

XVII

THE CRUSADES AGAINST THE HUSSITES

The Hussite wars, which lasted throughout much of the third and fourth decades of the fifteenth century, had many aspects, but primarily they were the violent expressions of a great revolution, one of the first in the chain of European revolutions which produced decisive changes in the structural character of European societies. This first great upheaval also had the aspect of a civil war in which

The series of Hussite wars, one important aspect of the Hussite revolution, is probably the greatest event in Czech history and has therefore been an object of a vast literature in Czech historiography. It has also been treated to some extent in other languages, especially in German, in French, and, more recently, also in English. In Czech the first modern substantial treatment came from the pen of the greatest of 19th-century Czech historians, František Palacký, in vol. II, parts 1–3, of his *History of Bohemia* (in several Czech editions and a German one in 1851); it is still valuable. This is even more true of Palacký's basic source publications, such as *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte des Hussitenkrieges* (2 vols., Prague, 1873; repr. Osnabrück, 1966), giving letters and documents in German and Latin, and *Archiv český*, especially the early volumes published by Palacký between 1840 and 1872, containing only Czech material. Of later Czech publications the most important are the fourth volume of V. V. Tomek's huge *Dějepis města Prahy [History of the city of Prague]* (2 vols., Prague, 1899), in fact more a Bohemian than merely a Prague history; as well as the same author's *Jan Žižka* (Prague, 1879; also in German translation); some of the large literature specifically on Žižka will be mentioned in the footnotes. In the 20th century the main publications in Czech are O. Frankenberger, *Naše velká armáda [Our great army]*, relating only to the events of the Hussite Wars (3 vols., Prague, 1921); J. Pekař, *Žižka a jeho doba [Žižka and his time]*, a work that goes beyond the personality of Žižka and touches upon the whole Hussite Revolution (4 vols., Prague, 1927–1933); R. Urbánek, *Lipany a konec polních vojsk [Lipany and the end of the field armies]* (Prague, 1934); a number of works by Jos. Macek, especially *Husitské revoluční hnutí [The Hussite revolutionary movement]* (Prague, 1952; translated into many languages, including English), *Tábor v husitském revolučním hnutí* (2 vols., Prague, 1955–1956), and *Prokop Veliký [Prokop the Great]* (Prague, 1953); and finally F. M. Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce [Hussite revolution]* (2 vols., České dějiny, part II, vols. 7 and 8; Prague, 1965–1966).

In other languages the most important contributions on the Hussite wars in the 19th century were in German. For the crusades, and especially for the role of emperor Sigismund, the first (to some extent still valuable) is J. Aschbach, *Geschichte Kaiser Sigmunds*, vol. IV (Hamburg, 1845). Far more valuable, and still highly valued by Czech historiography, is F. v. Bezold, *König Sigmund und die Reichskriege gegen die Hussiten* (3 vols., Munich, 1872,

the people of Bohemia and Moravia, the majority Czechs, a minority Germans, were involved. To some extent the term "civil war" could also be used in relation to the other dependencies of the Crown of St. Wenceslas, the duchies of Upper and Lower Silesia and the margraviates of Upper and Lower Lusatia. Their ethnic composition, however, was overwhelmingly non-Czech, with a German majority and a Slavic minority—Polish and Lusatian Sorb. On the whole these northern dependencies belong among the countries whose rulers would try to intervene, for political and religious reasons, in Bohemian events.

1875, and 1877). No other work has presented the material as clearly and objectively, although Bezold did not as yet have all today's source material at his disposal; e.g., *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, vols. VIII and IX (Munich, 1867–1886; repr. Göttingen; cited as *RTA*). Excellent also is Bezold's more ideological work *Zur Geschichte des Hussitentums* (Munich, 1874). In the framework of later German history the work of A. Bachmann, *Geschichte Böhmens*, vol. II (Gotha, 1905; mainly chapters 4–6, pp. 142–342) is of some value, but since then few contributions were made in German until the important production by F. Seibt, *Hussitica: Zur Struktur einer Revolution* (Cologne and Graz, 1965), and his concise but highly reliable contribution, "Die Zeit der Luxemburger und der Hussitischen Revolution," in vol. I of the *Handbuch der Geschichte der böhmischen Länder*, ed. K. Bosl (Stuttgart, 1967). In French the most valuable work is Ernest Denis, *Hus et la guerre des Hussites* (Paris, 1878). In English the history of Hussitism, with special emphasis also upon the religious background and the influence of the papacy, was first presented in a careful treatment by Bishop Mandel Creighton, *A History of the Papacy from the Great Schism to the Sack of Rome* (London, 1899), vol. II, especially chapters III to VI (pp. 171–321). A more popular treatment was Count [F. H. H. V. von] Lützwow's *The Hussite Wars* (London, 1914). In 1955 appeared *John Žižka and the Hussite Revolution* by the present author (Princeton; repr. New York, 1969), which puts its emphasis, in the phase from 1419 to 1424, on political and military events, whereas H. Kaminsky's valuable work *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967) puts its emphasis on ideological and to some extent sociological issues and accordingly begins with the prehistory of the Hussite wars, also ending in 1424. The huge bibliography on Hussitism and Wyclifism before the wars cannot be mentioned here, but will be found in the bibliographies of some of the listed works, including the two mentioned last.

In addition to the original source works mentioned in relation to Palacký, a few other basic source works should be mentioned. There are the contemporary chronicles called "Starší letopisové čeští" (Old Czech Annalists), published in three versions, first by Palacký (reprinted by Charvát in 1941, and completed by publishing in 1945 parts which had been eliminated by Nazi censorship); the *Vratislavský rukopis* (Breslau edition) published by F. Šimek (Prague, 1937); and the *Křižovnický rukopis* published by M. Kaňák and F. Šimek (Prague, 1959); the last two are somewhat more thoroughly exact than the combined versions of Palacký. Of the greatest importance is the "Chronicle of Lawrence [Vavřinec] of Březová," without which our knowledge of the Hussite revolution, especially during the early phases, would be far more scanty; see J. Goll, ed., *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, V (Prague, 1893), 327–541. In the same publication, the "Chronicle of Bartošek of Drahonice" (pp. 589–628) is valuable. Of considerable importance also, as a contemporary report of the history of Sigismund, is the account by his financial counselor and biographer Eberhart Windecke, published by W. Altmann under the title *Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Zeitalters Kaiser Sigmunds* (Berlin, 1893). For further original sources and secondary works see the bibliographies in the works by H. Kaminsky and F. G. Heymann mentioned above.

But the Hussite wars were not only among the first of the great European revolutions, and as such a step across the threshold of the modern period; they can also be considered an important late medieval event: almost the last of the great crusades in the traditional form of a war proclaimed by the papacy and meant to save Christendom from the dangers of eastern invaders or European heretics. There were, it is true, some still later crusading attempts, such as the catastrophic campaign of Varna of 1444,¹ the successful defense of Belgrade in 1456, and the abortive crusade planned for 1464 by pope Pius II. But the Hungarian and Roman king Sigismund, the official "sword-bearer" in the crusades against the Hussites, had seldom paraded as a crusader in his many collisions with the Turks after his early and disastrous defeat at Nicopolis in 1396. Similarly, the "second Hussite wars" of 1468 and later, fought against the Czech king George of Poděbrady by several of his neighbors, did not, though strongly supported by the papacy, take the official form of a sequence of crusades, characteristic of the campaigns directed against Bohemia in the years 1420, 1421, 1422, 1427, and 1431.

