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Luther's Attitude Toward John Hus

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The history of the development of Protestantism in Eastern Europe is an area of church history to which comparatively little attention has been devoted. Because Protestantism is now relatively weak in the lands east of the Iron Curtain, many students of church history are inclined to forget that at one time the churches of the Reformation had millions of adherents in these lands which are now dominated by Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Soviet Communism.

In a previous issue of this journal we have called attention to an important chapter from the history of the Reformation in Poland.[1] In many ways, however, the Reformation in Bohemia is far more important, especially because of its relationship to Luther's Reformation. That relationship was climaxed in Luther's endorsement of the *Confessio Bohemica* of 1535. But the chief factor involved in the negotiations between Luther and the Bohemians was Luther's high regard for John Hus (ca. 1369—1415). It is the purpose of this paper to trace the development of Luther's feeling about Hus.[2]

I

Just when Luther first heard of Hus, and from whom, is difficult to determine. But it seems safe to say that his first knowledge of Hus and of the Hussites came when he was quite young. Luther's father was a miner, and the German miners of the latter half of the fifteenth century were in constant contact with Bohemia.[3] German noblemen hired Czech artists, and vice versa. The contact between Germany and

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[1] "The Consensus of Sandomierz," CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, XVIII (1947), 825—37.

[2] The first to try a comprehensive discussion of this development was the Russian scholar E. Novikof, *Gus i Luter* (2 vols.; Moskva, 1859). A less voluminous, but more penetrating study of the problem is that of Jaroslav Goll, "Jak soudil Luther o Husovi?" *Časopis musea kralovství českého*, 1880, 69 ff. Independent of the previous two, because, as he says, he cannot read "Ungarisch" (!), are the pertinent sections of Walter Koehler, *Luther und die Kirchengeschichte nach seinen Schriften*, I. (untersuchender) Teil, 1. Abteilung (Erlangen, 1900). Cf. also W. H. T. Dau, "Luther's Relation to Hus," in *Theological Quarterly*, XIX, 3 (July, 1915), pp. 129—163.

[3] On the extent of the contacts between German and Czech miners, cf. S. Harrison Thomson, *Czechoslovakia in European History* (Princeton, 1943), pp. 101—02.

Bohemia can also be gauged through a study of the Czech, Moravian, and Silesian students at various German universities in this period;[4] and one can glimpse the meaning of this academic contact if he pay particular attention to those who studied at Wittenberg.[5]

Much more conclusive than this tenuous evidence for an awareness of Hus among Luther's contemporaries is the fact that the memory of the Hussite Wars was still alive in the places where and among the people with whom Luther spent his early life. At least three times in his writings[6] the Reformer indicates an acquaintance with German participation in those wars, and that is not surprising; for the city of Erfurt, whose university Luther entered early in 1501, had been a collecting place for the anti-Hussite taxes of the early and middle fifteenth century.[7] In the German lower classes, too, the social upheavals of the Hussite period served as a reminder and an encouragement in their difficult lot.[8]

The extent of the awareness referred to above may well be gauged from the part played by Jan Zizka (d. Nov. 11, 1424) in the writings of Luther's contemporaries.[9] Thus, for example, a colored picture of Zizka and of the Hussite armies decorates the cover of a sixteenth-century "Relatio historica

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[4] J. V. Šimák, "Studenti z Čech, Moravy a Slezka na nemeckých universitách v XV.—XVII. století," *Časopis českého musea*, 1905; also J. O. Novotný, *Strední Slovensko* (Praha, 1937), I, pp. 150—59.

[5] Ferdinand Menčík, "Studenti z Čech a Moravy ve Wittemberku od r. 1502 až do r. 1602," *Časopis českého musea*, 1897, 250—68; most of them, of course, came after 1530. For a handy summary see E. G. Schwiebert, *Reformation Lectures* (Valparaiso, 1937), Appendix B "Student Matriculation in the University of Wittenberg from 1520—1560," p. iv.

[6] "Warnunge D. Martini Luther, An seine lieben Deudschen," *Werke* (Weimar, 1881 ff.; hereafter referred to as *WA*), 30—III, 281. Cf. his reference to the Germans as those "qui occidimus eum," "Schreiben an die boehmischen Landstaende," *WA* 10—II, 174; also "De instituendis ministris ecclesiae," *WA* 12, 171, and Ernst Schaefer, *Luther als Kirchenhistoriker* (Guetersloh, 1897), p. 459.

[7] Cf. František Palacký, *Dejiny národu českého* (Praha, 1921), page 624.

[8] See Wilhelm Vogt, *Die Vorgeschichte des Bauernkriegs* (Halle, 1887), pp. 57—83: "Das 'boehmische Gift' und seine Vorbereitung in Deutschland."

[9] Jan Žižka of Trebova was the one-eyed leader of the Hussite armies. A sketchy discussion of Žižka's place in the humanistic literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is offered by Karel Hrdina, "Žižka v humanistickém písemnictví XV. a XVI. století" in Rudolf Urbánek (ed.), *Sborník Žižkuv 1424—1924* (Praha, 1924), pp. 196—99.

de Turcarum moribus."[10] And the German anticlericals[11] of the time, notably Ulrich von Hutten, used Zizka as proof of the fact that an anticlerical revolt could be successful.[12] This enthusiasm for Zizka was shared by others in the same period,[13] as well as by Luther's followers of a generation later.[14]

As the Hussite Wars had not been forgotten, so, too, it was rumored about here and there that the condemnation of John Hus at Constance had not been completely legal and fair.[15] Luther became acquainted with these rumors from at least two sources. One of them was Johann Greffenstein, who told him that Hus "sey noch nie mit schriften ubirwunden."[16] Diligent study by Biereye, supplemented by Otto Scheel,[17] has failed to identify Greffenstein; but it seems safe to take 1505 as the *terminus ad quem* of the utterance. Similarly, he heard "von Andreas Proles" that Hus was defeated in debate by a Bible corrupted in the passage Ezekiel 34:10.[18] Now, Luther is said to have seen Proles "jam decrepitum" in Magdeburg in

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[10] Reprinted as plate 120 in the appendix to Urbánek, *op. cit.* The manuscript is — or, at least, was — preserved in Vienna.