It is impossible, within the framework of this chapter, to discuss in any detail the origins of the Hussite revolution.² Elements of Czech nationalism directed against the strong position of the Germans, especially in the cities and monasteries of Bohemia and Moravia; mass dissatisfaction with the dominating and wealthy representatives of the church; and the movement for a far-reaching religious reform—these three motive forces, often combined with one another, occasionally colliding, can probably be considered the main causes leading to the revolution.³ This ideological and political development had already gone quite far by July 6, 1415, when John Hus, for some years the most influential and most popular leader of the reform movement, was burned at the stake in Constance.

Hus had already, in 1412, come out against an enterprise officially termed a crusade: the campaign of pope John XXIII against king Ladislas of Naples. The financing of this "crusade" was partly based on the sale of indulgences, and against this Hus had inveighed even more strongly, thus antagonizing the Roman papacy.⁴ Pope John,

1. A chapter on the crusade of Varna is planned for volume V of this work, in preparation.

2. The history of these origins is presented most thoroughly in Howard Kaminsky's *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (cited as *Revolution*).

3. But see Seibt's questioning of these three motive elements in his *Hussitica*, pp. 5–6, 183 ff.

4. M. Spinka, *John Hus, a Biography*, (Princeton, 1968), pp. 132 ff.

indeed, was deposed on May 29, 1415, by the same council that was to have Hus burned so soon afterward. But Odo Colonna, who in 1417 was to replace John and his two rival popes, Gregory XII and Benedict XIII, and thus as pope Martin V effectively put an end to the Great Schism, was as determined to fight the ideas of Wyclif and Hus as his predecessors had been.⁵ Accordingly, early in 1418 he explicitly charged cardinal John Dominici with the preparations for a crusade.

Sigismund, at this stage, was not yet decided. Having taken from his older brother Wenceslas IV the dignity of "king of the Romans," he had long had his eyes also upon the kingdom of Bohemia, which Wenceslas had retained. During the years between 1415 and 1419 he tried to gain more influence on the Bohemian situation, but found himself in a difficult position. Hus had been executed in spite of the safe-conduct issued in his favor by Sigismund, and a large part of the Czech people, including many of the great lords, considered the king responsible for this. As early as September 1415 a passionate declaration in defense of Hus and his reforming ideas was signed by 452 prominent members of the Czech nobility, lords as well as knights. In response, the leaders of the Council of Constance put some pressure on Sigismund to act immediately, using force against this dangerously growing religious rebellion in the center of Europe; indeed, this seems to have been the origin of the idea of a great crusade against the Czech "heretics." Among the most active of the Catholic Czech prelates trying to suppress the rebellious movement in Bohemia was John "the Iron" (Jan Železný), bishop of Litomyšl, whom the council tried to make its legate to Bohemia. Sigismund was not yet willing to undertake any militant enterprise himself. Instead, he tried to persuade his brother Wenceslas to take vigorous action. For a time he had little success, since neither Wenceslas nor his queen Sophia was willing to take a strong position against the steadily growing reform movement. Above all, the statement of Prague University in March 1417 upholding the right of laymen to receive communion under both kinds, not only the bread but also the wine, made a vast impression,⁶ even though it went directly against the decisions of the Council of Constance.

During the early months of 1419, however, Wenceslas, partly under the pressure of his brother Sigismund, came to believe that his royal position would be in danger if he permitted the Hussite deviations,

5. Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, I, 48-49.

6. Kaminsky, *Revolution*, p. 266.

and especially the usage of the chalice, to become general. To prove his orthodoxy Wenceslas took the important but dangerous step of ejecting the Hussites (or "Utraquists") from all but one or two churches in Prague.⁷ This act of religious-political reaction led immediately to the open outbreak of a militant upheaval. One of the most vigorous of the revolutionary leaders, the former Premonstratensian monk John Želivský, on July 30 led a crowd of his followers to the city hall of the New Town of Prague, whose administration had only recently, on the king's order, been taken away from Hussites and put into the hands of reliable Catholics. What began as a parley turned into a bloody struggle in which most of the members of the city council were killed by being thrown out of the windows—the first "defenestration of Prague."⁸ This open act of rebellion infuriated king Wenceslas so much that he suffered a sequence of strokes, culminating in his death on August 16. The heir to his Bohemian kingdom, on the basis of normal dynastic succession, would be none other than Sigismund of Hungary, king of the Romans.

Sigismund, obviously, would do everything in his power to realize this claim. As a good orthodox Catholic he could hardly avoid trying to lead the people of Bohemia back toward orthodoxy. There was strong antagonism against him as the man considered responsible for the deaths of John Hus and his friend Jerome of Prague, although he repeatedly denied any such responsibility. But he was not without support among the Czech nobility, including even some men who had disapproved of the way in which he had handled the trial of Hus at Constance but who felt that they ought to be loyal to their "natural" king. An even more solid basis of support for Sigismund existed in a number of cities, not only those which, like Cheb, Kadaň, Chomutov, and Ústí in northwestern Bohemia, or Jihlava, Znojmo, Brno, and Olomouc in Moravia, were essentially German in character, but also cities in central Bohemia with a mixed population such as Kutná Hora, east of Prague, Bohemia's greatest center of silver mining and one of the main sources of regular income for the crown. Even if Sigismund had had no other important reason to march, as soon as possible, toward the very center of Bohemia, the chance of increasing his income from the Kutná Hora silver mines would have been of considerable interest to this ruler who was almost always in financial difficulties. And Sigismund was advised to do just that by some of the leading Catholic barons.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 267–268.

8. Kaminsky, "The Prague Insurrection of 30 July 1419," *Medievalia et humanistica*, XVII (1966), 106–126.

Yet he decided otherwise, partly under the influence of his Hungarian advisers. Having left Germany at the beginning of 1419 and arrived in Hungary in February and at Buda in August, he was now involved in renewed trouble with the Turks. They had gained a rather firm foothold in Bosnia and had invaded Hapsburg (Habsburg) territories such as Styria. It seemed to him urgent first to safeguard Hungary, especially since, at the time when he learned of Wenceslas's death, the Hungarian nobility had already made preparations for defense against the Ottomans. Whether there was—as is frequently assumed—a battle near Nish in Serbia is somewhat doubtful.⁹ However, it seems that Hungarian war preparations resulted temporarily in a reduction in Turkish activity, probably even in an armistice. Thereupon Sigismund finally decided in favor of establishing control over his new realm. In mid-December he arrived at Brno in Moravia, to which a diet of the estates of the Bohemian crown had been summoned. It was to be followed, in January 1420, by a Reichstag of the Holy Roman empire, to be held—somewhat unusually—also within the borders of the Bohemian realm, in Breslau, the leading city of Silesia.

It was high time if Sigismund wanted to gain the throne of Bohemia. The situation there was complex: splits had occurred not only between the Catholics and the party of reform, but also between two wings of the Hussites. In Prague, as well as in some regions south of it, a really revolutionary, radical movement, later generally called Taborite, had become more and more active and widespread, while other, more conservative groups, without giving up the claim for lay access to the chalice, were reluctant to deviate strongly from the Roman creed and ritual. Among the latter were some of the Utraquist masters at the University, as well as some prominent members of the high nobility, among whom the leading figure was the lord high burgrave Čeněk of Wartenberg, the chief official of the kingdom.¹⁰ He had been one of the 452 signatories of the protest note sent to Constance after Hus's execution, and in the following years he had done everything in his power to arrange for the ordination of Utraquist priests on his own estates and elsewhere in Bohemia.

The queen-dowager Sophia—whom Sigismund had, upon learning of his brother's death, appointed regent of the kingdom—had, still in

9. Aschbach, *Kaiser Sigmund*, II, 404–412.

10. Pekař, *Žižka a jeho doba*, III, 43 ff., and Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, I, 38 ff.

August 1419, in close coöperation with Čeněk, summoned a diet in Prague. With the agreement of all three estates (lords, gentry, and royal cities), the diet had formulated certain demands to which they insisted Sigismund accede before he would be accepted as king of Bohemia.¹¹ Among these demands was that for the freedom within the kingdom of communion under both kinds (*sub utraque specie*, hence the term "Utraquists" for its proponents). Moreover, the king must agree to intercede with the pope for the freedom of Hussite worship, and urge him to desist from any further denunciation of the Czech nation as heretical. Finally, he was required to promise to help toward reforms in the church, particularly regarding simony, and to disregard all papal bulls against Bohemia until a final accommodation between Sigismund and the Bohemian estates had been achieved. The king was also asked to avoid giving any offices to people (mostly Germans) who had been exiled under king Wenceslas, nor should foreigners, especially Germans, be given any administrative offices in the cities of Bohemia wherever Czechs were available. Sigismund never directly answered these demands.

During the months from August to December 1419 the leadership in Prague had undergone some weakening, primarily because John Žižka, formerly the captain of king Wenceslas's palace guard but soon the most active and most successful military leader of the revolutionary wing in Prague, had left the city. He had been in conflict with the city authorities ever since the latter had returned the great Vyšehrad castle, earlier occupied by Žižka's troupes, to the royalists. For some time Žižka had occupied the city of Pilsen, but he had eventually been forced to evacuate this important western center as well. Early in 1420 he established himself in the newly built fortress-town of Hradiště, thenceforth called Tábor. This new revolutionary center in the south of the country was, for a long time, to play a nearly decisive role in the Hussite movement.¹²

For Sigismund the existence of a radical wing seemed, in a way, to be a considerable advantage. Its hostility not only to him as king but also to the whole institution of the Catholic church would strengthen the support that he could expect from Rome. But he was not satisfied with struggling against radicalism. He was determined also to destroy those less radical deviations which might make his situation difficult. And in executing this policy he immediately aroused great

11. *Archiv český*, III, 206–208; also Bartoš, *op. cit.*, pp. 72 ff., and Heymann, *John Žižka and the Hussite Revolution*, pp. 70 ff. (cited as *Žižka*).

12. Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 87–88, 94 ff.; Kaminsky, *Revolution*, pp. 334 ff.; and especially Macek, *Tábor v husitském revolučním hnutí*, in both volumes.

hostility. While he hoped to split the Czech Utraquists, his harshness tended in fact to unite them.

At first he seemed to be doing well, concluding a compact with Čeněk of Wartenberg, whose control of the Hradčany, the main castle largely dominating the left bank of the Vltava (Moldau) river, gave the king a potentially strong position in relation to the city. For a time it seemed that not only Čeněk but also other leading barons, including lord Ulrich of Rosenberg, who had formerly been Čeněk's ward and was to play a most important role later, could enjoy access to the chalice as well as the benevolent understanding of the king. This tolerance seemingly prevailed also at the December (1419) diet of the Bohemian estates at Brno.¹³ To this assembly the city of Prague sent representatives, who asked forgiveness for earlier acts of resistance and promised to do homage, but requested the right to defend publicly their understanding of the faith, especially the chalice for the laity. Sigismund's answer was harsh. He demanded, before anything else, the complete removal of all recent structures for military defense. On their embassy's return, the majority of the people of Prague felt that they had no choice but to obey the king. If he had immediately gone on to Prague, even with his relatively modest army, he would have had a chance of gaining an easy and perhaps decisive victory.

Sigismund, however, against the advice of the Czech Catholic nobles, decided that he would not go to Prague until he had held the Reichstag in Breslau and could afterward approach the Bohemian capital with a truly large and powerful army. It was a fateful decision, but one which he made rather too early. While in Brno he had seemed to be willing, especially in his discussions with the nobility, to consider the issue of the chalice as an open question. Immediately upon his arrival in Breslau his whole attitude changed.¹⁴ In a substantial correspondence with some of the German cities in Bohemia and Lusatia during February and March the king urged preparation for war against the "heretics."¹⁵ Finally, on March 17, 1420, the papal legate, Ferdinand, bishop of Lucena, read from the pulpit the text of the bull *Omnium plasmatoris domini*,¹⁶ which solemnly proclaimed a crusade with the task of exterminating all "Wyclifites, Hussites, other heretics, and those favoring, accept-

13. Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 105-107.

14. For the main events at the Breslau Reichstag, see *RTA*, vol. VII.

15. Palacký, *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte der Hussitenkriege*, I, 15 ff. and later (cited as *U.B.*).

16. *U.B.*, I, 17-18.

ing, and defending such heresies," with the usual addition that men fighting this war for the cross would thereby expiate all their sins. The bull was dated March 1 and had been sent from Florence (where pope Martin at this time had taken refuge)¹⁷ directly to Breslau upon the request of Sigismund. The king added, in several specific orders, the command that the armies entering Bohemia should kill anyone practising such heresy and not immediately recanting.¹⁸ Sigismund's intentions had been expressed even earlier (on March 6) when he ordered the public execution of twenty-three guild members of Breslau who had, in July 1418, rebelled against the patrician city council.¹⁹ Another victim of an especially cruel public execution was a Prague citizen called Krása who refused to recant his support of the teachings of Hus.²⁰

These actions were carefully watched at Prague, as well as by the one leading Czech nobleman from whom Sigismund had expected support as long as he himself and his family were not prevented from taking communion under both kinds: Čeněk of Wartenberg. The baron was treated, by the king, with extreme friendliness,²¹ but as soon as he left Breslau he joined in a solemn declaration which the councillors of the Old and the New Town²² had issued after a meeting on April 3,²³ making it clear that Bohemia's capital no longer considered meek surrender to Sigismund's demands desirable. On the contrary, Prague strengthened its defenses, and sent a message to all cities of the kingdom condemning the crusading bull as "a vile and venomous serpent's egg hatched by this church who had long before shown herself to be not a mother but a vicious stepmother to the Czech people." Besides joining with the Prague Hussites, radicals as well as moderates, in their opposition to Sigismund's Breslau policy, Čeněk added the considerable power of the Hradčany castle. Having renounced all fealty to Sigismund, he sent out on April 20 a manifesto to all Bohemians and Moravians in which the king was characterized as "the great enemy of the Czech kingdom and nation who wants cruelly to exterminate it."²⁴ In consequence, three days

17. Creighton, *The Papacy*, II, 138 ff.

18. *U.B.*, I, 24–25, 28–29.

19. There is no proof that the rebellion of 1418 had any connection with events in Bohemia. For details see Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, I, 85–86, and the sources cited in his note 88.

20. Lawrence of Březová, "Kronika husitská," ed. Goll, in vol. V of *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum* (Prague, 1893), pp. 358–359 (cited as Březová).

21. Windecke, *Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte Kaiser Sigismunds*, ed. Altmann (Berlin, 1893), pp. 130–131 (cited as Altmann, *Windecke*).

22. Březová, p. 363.

23. Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 112–113.

24. *Archiv český*, III, 210.

later a majority of the lords and knights sent their challenge to the king. This, surely, was not the development which Sigismund, by his crusading policy, had intended and expected.