[11] The attempt has recently been made to interpret both Hussitism and Hutten's admiration for it as an instance of class warfare rather than of anticlericalism; the argument appears highly tendential. Roman Jakobson, *Moudrost starých Čechu* (New York, 1943), pp. 170—72.

[12] *Gespraeche von Ulrich von Hutten uebersetzt und erlaeutert,* edited by David Friedrich Strauss as Part III of his *Ulrich von Hutten* (Leipzig, 1860), p. 209. For an interpretation see Paul Held, *Ulrich von Hutten* (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 146—47.

[13] So Martin Bucer, or whoever it was that wrote *Gesprechbiechlein neuew Karsthans,* edited with an introduction by Ernst Lehmann (Halle, 1930), p. 15. For this passage in its historical context, see Hajo Holborn, *Ulrich von Hutten and the German Reformation* (New Haven, 1937), page 179.

[14] Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Catalogus testium veritatis* (Frankfurt, 1672), p. 733.

[15] The extent of Hussite propaganda in Germany during this period is summarized by Lindsay, *A History of the Reformation,* I (New York, 1926), pp. 98 and 309.

[16] "Von den newen Eckischenn Bullen und lugen," *WA* 6, 591. James Mackinnon doubts the effectiveness of Greffenstein's words at the time they were spoken, *Luther and the Reformation* (London, 1925—30), I, page 25.

[17] *Martin Luther. Vom Katholizismus zur Reformation,* I (Tuebingen, 1921), p. 306, on the relative merit of the view that Greffenstein was an Augustinian and of the theory that he was one of Luther's teachers.

[18] "Von den newen Eckischenn Bullen und lugen," *WA* 6, 590.

1497.[19] But it was probably not directly from Proles, but through Johann Staupitz,[20] that Luther heard the story.

What is the significance of these data? Ever since Flacius[21] it has been customary to speak of Proles as a "pre-Reformer," to compare him with John the Baptist as a preparer of the way.[22] On the basis of the data quoted above and similar indications, Ludwig Keller has sought to find such a "pre-Reformer" also in Staupitz, but in vain.[23] For Keller's is, as Theodor Kolde has shown, an artificial theory, based not upon an observation of the facts, but upon speculation.[24] Rather, it seems nearer to the truth to see in these facts an indication of an active spiritual life in the Augustinian order, a spiritual life which may well have recognized John Hus as the loyal son of the Church that he really was.[25]

That indication is strengthened by the fact that there were books by Hus lying around in certain places where they could be read. That this was true of either Luther's monastery or his university is apparent from his own words.[26] From his quotations at the Leipzig Disputation in 1519 it seems that, despite his claim never to have read anything by Hus,[27] Luther had read the Acts of the Council of Constance carefully[28] and had also retained passages from Hus' *De ecclesia* not contained in the condemnatory decrees of that Council,[29] though

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[19] Melchior Adamus, *Vitae Germanorum Theologorum* (Heidelberg, 1620), p. 6.

[20] So Luther himself reports, *WA, Tischreden* (hereafter referred to as *Ti*), 4, 654.

[21] Cf. his *Catalogus testium veritatis*, pp. 849—50.

[22] So, for example, H. A. Proehle, *Andreas Proles, ein Zeuge der Wahrheit kurz vor Luther* (Gotha, 1867).

[23] *Johann von Staupitz und die Anfaenge der Reformation* (Leipzig, 1888).

[24] "Johann von Staupitz, ein Waldenser und Wiedertaeufer, eine kirchenhistorische Entdeckung beleuchtet," *Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte* (hereafter referred to as *ZKG*), 7 (1887).

[25] Cf. Hedwig Vonschott, *Geistiges Leben im Augustinerorden am Ende des Mittelalters und zu Beginn der Neuzeit* (Berlin, 1915).

[26] "Vorrede zu Confessio fidei ac religionis baronum et nobilium regni Bohemiae," *WA* 50, 379.

[27] Cf. Luther to Johann Staupitz, October 3, 1519, *WA, Briefe*, 2, 514, and "Von den newen Eckischenn Bullen und lugen," *WA* 6, 587—88.

[28] ". . . als auch etlich acta selbs schreyben," "Von den newen Eckischenn Bullen und lugen," *WA* 6, 591; cf. Luther and Carlstadt to the Elector Frederick, August 18, 1519, *WA, Briefe*, 2, 470.

[29] This was the conclusion reached by Theodor Kolde, *Luthers Stellung zu Konzil und Kirche bis zum Wormser Reichstag 1521* (Guetersloh, 1876), p. 47.

they may well have been recorded in other anti-Hussite writings. Nor is the possibility excluded that the books of Johann Wesel, of which Luther spoke highly,[30] provided him with information; for Wesel had been in close contact with the Bohemians and had addressed some treatises to them which made trouble for him.[31]

Luther's early experiences of John Hus can, therefore, be summarized thus: Although, in harmony with the ecclesiastical tradition, Luther was taught that Hus was a heretic to be avoided,[32] there were nevertheless influences in his early life which gave him a proclivity for the Czech Reformer, a proclivity which made itself increasingly prominent as his reformatory thought progressed.