He did not, however, give up his attempts to divide the Hussite population of Bohemia. He hoped that he could still gain support among the high nobility, and astonishingly enough after a very short time won over Čeněk, as well as his young friend Ulrich of Rosenberg.²⁵ Thereby Sigismund regained not only the Hradčany castle but also a much greater freedom of action. At the head of an army of about 20,000 men he had meanwhile moved, early in May (1420), to Hradec Králové, an important, thoroughly Czech and Hussite city which however did not at this stage dare to resist. From there he went on to Kutná Hora, where the patricians and the German miners as well as many refugees, mainly Catholic clerics, greeted him enthusiastically. Meanwhile, temporarily protected by an armistice between the city and the royalist barons, including Čeněk, another Prague embassy went to Kutná Hora.²⁶ Its reception by Sigismund was largely a repetition of what had happened five months earlier in Brno: the Prague representatives promised surrender and even willingness to make some breaches in the walls provided they could retain access to the chalice. The king, angrily, went one step farther than he had at Brno: not only must all barricades and fortifications be removed, but the people of Prague must surrender all their weapons to the royalist garrisons of the Hradčany and Vyšehrad castles, thus leaving themselves completely defenseless.

The report given by the members of the Prague city embassy upon their return home made it clear that, unless a totally hopeless unconditional surrender (and with it the loss of access to the chalice) was decided upon, the only alternative was armed resistance to the king. There was a united decision for the latter, but it was clear that Prague had to secure support from other parts of the kingdom. This came from more than one region, but none as strong and effective as that sent by the fortress-town of Tábor, some 9,000 men (perhaps including noncombatants) led by John Žižka. Without him and his army the fate of Prague, and with it of Hussite Bohemia, might have been quite different.

The crusading army which Sigismund led to Prague was large and included contingents from many countries. One of our best informed

25. Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 117–118; Pekař, *Žižka a jeho doba*, III, 43 ff.; and Březová, pp. 365 ff.

26. Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 120–121, and also the sources cited there in note 27.

sources, the chronicle of the Prague city secretary Lawrence of Březová,²⁷ names among the members of the crusading army various German-speaking groups, all the ethnic groups of the kingdom of Hungary, other southeastern peoples like Bulgarians, Serbians, and Wallachians, several representatives of the Slavic east like Poles, Russians, and Ruthenians, and finally from the west the Dutch, Swiss, English, French, Aragonese, and other Spaniards. (The omission of Italians was certainly a slip.) Březová's claim that this army grew to 150,000 men is surely much exaggerated; on this issue a source from Sigismund's camp, the chronicle of his financial adviser and biographer Eberhart Wendecke, speaks of 80,000, still a rather high figure though perhaps not quite impossible. In any case even this, for medieval times, enormous army would have had difficulties in conquering a strongly fortified city like Prague, with a population of some 40,000 inhabitants (the emigration of Germans and anti-Hussites was roughly offset by the addition of the troops of the Czech allies). The history of the later Middle Ages shows hardly any examples, with the remarkable exception of Constantinople, of the conquest of great, well-defended cities. But the very size of the population—and 40,000 was, for the time, a large population—could have its disadvantages, if the aggressor succeeded in maintaining a truly effective siege which would prevent the city from being sufficiently supplied, particularly with food.

The situation of Prague was dangerous. The two great castles were in the hands of the royalists, and attempts of the Hussites to conquer the Hradčany before the crusading army established itself outside the city had failed. The Hradčany dominated the accesses to the west and southwest, the Vyšehrad those to the southeast, while the main body of the crusaders' army had built a large tent city to the north across the Vltava on what today is called the Letná. Prague, therefore, was open to the outside world only as long as the roads to the rich valley of the upper Elbe were free. In the neighborhood of Prague they were dominated by a longish hill east of the city, called the Vítkov, whose southern slopes were covered with vineyards. If this hill could be occupied and upheld by the crusaders, it would indeed make the siege effective. Sigismund planned the occupation of the Vítkov as his first and most promising stroke, but Žižka anticipated the king's intentions and acted accordingly.²⁸ He ordered the building of a small but well situated bulwark consisting

27. Březová, pp. 383–384; also other sources given in detail in Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 136 ff.

28. See, on the battle on the Vítkov, *ibid.*, chapter 9 (pp. 136–147).

of two wooden forts, whose main purpose was to keep the defenders in constant readiness and to warn Žižka's Taborite army in case of an attack.

This offensive strike did indeed occur, on July 14 (1420), when several thousand troops, largely cavalry from Meissen and Thuringia, as well as some from Hungary, crossed the Vltava river at its easternmost point and attacked the Vítkov hill from the east, at its least steep slope. While they occupied part of the fortifications, Žižka with his Taborite soldiers climbed the southern slope and made a surprise flank attack. The crusaders fled after a number of them, apparently about five hundred, had been killed. Žižka followed up his victory by building stronger fortifications on the hill.

The defeat on the Vítkov was, in itself, only a limited one. Most of the crusaders' army had not seen action and might still have been used in renewed assaults. However, the Czech Catholic lords in Sigismund's entourage tried to convince him that, after the failure of the Vítkov battle, he would have a better chance of winning Prague by political means. They persuaded him not to bombard the city with heavy artillery, as he had planned, and assured him that within one month Prague would be in his hands. When the king expressed doubts, they promised him that as a first step he would be crowned by archbishop Conrad in St. Vitus's cathedral on the Hradčany. In Sigismund's eyes this seemed to be a substantial success: the official coronation which, traditionally and in the eyes of the high nobility, would make him legally the king of Bohemia. The coronation took place on July 28, 1420.

This, however, soon proved to be the only success that Sigismund would achieve during this phase of the crusading war against the Hussites. The general morale deteriorated rapidly. The crusaders did, whenever they had a chance, catch and kill people who were suspected of being heretics, regardless of their age and sex, whereas the Czechs were, with rare exceptions, careful to spare the lives of women and children all through the Hussite wars. However, since the killing and burning took place in the crusaders' camp within sight of the Praguers, who were separated from the enemy only by the limited width of the Vltava river, the Czechs decided to burn sixteen German prisoners within view of the enemy. In the crusaders' encampment, during an unusually hot summer, epidemics killed men and horses in large numbers. The German princes and their soldiers became even more impatient, and the suspicion spread that the king was in secret agreement with the Hussites.

For Sigismund the situation became doubly difficult. His cash

reserves for the payment of the German and Hungarian mercenaries had already been exhausted, and his earlier expectation of getting money or precious metals from the hoped-for conquest of Prague was soon completely disappointed. To deal with the danger of open rebellion among the soldiers he recklessly confiscated all the precious metals and jewelry to be found in the cathedral of St. Vitus and in other churches on the Hradčany,²⁹ which barely sufficed to pay his debts. By the end of July the German princes returned to their lands, and Sigismund himself raised the siege and went, with his now limited army of about 16,000 men, to Kutná Hora. His only significant military enterprise in the following weeks was a strong attempt to relieve the Vyšehrad castle, to which the Praguers had laid siege in September, since in royal hands it could still have military as well as, perhaps, political influence. However, the king, as usual, was late in his movements, waiting for troops expected from royalist nobles of Moravia. On November 1 a battle took place between Sigismund's army and a Hussite army³⁰ led by lord Hynek Krušina of Lichtenburg, the military leader of a growing brotherhood in eastern Bohemia called Orebites (after Mount Horeb), whose structure was rather similar to that of Tábor. Krušina had been asked to take over the leadership of the Prague forces when the Taborites under Žižka had left for the south in late August; Tábor sent only a small contingent to help in this struggle near Prague. The battle was won by the Hussites, with even heavier royalist losses than at the battle on the Vítkov, especially among the Moravian nobles.

Meanwhile the Taborites had made considerable gains in southern and western Bohemia, and had weakened especially the position of Ulrich of Rosenberg, Sigismund's strongest ally in Bohemia, who was forced to conclude an armistice on terms dictated by Žižka. At the beginning of 1421 the king made another attempt to regain a broader basis in Bohemia, especially in the west where he received some German support. However, when the combined armies of Tábor and Prague approached, he did not dare risk another battle. He moved eastward, making a wide detour through northern Bohemia, and in March he left Bohemia and Moravia altogether. For some time minor fights occurred, skirmishes between Hussites and Catholic Bohemians and invasions from neighboring territories, including Silesia and Lusatia, both dependencies of the Bohemian crown.

On the whole, however, with Sigismund out of the country and even the offshoots of the first great crusade withering in utter failure,

29. Březová, p. 396.

30. Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 175–180, with a source bibliography in note 22 on p. 178.

the position of the Hussites was enormously strengthened. The surrender of the Vyšehrad was followed, a few months later, by that of the Hradčany. Prague had been able to hold out with the two great castles still in enemy hands, so its defenses were now even stronger. The royalist party, realizing this, and seeing Žižka and the Taborites still active, especially in southern and western Bohemia, hardly dared to show itself. It was characteristic that Čeněk of Wartenberg, concerned for his rich possessions and no longer expecting the king to win out, turned back, for the second time, to the Hussites.³¹ He was not the only leading baron to do this, but it was perhaps of even greater significance that Conrad of Vechta, the German-born archbishop of Prague, who only recently had crowned Sigismund king of Bohemia, joined the Hussite side and declared his adherence to the "Four Articles of Prague."

These articles were increasingly the unifying basic charter of the revolutionaries.³² They demanded freedom of preaching, the offering of the chalice to laymen, the restriction of the priesthood to its religious duties without any power or wealth, and the proper punishment of all public mortal sins. The Four Articles were also solemnly confirmed by a great diet which was held at Čáslav in early June 1421 and which, through the strong representation of the estates of Bohemia and Moravia, had all the characteristics of a national assembly.³³ This meeting deposed Sigismund, claiming that he had "never been accepted as king," and that he was a "notorious despiser of the sacred truths proven from the Scriptures" and "the deadly enemy of the honor and the people of the Czech nation." The assembly also appointed a regency council of twenty men representing the three estates, including especially the cities of Prague and Tábor.

The council was given only a limited time for operation since there was already a strong hope that grand duke Alexander Vitold of Lithuania, a cousin of king Vladislav II (Władysław, in Polish) Jagiello of Poland, would accept the crown of Bohemia, which was offered to him in repeated negotiations. The seeming willingness of Vitold, not completely shared by Vladislav, was largely a reaction to the fact that at the Reichstag of Breslau king Sigismund had, in arbitrating between Poland-Lithuania and the order of Teutonic Knights over the fate of the province of Samogitia, decided essentially in favor of the Knights. For a rather long time Sigismund was considered an

31. *Ibid.*, p. 217, and Březová, p. 483.

32. Heymann, *Žižka*, chapter 10 (pp. 148-163), and Bartoš, *Do čtyř artykulu* (Prague, 1926).

33. Heymann, "The National Assembly of Čáslav," *Medievalia et humanistica*, VIII (1954), 32-55; also in *Žižka*, pp. 220-240; and cf. Seibt, *Hussitica*, pp. 167-176.

enemy by the two Jagiellon princes, who were therefore willing to help his opponents, yet they tried not to annoy the pope, claiming that their real goal was to lead the Czech schismatics back to proper Roman orthodoxy.³⁴

Pope Martin, however, did not believe that such a peaceable solution of the Hussite movement was either possible or desirable. From the beginning he had been convinced that the only way to deal with the "Wicelista et Hussitae" was to destroy them. Originally there was hardly any difference in this respect between the pope and Sigismund; again and again the Hussite spokesmen, in as wide a representation as that at the diet of Čáslav, accused the king of having the complete destruction of the whole nation as his goal. Since eventually he wanted to rule over the Czechs, have them work for him, and tax them, we may doubt that he really planned such a total annihilation. In fact, under the influence of the Czech barons in his entourage, he had refused to go as far in his attack upon Prague as the German princes had demanded. As a result, a lack of confidence in Sigismund's determination to destroy the "heresy" developed steadily in several circles in the empire, even among some of the German electors. There was also in Rome, if not exactly suspicion of Sigismund's orthodoxy and devotion to the church of Rome, then at least doubt as to his true intentions. From then on the holy see, far from giving up the idea of an effective crusade, strengthened the propaganda for this policy.

It cannot be denied that Martin V himself was a strong personality with a clear consciousness of what he considered to be his sacred duty.³⁵ His many briefs written to those involved in the intended crusades—king Sigismund, the electors, king Vladislav of Poland, grand duke Vitold of Lithuania, the grand master of the Teutonic Knights, Michael Küchenmeister of Sternberg, duke Albert of Austria, and a good many others—are generally impressive.³⁶ He also chose, as his helpers and especially as his legates, men of a rather high caliber, such as bishop Ferdinand of Lucena, who had accompanied Sigismund as legate during the whole phase of the 1420 crusade. He was present at the siege of Prague, and during the last phase, shortly

34. J. Goll, *Čechy a Prusy ve středověku*, (Prague, 1897), pp. 151 ff.

35. Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, I (7th ed., Freiburg, 1925), 223–224, 290 ff.; also Creighton, *A History of the Papacy*, II, 135 ff., 163.

36. These can be found in the Vatican Archives. Few have been published, but 511 are calendared in K. A. Fink, "Die politische Korrespondenz Martins V. nach den Brevenregistern," *Quellen und Forschungen, Preussisches historisches Institut*, XXVI (Rome, 1935–1936), 172–244.

before the battle on the Vítkov, he was involved in an attempt to discuss the Four Articles with some of the leading masters of the University, especially the very nearly orthodox John Přibram, with the purpose of convincing the more moderate Utraquist theologians that they ought to return to the orthodox faith.³⁷ It may be that this action, even though it ended in complete deadlock, annoyed the pope, and it seems that he also held his legate at least partially responsible for the whole pitiful failure of the first crusade. He decided to replace bishop Ferdinand as legate to the empire with a man of more diplomatic experience and a higher clerical rank, cardinal Branda of Castiglione.³⁸

The fact that, after the failure of the 1420 crusade, another campaign was started at a relatively early date was due largely to the energy of Branda, and to the considerable influence he managed to gain, especially upon the German prince-electors. Sigismund had to appear eager for renewed action, if for no other reason than to prove that the rumor of his secret understanding with the heretics was wrong, as in fact it was. At the end of November 1420 the king sent out letters to princes and cities suggesting the holding of a Reichstag, which after many difficulties met in April 1421 at Nuremberg, but in Sigismund's absence and with little success. The initiative slipped, with the strong support of the legate, ever more clearly into the hands of the Rhenish electors—the three archbishops of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne, and the palgrave Louis of Wittelsbach—who on April 23 concluded a union directed against the Hussites and promising support for the king in his actions,³⁹ subject, however, to a prior understanding based on the consensus of the four electors. A subsequent meeting of the electors at Wesel in May tried, with rather limited success, to gain promises of military support from the imperial cities, a procedure which was repeated with greater results at Mainz in June. Finally, in July, the planning that had begun at the previous meetings was set down in detail at a conference at Boppard on the Rhine. By this time a powerful alliance had been created which could put considerable pressure on Sigismund. While the king did not take part personally in any of the negotiations, he sent to Mainz and Boppard, as his special representative with far-reaching powers, his chancellor George, bishop of Passau. The bishop expressed to the electors the full agreement of the king, as well as his

37. See, on this, Pekař, *Žižka*, III, 69–72, and Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 157–163.

38. See, on him, Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, I, 283 ff., and Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, I, 148.