II

The first of Luther's opponents to recognize his affinity for Hus was probably either John Tetzel[33] or Sylvester Prierias, who received the impression upon reading some of Luther's words that "si talia in lucem dedisses quasi mox ad Bohemos commigraturus aut magnum aliquod ac latens adhuc scisma propalaturus."[34] Prierias' right to that priority is made questionable by the doubtful date of his "Replica";[35] but in any event, the fact that this is merely a passing remark and only one expletive among very many would tend to reduce its importance. There were probably others among Luther's opponents early in 1518 who hurled the name "Hussite" at him;[36] and it may well be that the use of that name

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[30] "Von den Konziliis und Kirchen," *WA* 50, 600; also "Responsio Lutheriana," *WA* 6, 184.

[31] Cf. Otto Clemen, "Wesel," *Realenzyklopaedie fuer die protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (3d ed.; 1896 ff.), 21, 129.

[32] His references to "venenum sub melle," *WA* 50, 379, or to his mortal hatred for Hus, "In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatos Commentarius," *WA* 40—I, 138, are probably exaggerated accounts. But it seems clear that he was warned about Hus: "Schreiben an die boehmischen Landstaende," *WA* 10—II, 172.

[33] Cf. Walter Koehler, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

[34] "Replica F. Silvestri Prieriatis, sacri Palatii apostolici Magistri, ad F. Martinum Luther Ordinis Eremitarum," *WA* 2, 51.

[35] Although some scholars date it earlier, Knaake puts it "wahrscheinlich Anfang November 1518," *WA* 2, 48.

[36] Cf. Luther to Johann Lang, March 21, 1518, *WA, Briefe*, 1, 154, on the many "portenta" with which his adversaries attempted to smear him.

was a common polemical device in the early sixteenth century.[37]

Effective use was not made of the similarity between Luther and Hus, however, until the entry of Johann Eck into the controversies which had sprung up as a result of Luther's theses. Slightly younger than Luther, Eck was pro-chancellor at the University of Ingolstadt and inquisitor for Bavaria and Franconia. The publication of the Ninety-Five Theses moved him to break off his friendship with Luther and to write "Obelisca" against him sometime early in 1518. Here he takes exception to Luther's view of the Church, labeling it "Bohemicum virus."[38] Although his "Asterisca," written in reply, do not refer to this charge, Luther was struck by it.[39] And when, a year later, various accusations by Eck had begun to accumulate, Luther published a "Disputatio et excusatio," in which he first expressed criticism of the Council of Constance, where Hus had been excuted,[40] and ridiculed Eck's accusation of Hussitism by a reference to an inscription on the Lateran Church in Rome.[41]

Strengthened by this in his conviction that Luther was in league with the Hussites, Eck came to Leipzig in June, 1519, and on the twenty-seventh day of that month began his debate with Andreas Carlstadt. Rumor had it that there were some Bohemians in Leipzig for the disputation, who wanted to support Luther as a follower of Hus.[42] When Luther was asked to preach, all the churches were closed to him, and he used the debate auditorium. His sermon, delivered on June 29, St. Peter's and St. Paul's day,[43] dealt with

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[37] In an undated sermon on John 8, Luther compares the attacks on him as a Hussite to attacks on Christ as a Samaritan, *WA* 4, 614. For another instance, see Oskar Farner, *Huldrych Zwingli*, II (Zuerich, 1946), page 331.

[38] Eck, "Obelisca" No. 18, *WA*, 1, 302.

[39] Cf. Luther to Johann Sylvius Egranus, March 24, 1518, *WA Briefe*, 1, 158; also Carlstadt to Eck, June 11, 1518, in *Luthers Saemmtliche Schriften* (Saint Louis Edition, hereafter referred to as *StL*), 15, 805.

[40] "Disputatio et excusatio F. Martini Luther adversus criminationes D. Iohannis Eccii," *WA* 2, 159. This holds if J. Knaake's reading "Constantipolitanam" is correct rather than "Constantinopolitanam" in other editions.

[41] ". . . ut ipsa quoque Ecclesia Ecci sit Hussita," *ibid.*, p. 159.

[42] Eck to Georg Hauen and Franz Burckardt, July 1, 1519, *StL* 15, 1228.

[43] "Ein Sermon von sanct Peters und Pauls fest," *WA* 2, 246—49.

grace and free will, and with the primacy of Peter. Because of its treatment of this latter point the sermon seemed to Eck to be Hussitic.[44] And so it is not surprising that when Luther chanced into the Paulist church one morning while the fathers were reading mass, they ran away with their monstrances for fear of being contaminated by the heretic.[45]

On July 4, 1519, after the preliminary bout between Eck and Carlstadt was over, the debate between Eck and Luther began. Before the morning had passed, Eck took occasion to refer to the fact that "cum summa Christianorum iniuria sumus experti portas infernorum prevaluisse ecclesie Hierosolymitane . . . addo quoque Boemice."[46] Luther's reply mentioned the Bohemians, and no more.[47] But the next day Eck pressed his point, acknowledging himself as an enemy of the schismatic Bohemians and citing the resemblance between their position and Luther's on the controverted points; "fateor, quod Bohemi in suorum errorum pertinaci defensione illa commemorant," he added, "et his armis virulentis se defendunt."[48] While granting that the Bohemians sinned by breaking the highest law of Christian love,[49] Luther expressed his amazement that so avid an opponent of the Bohemians as Eck had never taken the time to write against them.[50] Although he attempted at first to sidestep the issue about his agreement with Hus and his disagreement with the Council of Constance,[51] he was ultimately forced to defend Hus and even to grant that the Bohemians had been wronged; for

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[44] Eck to Jacob Hochstraten, July 24, 1519, *StL* 15, 1227; cf. Eck to Hauen and Burckardt, July 1, 1519, *StL* 15, 1228.