39. *RTA*, VIII, 28 ff.

promise to coöperate fully with the German princes so as to make the new crusade as effective and powerful as possible.

There was a prelude to the crusade proper: an invasion on the part of Frederick of Wettin, margrave of Meissen, into northern Bohemia, where a Hussite army led by John Želivský was trying to conquer the Catholic and ethnically German city of Most. The collision of the two armies on August 5 (1421) led, for the first time, to a painful defeat of the Hussites,⁴⁰ and might have helped toward the success of the crusade if there had been sufficient coöperation among their opponents. The Meissen army left Bohemia when they were informed that a Hussite force was approaching, led by Žižka, although the Taborite general had recently lost his eyesight. Meanwhile the far larger German army had crossed the Bohemian border in the region of Cheb in late August. The total number was alleged to be at least 125,000 men, as usual an exaggeration.⁴¹ After considerable destruction and indiscriminate killing of all Czechs except small children,⁴² detachments of the army occupied the towns of Kadaň and Chomutov. The main body, however, moved eastward in the direction of Prague, but stopped about September 10 to besiege the city of Žatec. The expectation was clearly that Sigismund with his predominately Hungarian troops was about to start his own invasion of Bohemia, thus forcing the Czechs to defend themselves in several regions of their country at the same time. He procrastinated, to the bitter disappointment of the German forces and their leaders, the princes and bishops. The siege of Žatec, though it was a far smaller city, began to resemble the siege of Prague the year before.⁴³ After enduring three weeks of siege and several ineffective assaults, the Žatec garrison undertook a successful sortie. Early in October the news came that a strong Czech army, again with Žižka as one of the leaders, was on its way to attack the besiegers of Žatec. The result was, strangely enough, a frantic retreat from Žatec, during which the Czech garrison pursued the Germans and inflicted considerable losses upon them. The German princes, who had done little to stop the stampede, blamed Sigismund's absence for this second debacle, whereas the king on his part was most disappointed and angry to hear of the retreat when he finally invaded Moravia in October, only a short time after the German crusading army had left Bohemia.⁴⁴

40. Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 248–253, with contemporary sources in notes 12 and 13.

41. See, *ibid.*, p. 273, note 20.

42. See the report from Nuremberg to Ulm, *U.B.*, I, no. 134, p. 144.

43. Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 274 ff.

44. *U.B.*, I, 159–163.

There is no doubt that Sigismund favored the strategy of combined operations from west and east, but he wanted to have an army of overwhelming strength, and this took more time than he had originally expected. He might have been wiser if, under these circumstances, he had stopped the whole campaign and replanned it for the next year, but he had, by then, spent a good deal of money on the enterprise. So he decided to invade the kingdom with an army which was still very strong, and not to worry about the lateness of the season.⁴⁵ Though he maintained the role of supreme commander, he left many of the decisions, and especially the tactical details, to the Florentine condottiere Philip Scolari (created by Sigismund count of Ozora), usually called Pipo Spano, who had proved his gifts as a general repeatedly in fights with the Turks, and who was in command of the Hungarian troops. Among them, as usual, light cavalry was to play an important role. It was Pipo Spano who, still in the first half of October (1421), entered Moravia, joining up in its northern region with a small army raised by John "the Iron," the vigorous anti-Hussite bishop of Olomouc (formerly of Litomyšl), and soon afterward also with troops from Silesia and Lusatia led by bishop Conrad of Breslau and some other Silesian princes.

Sigismund himself, who had entered Moravia on October 16, moved very slowly, gaining some additional strength through the arrival of Austrian troops under his son-in-law Albert of Hapsburg. It appears that at this stage the king had altogether an army of about fifty thousand, almost one third of whom consisted of Hungarian cavalry. He might have had a good chance now, since even after the withdrawal of the German crusaders in the west the situation of the Hussites was far from good. The Taborites under Žižka were engaged in a difficult struggle with the royalists organized in the so-called "Landfrieden" of Pilsen, while the Prague forces, at the time commanded by a young and inexperienced squire called John Hvězda of Vícemilice who had been made captain-general by Želivský, had limited strength and would hardly have been able to deal with an army the size of Pipo Spano's.

But Sigismund, far from acting fast, tried first to establish his position in Moravia by political means. He summoned a diet at which a majority of the Moravian nobility, including those who had taken part in the assembly of Čáslav, renounced their previous actions.⁴⁶ They were also forced to condemn the Four Articles as heresy and to

45. See, for this whole exciting campaign, *ibid.*, chapter 18 (pp. 286–306), with references to the main sources.

46. *U.B.*, I, 166–171.

swear never to adhere to them again. Sigismund did not gain anything by this policy, since nothing was so apt to unite the Hussites as a renewed attack upon the Four Articles. Moreover, the king spent almost four weeks in Moravia, mainly in Brno and Jihlava, both Catholic and mostly German cities, before he finally entered Bohemia. His first goal, understandably, was Kutná Hora. This city had previously joined the Hussites within the Prague league of cities, but the German-Catholic majority of the city's population hoped to be liberated by the king, who had managed to form strong contacts with the leading Germans within the city. The royalist army, however, took another twenty days to march from Jihlava to the region of Kutná Hora (a distance of less than fifty miles), still expecting more reinforcements. En route, the crusading army, especially the Hungarians, committed as much destruction, killing, and raping among the Czech people as possible.⁴⁷

The events from late October to mid-December 1421, as Sigismund's activities became known throughout Bohemia, were bound to unite the Hussites, as always happened when their land and faith seemed in real danger. Just as they had done at the time of the 1420 crusade, the Praguers asked for help from the Taborites, and again Žižka responded promptly. The enthusiasm of his reception in Prague established his position as commander-in-chief of all Hussite troops. Again the old soldier anticipated the king's intentions, and marched with his combined forces—the field armies of Taborites and Orebiters and the troops and militias of Prague and of the cities under its suzerainty—toward Kutná Hora.⁴⁸ When the royal army approached from the west on December 21 Žižka stationed his own troops outside the gates, and there was a prolonged fight which does not seem to have had any important consequences. Žižka was not aware that in the meantime the Kutnohorian Germans, in an understanding with the royalists, had planned a massacre of all Hussite Czechs in the city, after which they opened the gates to such royalist troops as had been able to approach the city at nightfall. By this bloody maneuver, planned and directed by Pipo Spano, the Czech army found itself suddenly surrounded. The situation looked nearly hopeless, but Žižka managed, by using his guns as field artillery,⁴⁹ to

47. Březová, pp. 531–532.

48. See, on the battle of Kutná Hora, in addition to the general sources J. Durdík, *Husitské vojenství* (Prague, 1953), pp. 145–148, and Heymann, "Kutná Hora—Malešov, Dva problémy topografie Žižkových bitev [Two problems of the topography of Žižka's battles]," *Československý časopis historický*, no. 9 (1961), pp. 75–81.

49. This is the first case of the use of field artillery which can be proved from the sources. See Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 294–296, which cites the sources.

force a breach in the enemy lines and to escape from the iron ring. There was no pursuit; Sigismund was, at the moment, satisfied with having gained Bohemia's second most important city, and was even so sure of himself that he sent a Polish nobleman as an emissary to Prague demanding its surrender. He was not successful.

Meanwhile the king, who had established his headquarters in Kutná Hora and was feeling close to victory, had to find quarters for his army. It was an early and cold winter and he could not expect his soldiers to camp in the open. There was not enough space for the army in Kutná Hora, and so its contingents were distributed among the villages in the region roundabout, with a somewhat stronger unit established at the large village of Nebovidy halfway between Kutná Hora and Kolín.

It was at Kolín that Žižka had halted after his retreat and planned his further steps, including a good deal of additional recruiting, especially in the Orebite region, where he was very popular. In early January 1422 his numerical strength was no longer so inferior to that of the royalists, and he had his troops together whereas the royalists were dispersed. On January 6 Žižka began his own offensive, striking first at the royalist troops at Nebovidy. Completely unprepared, they could not resist long, and soon were in headlong flight. Žižka's army, in hot pursuit, approached Kutná Hora. Sigismund, seeing himself in danger of being surrounded there, decided to leave immediately, and since the Bohemian and Moravian barons whom he asked to defend the precious city refused, he ordered that it be evacuated and put to the torch. Before the order could be obeyed Žižka's army arrived. While the fleeing German Catholics tried to keep up with the king's army, the Czech inhabitants returned. In the further retreat south-eastward Sigismund's reassembled army made an attempt, on January 8, to stand up to the Czechs at the little town of Habry, but this battle, again, ended with a complete defeat of the royal troops. The next stop was at the city of Německý Brod, on the Sázava river near the Moravian border. Here another attempt at resistance was made by the king's army; it was sufficient to cover his own retreat, freeing him from personal danger,⁵⁰ but after a short siege the Hussites took and burned Německý Brod. The royalist army, having lost several

50. The "Old Annalists" (in Palacký's edition, see the most recent issue, "Staří letopisové čeští," in *Dílo Frant. Palackého*, II [Prague, 1941], 61) reports that no fewer than 548 Hungarian soldiers drowned when attempting to cross the Sázava river by riding across the current. This was taken as a fact by most historians, including the present writer (*Žižka*, pp. 301-302). At a later visit to this neighborhood I became rather doubtful about it, since the Sázava river below Německý Brod (now Havlíčkův Brod) appeared to me too narrow and too shallow to play the role of a Berezina.

thousand men and nearly all its ample materiel, no longer existed. Sigismund went first to Brno, where he could reasonably feel safe, and soon afterward returned to Hungary. It was the greatest defeat he had suffered since the catastrophe of Nicopolis a quarter of a century before.

Žižka's victory over Sigismund, after the failure of the first part of the 1421 crusade in western Bohemia, not only had great military significance; it also influenced the political situation. Ever since the spring of 1420, there had been negotiations between the Hussites and king Vladislav of Poland and grand duke Vitold of Lithuania, concerning the possibility that one of them might accept the crown of St. Wenceslas.⁵¹ Vladislav had never actually contemplated such a step, even though he felt bitter about Sigismund's decision against him and in favor of the Teutonic order. Vitold, on the other hand, seriously considered the offer to become king of Bohemia, although he was unwilling to approve the Four Articles, which the Czechs asked him to accept and protect. The Bohemian estates had actually elected (or, as it was called, "postulated") him at a diet held at Kutná Hora in August 1421, when the situation of Hussite Bohemia did not seem promising. A second crusade was imminent, as everybody knew. The fate of the first crusade had not convinced most observers that the second, too, would be a total failure. On the contrary, the pope, his legate, king Sigismund, and the German princes had all been optimistic about the outcome of the impending invasion. Vitold was cautious enough not to burden himself with the military, political, and theological dangers which close coöperation with the "heretics" would entail.

Vladislav went even further, offering Sigismund Polish support against the Czechs if Sigismund would revise his Breslau award. However, this possibility disappeared when a Czech embassy sent to Poland and Lithuania was arrested by the duke of Ratibor and extradited to Sigismund, to the extreme anger of Vitold himself and of a large number of the Polish and Lithuanian gentry.⁵² Above all, the second crusade, both the early western part involving the electors and the later part directed by Sigismund himself, left little doubt of Hussite Bohemia's ability to withstand even a large-scale invasion. Vitold now took a step which he had been considering for some time. He declared, in a letter to pope Martin dated March 5, 1422,⁵³

51. About this and the ensuing diplomatic developments see Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, I, 177 ff., and Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 165–166, 269 ff., 319 ff.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 320–321, and the documents cited there in notes 6–8.

53. *U.B.*, I, 186 ff.

that from then on he would take the Czechs under his protection in order to lead the schismatics back to the church of Rome, and that for this purpose he was going to send his nephew Sigismund (son of) Korybut to Bohemia as his representative. He did so, but prince Korybut was much less prudent than the grand duke, claiming the country as Vitold's, and presenting himself as the regent representing the "postulated king."

As was to be expected, Sigismund considered this a particularly nasty way of depriving him of his legitimate crown, and he complained bitterly to the pope, feeling that the holy see had not been diligent enough to prevent this step. The pope reacted very strongly with a whole range of letters to Vladislav, to Vitold, to archbishop Nicholas Tramba of Gniezno (Gnesen), and to Sigismund, protesting to the latter his innocence regarding Vitold's step. At the same time the pope again urged the king, directly and through cardinal Branda, to deal with the heretics by means of another, a third, crusade.⁵⁴ It was hardly possible for Sigismund not to agree to this plan. But he had been sufficiently burned to avoid any personal involvement this time. He did go so far as to attend a Reichstag which he had summoned to Regensburg, but which the electors, in considerable disagreement with him, had convened in Nuremberg, supported again by the papal legate cardinal Branda.⁵⁵ The latter tried his best to concentrate all efforts upon another crusade, but serious difficulty arose from the fact that king Vladislav of Poland had become involved, in mid-July, in another war with the Teutonic Knights. The electors wrote to the king of Poland, demanding that he and his cousin Vitold recall prince Korybut from Bohemia, cease altogether any support to the "heretics," and instead of war against the Teutonic Knights help wage war against the Czechs.⁵⁶ Sigismund, who had long encouraged the order to military action against Poland, went farther, and made them the somewhat astonishing promise to lead Hungarian and Silesian troops against the Poles.

The elector least willing to play this game was Frederick of Hohenzollern, margrave of Brandenburg, who had for some time established close ties with the house of Jagiello. He hoped to make this friendship even warmer and politically more promising by a marriage of his son Frederick to Jadwiga, a daughter of Vladislav, who was, at that time, still without a male heir. This approach to Poland was one of the reasons for the bitter feeling of disappointment and even hatred

54. *U.B.*, I, 194–196, 199–214, and *RTA*, VIII, 119–121.

55. *RTA*, VIII, 122 ff., 125 ff., 140 ff.

56. Aschbach, *Geschichte Kaiser Sigmunds*, III, 155–156, notes 25 ff.

which Sigismund, once the warm friend and protector of the Hohenzollern prince, now harbored toward Frederick. He also held him, perhaps not quite without justification, responsible for the steadily growing distrust and opposition to him among the majority of the electors.⁵⁷ But just for this reason, and surely remembering what had happened two decades earlier to his brother Wenceslas at the hand of the electors, Sigismund felt all the more bound to reestablish, if only on the surface, a tolerable relationship with Frederick of Brandenburg.