[45] Sebastian Froeschel, Preface to "Vom Koenigreich Jesu Christi und seinem ewigen Priesterthum," *StL* 15, 1208; cf. W. H. T. Dau, *The Leipzig Debate in 1519* (St. Louis, 1919), p. 130.

[46] "Disputatio Excellentium theologorum Iohannis Eckii et Martini Lutheri Augustiniani," *WA* 2, 262.

[47] *Ibid.*, *WA* 2, 266.

[48] *Ibid.*, *WA* 2, 275; cf. also Eck's *Ad malesanam Lutheri venationem* of October 28, 1519, preserved in the Pritzlaff Memorial Library, leaf 4 B; and Eck to the Elector Frederick, November 18, 1519, *StL* 15, 1317.

[49] "Disputatio," *WA* 2, 275; for an interpretation cf. Erich Seeberg, *Luthers Theologie*, II: *Christus. Wirklichkeit und Urbild* (Stuttgart, 1937), p. 226.

[50] "Disputatio," *WA* 2, 276; see also the curious misreading of this passage in Heinrich Boehmer, *Road to Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1946), page 285.

[51] On the Council, "Disputatio," *WA* 2, 283; on Hus, *ibid.*, p. 288.

many of Hus' articles were most Christian and evangelical.[52] With inexorable logic, Eck concluded that if Luther supported Hus, whom Constance had condemned, then Luther was putting his own judgment above that of the Council.[53]

III

Eck's strategy had worked, his suspicions were confirmed: Luther was a Hussite and had been forced to admit it. And now that Luther's identity with the Hussites was established, Eck determined to take full advantage of the situation. A few months after the debate he tried to use the Hussite bogey to scare Luther's protector, Frederick,[54] but the attempt failed. Less than a year after that, in October, 1520, he published a tract in criticism of what Luther had said and written since Leipzig.[55] There was much that displeased him, most of all Luther's growing friendship for Hus and the Hussites. This friendship did not surprise him, for Luther seemed to have much in common with the Bohemian heretics.[56] Indeed, in June, 1520, Luther had urged that attempts be made to conciliate the Czechs, since an injustice had been done them[57]—a charge that irked Eck very much.[58] In his pamphlet on the Lord's Supper of December, 1519, Luther had even sug-

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[52] *Ibid.*, p. 297. Eck referred to this statement eleven years later in the thirtieth of his *Theses 405*, reprinted in Wilhelm Gussmann, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des augsburgischen Glaubensbekenntnisses*, II (Kassel, 1930), p. 107. Because the disputation was in public, it is, I think, correct to see in this action, as Hartmann Grisar does, proof that Luther was "in die Enge gebracht," *Martin Luther*, I (Freiburg, 1911), p. 295.

[53] "Disputation," *WA* 2, 299. He insisted especially that Luther's view of the Church as the company of the elect "ad Hussiticam intelligentiam, est hereticissimum," *ibid.*, p. 295. For the place of this in the debate and in Luther's development, cf. Karl Holl, "Die Entstehung von Luthers Kirchenbegriff," *Gesammelte Aufsaetze zur Kirchengeschichte*, I: *Luther* (6th ed.; Tuebingen, 1932), p. 312, n. 3.

[54] Eck to Frederick, November 18, 1519, *StL* 15, 1317.

[55] "Des heilgen concilii tzu Costentz, der heylgen Christenheit und hochloeblichen keyszers Sigmunds, und auch des teutzschen adels entschueldigung etc.," reprinted in Karl Meisen und Friedrich Zoepfl (ed.), Johann Eck, *Vier deutsche Schriften* (Muenster in Westfalen, 1929), pages 1—18.

[56] Eck, "Entschueldigung," pp. 17—18.

[57] "An christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung," *WA* 6, 454.

[58] He quotes Luther's words on the title page of the "Entschueldigung" and again later (p. 14), labeling them as "den grossen frevel . . . des keynen frummen Christen nicht tzu gedulden ist."

gested the permissibility of Communion under both kinds,[59] an indication to Eck that Luther preferred the practice of the heretics to the custom of the orthodox Church.[60] And what was even worse in Eck's eyes,[61] Luther had urged compromise with those Bohemians, who doubted the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation and had also himself declared that doctrine to be a fiction.[62] It was, therefore, with renewed confidence in the correctness of his tactics at Leipzig that Eck could throw the approval of Hus up to Luther in the presence of the Emperor at the Diet of Worms.[63] And even in 1530 he referred to Luther's previous denunciation of the Bohemians[64] and called him "der Pickardisch Luther," [65] insisting that "Luttero enim debemus . . . novos Hussitas." [66]

Once established by Eck, Luther's affinity with Hus and the Hussites was exploited by his enemies; and it soon became the usual practice in a polemic against Luther to refer to his "Hussitism." Thus, when Luther made his fateful admission about Hus at Leipzig, Duke George of Saxony, himself of Czech blood,[67] arose with arms akimbo and cried: "Das walt

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[59] "Sermon von dem hochwirdigen sacrament des heyligen waren leychnams Christi und von den bruederschafften," *WA* 2, 742—43. Luther lived to regret some of the phrases in this "Sermon"; cf. "Ein brieff an die zu Franckfort am Meyn" of 1533, *WA* 30—III, 563. For the effect of this pamphlet on Duke George, cf. note 69 below. On the *sub utraque* in Luther's thought see also *WA* 6, 138. As often, Carlstadt was ahead of Luther in considering this problem, as evidenced by his thesis of July 19, 1521: "Non sunt Bohemi, sed veri Christiani, panem et poculum Christi sumentes," Hermann Barge, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt* (Leipzig, 1905), I, p. 291, n. 118; also the Wittenberg faculty to the Elector, October 20, 1521, in *Corpus Reformatorum* (Halle, 1834 ff.), 1, 469 on the accusation that one holding to the *sub utraque* is a Bohemian. For Luther's interpretation of the incident, cf. "Von beider Gestalt des Sakraments zu nehmen," *WA* 10—II, 11—41, esp. p. 17, where he refers to Bohemia.

[60] "Entschueldigung," p. 4; Henry VIII's "Adsertio," *StL* 19, 146.

[61] ". . . ich noch fuer unleidlicher acht," "Entschueldigung," p. 5.

[62] "An christlichen Adel," *WA* 6, 456.

[63] According to Aleander's report, Eck listed the sympathy with Hus as one of the worst offenses of Luther's early writings, *WA* 7, 836. Cf. also Eck's reply to Luther's arguments, *ibid.*, p. 837.

[64] *Christliche erhaltung der stell der geschrifft fuer das Fegfeuer wider Luthers lasterbuechlin* (August, 1530), leaf 4 B. This work, too, is preserved in Pritzlaff Memorial Library.

[65] *Ibid.*, leaf 16 B.

[66] "Praefatio" to *Theses 405*, Gussmann, *op. cit.*, II, p. 101.

[67] So, at least, it was claimed, Luther to Amsdorf, January 2, 1526, *WA, Briefe*, 4, 3; see the note to J. K. Seidemann, "Schriftstuecke zur Reformationsgeschichte," *Zeitschrift fuer historische Theologie*, 44 (1874), 120.

die Sucht!" [68] When the above-mentioned pamphlet on the Lord's Supper appeared,[69] and when Luther published essays and books praising Hus,[70] the theologizing duke feared that the heresiarch's influence would assert itself in his land, too.[71] Royalty was joined to nobility in that denunciation when Henry of England expressed the thought that perhaps Luther would flee to the Bohemians if the situation in Germany grew too hot for him [72] — a rumor that had been current for some time.[73] Ever the politician, Henry used the example of the Bohemians to warn the Saxon dukes of what continued toleration of Luther might mean.[74] The rumor which had come to Henry's ears about Luther's trips to Bohemia eventually grew, so that he was said to be a Czech himself, born and reared in Prague.[75] In 1528 a book appeared under the name of J. Faber, comparing Luther unfavorably with Hus;[76] George Witzel took Luther's Smalcald Articles as an occasion to remind Luther of what he had written to the Bohemians in 1523;[77] and ultimately even Erasmus joined in.[78] Johann

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[68] According to Froeschel's report, quoted by Karl Friedrich Koehler, "M. Sebastian Froeschel," *Zeitschrift fuer historische Theologie*, 42 (1872), 535.

[69] Duke George to Elector Frederick of Saxony, December 27, 1519, *StL* 19, 450—51.

[70] Duke George to Luther, December 28, 1525, *WA, Briefe*, 3, 648.

[71] Duke George to Elector Frederick of Saxony, December 27, 1519, *StL* 19, 450—51; and Frederick's answer, December 29, 1519, *StL* 19, 452—53.

[72] "Adsertio septem sacramentorum," *StL* 19, 149.

[73] Cf. note 34 above; also Conrad Pellicanus to Luther, March 15, 1520, *WA, Briefe*, 2, 67; Silvester von Scharmberg to Luther, June 11, 1520, *WA, Briefe*, 2, 121; Luther to Spalatin, July 10, 1520, *WA, Briefe*, 2, 137.

[74] Henry to Elector Frederick, Dukes John and George, February 20, 1523, *StL* 19, 357.

[75] He first heard of the rumor early in 1520: Luther to Spalatin, January 10, 1520, *WA, Briefe*, 1, 608; it was substantiated a few days later, Luther to Spalatin, January 14, 1520, *WA, Briefe*, 1, 610; see also Luther to Johann Lang, January 26, 1520, *WA, Briefe*, 1, 619; and "Verklaerung etlicher Artikel in dem Sermon von dem heiligen Sakrament," *WA* 6, 81—82.

[76] It was called: "Nonaginta articuli, in quibus Joan. Hus et Pighardi, Waldenses ac Wesselius tractabiliores ac meliores Martino Luthero inveniuntur," Gussmann, *op. cit.*, II, p. 45.

[77] "Antwort auff Martin Luthers letzt bekennete artickel, unsere gantze religion und das concili belangend" (1538), edited by Hans Volz (Muenster, 1932), p. 106.

[78] "Purgatio adversus epistolam non sobriam Lutheri," quoted in Grisar, *op. cit.*, I, p. 82.

Fisher summarized the feelings of many when he stated that "Iohannes Husz pontificem Romanum totius ecclesiae divino iure monarcham profitetur, Lutherus contra penitus reclamat." [79]

IV

Sooner or later someone was bound to see the dangers connected with identifying Luther and the Hussites. Despite its disadvantages for the theory of papal supremacy, the Bohemian schism did perform the function of preventing the formation of a bloc against Rome. But if Luther were to take Hus' part in the controversy, might that not effect such a bloc, brought on by the loyal Roman Catholics who had used the Hussite stratagem to force Luther into a heretical position?

That danger was a real one, and something had to be done about it. The most obvious way to accomplish this was to play one Bohemian group against another and thus to irritate the disunity in the Bohemian situation as a lever against the chances of Luther's uniting with the Czechs. Such a thought seems to have occurred already to Eck, since he was concerned about the pious Czechs.[80] But it remained for Hieronymus Emser, one of Eck's cronies, to take concrete steps in that direction. While in the service of Duke George, Emser had an opportunity to travel in Bohemia;[81] and on this trip, or a similar one, he acquired a Bohemian mistress.[82] Feeling that such a connection with Bohemia imposed upon him the duty of setting Czech affairs straight, Emser wrote an essay for the faithful Czechs a month after the Leipzig Debate.[83] After calling Bohemia a "terra . . . supstitionis & confusionis" and lamenting the fact that the religious situation had even divided families,[84] the treatise goes on to show that there was no connection between Luther's position and that of the Czechs, and that Luther had repudiated the role

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[79] "Epistola dedicatoria" to *Sacri Sacerdotii Defensio contra Lutherum*, edited by Hermann Klein Schmeink (Muenster, 1925), p. 6.

[80] So, at least, it seems from his letter to the Elector Frederick, July 22, 1519, *StL* 15, 1287.

[81] Gustav Kawerau, *Hieronymus Emser* (Halle, 1898), p. 18.

[82] Luther ridiculed Emser about this liaison, "Ad aegocerotem Emserianum M. Lutheri additio," *WA* 2, 661; other references in Kawerau, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

[83] *De disputatione Lipsicensi, quantum ad Boemos obiter deflexa est.* There is an old edition of this epistle in Pritzlaff Memorial Library.

[84] *De disputatione*, leaf 1 A.

of being a patron of Hus and the Czechs. Emser appealed to the leader of the Czech Catholics to rally to the cause of Church and country.[85] Luther recognized the significance of Emser's treatise, exclaiming: "Nova miracula, qui ab Eccio delyrabar esse Boemus, ab Emserio mihi infensiore quam multi Eccii Boemus esse abnegor";[86] but he still condemned the schismatic Bohemians[87] and so did not enter into the alliance of which Emser and his coreligionists were so afraid.

Nevertheless, as Luther's contacts with the Czechs grew, Emser's fears spread among other Catholics. Illustrative of the situation in which Luther's opponents found themselves is Johann Cochlaeus (1479—1552). He may himself have come from a Slavic family — his real name was Dobneck[88] — and was in contact with Bohemia, both through personal visits[89] and particularly through correspondence with various people there. He carried on an extensive correspondence especially with Pietro Paolo Vergerio (1497—1564), papal legate in Prague,[90] from whom, among other things, Cochlaeus sought financial help from the legacy of a wealthy Czech for historical and polemical writing,[91] chiefly against Luther. The character of that writing is apparent from his history of the Waldenses,[92] in which he recorded, as he said, "articulos haereticorum, quos approbat noster antipapa."[93]

But more important than his Waldensian study was Cochlaeus' research in Hussite history. In his *magnum opus* in this field, which is useful even today[94] and which caused

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[85] *Ibid.*, leaf 3 A. For another example of Emser's use of Hus in polemic see Barge, *Karlstadt*, I, p. 395.

[86] "Ad Aegocerotem Emserianum M. Lutheri Additio," *WA* 2, 658.

[87] *Ibid.*, pp. 661—63.

[88] Theodor Kolde, "Cochlaeus," *Realenzyklopaedie*, 4, 194.

[89] Cf. Cochlaeus to Aleander, written from Prague, April 12, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 247; W. Friedensburg's note, *ZGK* 18, 270; and Cochlaeus to Cardinal Farnese, June 18, 1540, *ZKG* 18, 433.

[90] See Karl Benrath, "Vergerio," *Realenzyklopaedie*, 20, 546—50.

[91] Cochlaeus to Vergerio, December 24, 1533, *ZKG* 18, 242; March 14, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 243; April 27, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 249; July 27, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 254.

[92] On the progress of this writing, which was apparently the reworking of an older manuscript, see Cochlaeus to Aleander, May 5, 1521, *ZKG* 18, 111; Cochlaeus to Aleander, June 11, 1521, *ZKG* 18, 115; his complaint to the Pope, June 19, 1521, *ZKG* 18, 117; and his desire to revise it, Cochlaeus to Aleander, September 27, 1521, *ZKG*, 18, 125.

[93] Cochlaeus to Aleander, May 11, 1521, *ZKG* 18, 112; on Luther as "antipapa," cf. Cochlaeus to Morone, March 19, 1538, *ZKG* 18, 284.

[94] See Joseph Sauer, "Cochlaeus," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 4, 79.

him much grief while he was writing it,[95] he purposed to expose "utrorumque Hussitarum, Bohemicorum et Teuthonicorum, malicia et perniciosa machinatio."[96] As a result of these researches, Cochlaeus was quite free in applying the name "Hussite" to Luther[97] and in blaming Hussite influences for Luther's doctrinal aberrations.[98] Nevertheless, Cochlaeus seems to have had fears similar to those of Emser, with whom he was in constant contact and whose opinion and work he highly respected.[99] But there were factors in the religious and political situation that made Cochlaeus even more apprehensive than was Emser about driving Luther and the Czechs together.

Perhaps chief among those factors for Cochlaeus was the Polish question. Emser had feared a tie-up of Luther and the Czechs; Cochlaeus feared the influence of the Lutheran movement upon other lands throughout Europe, but especially upon Poland. He frequently referred to the fact that one of the chief purposes of his writing was the prevention of the spread of the Lutheran heresy outside Germany,[100] and also the counteracting of the influence of Luther's translated books.[101] Being probably quite aware of the many churches which the *Unitas Fratrum* had in Poland, Cochlaeus must have known of the intense struggle that had been going on in Poland for over a century, with the lower clergy supporting the

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[95] Cochlaeus to Aleander, June 25, 1535, *ZKG* 18, 265; Cochlaeus to Johann Fabri, October 28, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 258. The book was put on the Index by Sixtus V: Kolde, "Cochlaeus," p. 200.

[96] Cochlaeus to Aleander, September 8, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 256—57; he wanted to defend the Apostolic See, Cochlaeus to Vergerio, July 27, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 254.

[97] Luther is referred to as "novus Hussita," Cochlaeus to Pope Leo, June 19, 1521, *ZKG* 18, 116; Hus is referred to as Luther's "magister" in Cochlaeus' *Articuli CCCCC Martini Lutheri* (1526), art. 63. This latter writing is also in Pritzlaff Memorial Library, Saint Louis.

[98] On the doctrine of the Church, Cochlaeus' *Articuli*, art. 159; on purgatory, *ibid.*, art. 109, also note 64 above; on miracles at holy places, *Articuli*, art. 154; on the mass and other ceremonies, *ibid.*, art. 220; in general, Luther and his followers preach "Hussitica et Pighardica iam olim damnata dogmata," *ibid.*, art. 113.

[99] ". . . solus Emserus perstat invictus," Cochlaeus to Aleander, September 27, 1521, *ZKG* 18, 124; on Emser's answer to "An christlichen Adel," Cochlaeus to Aleander, May 22, 1521, *ZKG* 18, 114.

[100] Cochlaeus to Ottonello Vida, July 26, 1536, *ZKG* 18, 268; Cochlaeus to Vergerio, June 2, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 253; Cochlaeus to Aleander, September 8, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 257; Cochlaeus to Vergerio, July 27, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 254.

[101] Cochlaeus to Vergerio, June 2, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 253.

Hussites and the higher clergy, with German backing, advocating the eradication of the Hussite heresy.[102] That situation was still in a state of flux in the sixteenth century, and any strong unifying force might have brought about a realignment. Of this Cochlaeus was afraid — of an alliance between Poland, Bohemia, and Lutheran Saxony against Rome.

Cochlaeus' fears regarding the young Polish noblemen who were enrolled at Wittenberg have been described elsewhere.[103] When it was rumored about that one of the Polish bishops was inviting Melanchthon to Poland[104] and that even the young Polish king was "lutherico fermento infectus,"[105] he began to write profusely. He was overjoyed when the Polish king forbade his nobles to send their sons to Wittenberg to study, attributing the success of this to his books and to the grace of God.[106] But what he feared almost happened anyway in 1537, when reports came that some of Melanchthon's noble Polish pupils were plotting a rebellion "non modo contra episcopos, sed etiam contra regem ipsum."[107] The rebellion failed to materialize, but Cochlaeus was never completely certain of Poland's relation to the Church of Rome.

Because of such fears, it is not surprising to learn that Cochlaeus was careful about how he dealt with Luther-Hus polemics. As noted above, he did call Luther a Hussite. And while he could not avoid seeing and pointing out affinities between Luther's position and that of the Hussites, notably on the Eucharist,[108] he took every chance to point out that Luther was now guilty of what he had criticized in the

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[102] Cf. Ed. Dav. Schnaase, "Die boehmischen Brueder in Polen und die Reformierten in Danzig," *Zeitschrift fuer historische Theologie*, 37 (1867), 125—56. For more detailed bibliography, see my article on the Consensus of Sandomierz, referred to in note 1 above.

[103] "The Consensus of Sandomierz," CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, XVIII (1947), p. 831; see also the statistics cited there, p. 837.

[104] Cochlaeus to Aleander, April 23, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 248. The arrangements were being made through Andrew Krzycki; cf. Theodor Wotschke, *Geschichte der Reformation in Polen* (Leipzig, 1911), p. 27.

[105] Cochlaeus to Vergerio, July 27, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 255; *Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland nebst ergaenzten Aktenstuecken*, I (Gotha, 1892), No. 108, p. 291.

[106] Cochlaeus to Aleander, June 25, 1535, *ZKG* 18, 265.

[107] Cochlaeus to Aleander, October 7, 1537, *ZKG* 18, 275—76.

[108] See note 98 above; on the Eucharist, *Articuli* CCCCC, art. 422; and Cochlaeus to Morone, August 31, 1537, *ZKG* 18, 272.

Czechs,[109] namely, the perversion of the Scriptures in proof of a position [110] and particularly the sectarianism to which Luther had often pointed.[111] This he did, of course, to show the Czechs, as had Emser, that Luther was different from them. Another strategy he employed for that same purpose was his aid to Catholic Czechs. Among them was John Hasenberg, for whom he secured financial assistance.[112] He performed the same favor for four Czech noblemen.[113] The provost of All Saints' Church in Prague, Simon Villaticus, managed to publish his poems in Leipzig through Cochlaeus' intercession.[114] So concerned was Cochlaeus about the problem of Luther's alliance with the Hussites that he hoped to use the Czechs as a lever to bring the Germans back to the Church [115] and wanted to revise his history of the Hussites to avoid offending the Czechs.[116] And though he pretended to be shocked [117] at Luther's statement of 1520 that "si ille [Hus] fuit haereticus, ego plus decies haereticus sum," [118] it actually gave him an opportunity to continue his strategy by granting Luther's point.[119]

But Cochlaeus' attempts were in vain. The forces which Eck had set in motion at Leipzig were too strong to be checked; and by the time Luther's enemies had become aware of the dangers latent in the Hussite myth, Luther's friends and Luther himself had willingly accepted the charge and were acquainting themselves with Hus and his views.

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[109] *Articuli CCCCC*, art. 152 and 243.

[110] *Confutatio XCI. articulorum* (Cologne, 1525), art. 66. Like other works previously cited, this tract is preserved in Pritzlaff Library.

[111] Cf. note 49 above; *WA* 1, 625; *WA* 1, 697. See Cochlaeus, "Ein noetig und christlich bedencken auff des Luthers artickeln, die man gemeynsamen concilio fuertragen sol," edited by Hans Volz (Muenster, 1932), p. 7.

[112] Cochlaeus to Vergerio, March 14, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 243; May 29, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 252.

[113] Cochlaeus to Bishop Giberti, January 31, 1540, *ZKG* 18, 422—23.

[114] Cochlaeus to Morone, January 12, 1538, *ZKG* 18, 282; and Johann Metzler in *Tres Orationes Funebres in Exequio Iohannis Eckii Habitae* (Muenster, 1930), p. iv; a sample of Villaticus' poetry is on p. 7.

[115] Cochlaeus to Johann Fabri, October 28, 1534, *ZKG* 18, 259.

[116] Cochlaeus to Vergerio, November 16, 1535, *ZKG* 18, 266.

[117] *Articuli CCCCC*, art. 228; "Ein noetig . . . bedenken," p. 7.

[118] "Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per bullam Leonis X. novissimam damnatorum," *WA* 7, 135.

[119] *Commentarius de actis et scriptis Mt. Lutheri* (German translation, 1581), p. 550.

V

As late as 1522 some of Luther's friends were still defending him against the Hussite charge.[120] But soon after, Otto Brunfels became the first of the Evangelicals to publish some of Hus' works. More significant was the work done by Johann Agricola in acquainting himself and others with the life of Hus.[121] In 1529 he collaborated with Nicholas Krumbacher in the publication of a "History und warhafftige geschicht" about Hus; it was published in Hagenau, the same city in which Hus' *De ecclesia* had come out for foreign consumption for the first time.[122] The treatise is largely a collection of documents — letters, reports and speeches — dealing with Hus' defense at Constance.[123] In 1536, after moving to Wittenberg, Agricola published a German translation of Luther's edition of some of Hus' letters; the next year there appeared a "Disputatio Iohannis Hus, quam absoluit dum ageret Constantia," containing various tracts by Hus; and in 1538 Agricola wrote a five-act drama of Hus' martyrdom.[124] It was this last piece of work[125] which moved Cochlaeus to compose a dialog between Luther and a friend proving that the Council of Constance was correct in condemning Hus.[126] Because of all this activity on Agricola's part, it is not surprising that it should have been Agricola who wrote the preface to the *Apologia* of the *Unitas Fratrum* when that document appeared in 1538.[127]

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120 Cf. the anonymous "Ein kurze anred zu allen misgunstigen doctor Luthers, und der christenlichen Freiheit" in Oskar Schade (ed.), *Satiren und Pasquille aus der Reformationszeit* (2d ed.; Hanover, 1863), II, p. 191.

121 Agricola's research and publicistic activity in this field are well summarized in the chapter "Hussitica" in Gustav Kawerau, *Johann Agricola von Eisleben* (Berlin, 1881), pp. 118—28.

122 Jan Jakubec, *Dejiny literatury české*, I (Praha, 1929), p. 316.

123 Although I have been unable to find a copy of Agricola's original, there is what seems to be a second edition in the Pritzlaff Memorial Library. The book is anonymous and bears the title: "Die in Huszen bekriegte, doch unbesiegte Wahrheit" (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1686); cf. page 4.

124 See the selections from it in Kawerau, *Agricola*, pp. 120—21.

125 Cf. Cochlaeus to Aleander, October 7, 1537, *ZKG* 18, 277.

126 *Ein heimlich gespraech von der tragedia Johannis Huszen*, edited by Hugo Holstein (Halle, 1900). Kawerau, *Agricola*, p. 122, n. 2, seeks to disprove Cochlaeus' authorship, but his arguments are not convincing.

127 Cf. Georg Loesche, *Luther, Melanchthon und Calvin in Oesterreich-Ungarn* (Tuebingen, 1909), p. 55.

Such were the forces, hostile and friendly, which brought Luther to the conviction that he was supporting the same cause for which, a hundred years before, John Hus had lived a hero's life and died a martyr's death. The development of Luther's attitude toward Hus is important for the entire history of Protestantism in Eastern Europe, since it was chiefly through this attitude that relations between the Reformation and Eastern lands were stimulated. It is no less significant for the light it sheds on Luther's "Entwicklung zum Reformator" and on the evolution of his reformatory consciousness, for which his attitude toward Hus is a helpful barometer. Luther's appreciation of Hus also helps explain why, in 1538, he was willing to endorse a confessional document, the *Confessio Bohemica*, which was not completely Lutheran in every respect. It is to this latter problem, valuable for the present ecclesiastical and theological crisis, that we hope to turn in a later article.

Valparaiso, Ind.