Suggestions from some princes that the Germans and Hungarians begin open war against Poland were rejected not only by Frederick and others of his colleagues but above all by cardinal Branda, who never tired of asking for the immediate organization of another crusade against the Hussites. Pope Martin supported him by ordering the German clergy to tax themselves.⁵⁸ The hope of financing the whole campaign by the so-called "hundredth penny" met strong resistance among the cities, and instead the diet decided for a so-called taxation "according to the most equal and best," which left a good many principalities and cities more or less free from taxation. Even so the crusading army, while weaker than the preceding one, was respectable, and it was put under the command of an experienced and gifted soldier, Frederick of Brandenburg. On September 4, 1422, in Nuremberg's St. Sebaldus church, Branda presented Sigismund with a banner personally blessed by the pope, and the king passed it on to the generalissimo—with whom he had, at least superficially, reestablished the old friendship—while a detailed written instruction gave Frederick a great deal of power.⁵⁹

Crusading armies were to enter Bohemia from the north as well as the west.⁶⁰ The first was that of William of Meissen, who early in October (1422) succeeded in conquering the city of Chomutov. Lusatian and Silesian forces were to strengthen this army. Toward the middle of October forces immediately under Frederick's command, particularly troops from Brandenburg and from the bishoprics of Würzburg and Bamberg, crossed the border from Tirschenreuth, joining near Tachov with Bohemian Catholics (the "Landfrieden" of Pilsen) as well as the troops of the city of Cheb. Additional forces

57. This whole issue is treated well and in considerable detail by Erich Brandenburg in his early book, *König Sigmund und Kurfürst Friedrich I von Brandenburg* (Berlin, 1891), especially in chapter VII, pp. 119 ff.

58. *RTA*, VIII, 181–182.

59. See *RTA*, VIII, 184, and *U.B.*, I, 236 ff. Other sources are given in Bezold, *König Sigmund*, I, 96, 97, note 5.

60. See, for what follows, Heymann, *Žižka*, especially pp. 347–353, notes 21 to 31, with bibliography. The most detailed treatment is in Bezold, *König Sigmund*, I, 90–130.

from German cities, chiefly the armies of the electors of the Palatinate and of Cologne, were to join the western army. Among the immediate goals was the relief of the Catholic garrison of the great castle of Karlstein, the only strong fortress in central Bohemia to have been held by the royalists since the beginning of the struggle. The castle had been put under siege by Korybut fairly soon after he had, as Vitold's representative, taken over the regency of Bohemia.

This third crusade, while weaker in manpower than the second, had at least one advantage at its very beginning: a growing disagreement within the Hussite camp. Korybut had, in Prague as well as in some other cities, established a government which intended to eliminate all the more radical elements. This, of course, was desired by the two rulers to whom he was, to some extent, responsible, and who tried to maintain a satisfactory relationship with the papacy. A Bohemia ruled by the more radical elements, especially by the Taborites and their adherents in Prague, would never agree to a compromise with Rome, one of the hopes nourished by Vitold as well as by Korybut, who at this time seems to have dreamed of a future as king of Bohemia. The radicals were soon displeased with Korybut's policy, and on September 30 two of the leading figures of Tábor, lord Bohuslav of Švamberg and the former captain John Hvězda of Vicemilice, having established contact with radicals inside the capital, undertook to enter Prague with their modest forces and to replace the city government which Korybut had installed with men formerly led by John Želivský, who had been killed by his enemies the previous March.⁶¹ The Taborite invasion, apparently undertaken against the wishes of Žižka, was a total failure, but caused Korybut to take some of his Czech and Polish forces away from Karlstein, partly to secure his position in Prague, partly to be stronger in case a direct combat should result from the crusading invasion. With their weakened forces the Czechs nevertheless undertook, on October 22, a full-scale assault which ended in total failure, leading to considerable losses and strengthening the morale of the defenders.

Meanwhile the crusading army achieved very little, largely because some of the potentially strongest forces, such as those of bishop John of Würzburg, refused any action, and advised Frederick to give up an enterprise they considered hopeless. Frederick made an enormous effort to keep the crusading army together,⁶² and at least was able, for a time, to prevent William of Meissen from pulling his forces out of Bohemian territory. The whole situation can be explained only by

61. Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 344–347.

62. See his correspondence in *U.B.*, I, 238 ff., 260 ff., and II, 499 ff.

the fear that the experience of the first two crusades had left among so many participants. Frederick, as a result, decided to concentrate his still shrinking forces upon the relief of Karlstein, while he and Korybut conducted negotiations for a prolonged truce. The prince sent a substantial embassy led by archbishop Conrad of Prague and a number of high nobles, but the Czechs were not willing to include in the truce Sigismund and the princes and cities of Lusatia and Silesia. Hence Frederick broke off negotiations and returned to Tachov in order to undertake action to relieve Karlstein, only to be informed that in the meantime (on November 8) an armistice had been signed between the Hussites and Karlstein. The chance of a real military collision shrank, as neither side was eager for a battle. Apart from some minor skirmishes (the "daily war") nothing of significance occurred, and before the end of 1422 the third crusade had, as it were, evaporated. While Frederick of Brandenburg had not been able to cover himself with glory, he did, at least, return home without having suffered a smashing defeat. It was the only one of the crusades of this war that did not end with such a catastrophe.

Even so, Hussite Bohemia was, for a longer time than before, left alone; not completely—there were repeated minor attacks across the borders—but to the extent that no powerful strike comparable to the earlier expeditions occurred for a number of years. It could almost be said that this relative safety from invasion jeopardized the Hussite movement. As long as they were under fire from outside, with specific attacks against the political-religious program of the Four Articles, the Hussites, or at least the center and the left wing, tended to coöperate. As soon as they felt fairly safe they began to fight against one another; early in August 1423 such a conflict turned into a civil war among the leading groups of Hussites. The Hussite right, no longer willing to tolerate an increasingly revolutionary development, went so far as to ally itself with Roman Catholic royalists in order to reestablish, as far as possible, the former feudal structure. A good many among the more conservative masters of the University supported this course, most clearly expressed by the diet of St. Gall, which took place in Prague in October 1423.⁶³

But there were differences even within the more radical camp which resulted in John Žižka's leaving his place as commander of the Taborites and establishing himself in eastern Bohemia at the head of the somewhat less radical brotherhood of Orebiters.⁶⁴ The most

63. Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 395–398 (and the main source in *Archiv český*, III, 240 ff.).

64. Pekař, *Žižka*, III, 193 ff. and (with considerably differing understanding) Heymann, *Žižka*, chapter 22.

important clash between Hussites was the battle of Malešov (June 7, 1424), in which Žižka destroyed a fairly strong army based on a coalition of Praguers, mainly of the Old Town, and some more or less counter-revolutionary members of the nobility.⁶⁵ By this victory Žižka established, more solidly than before, his leading role in the Orebite brotherhood, which soon joined up again with Tábor. The dominating position of the two brotherhoods, based on a large number of Czech-Hussite cities, was by and large maintained for the next ten years. No radical change resulted from the return in June 1424 of prince Korybut, who had been recalled by Vitold early in 1423, nor even from the death of Žižka from the plague on October 11, 1424.

The most gifted and influential of the political and military leaders of this new phase was a Taborite priest called Prokop the Great (or the Bald), a worthy successor to Žižka who changed the strategy of the Hussites.⁶⁶ From the earlier, essentially defensive actions against the invaders he moved toward a policy of invading the neighboring territories from which previous crusading campaigns had started.

While on the Catholic side the activity of king Sigismund as well as of the German electors and princes was weaker than before, the holy see tried hard to keep the struggle against the "heretics" going. Cardinal Branda had done his best, but the pope felt that even this was not good enough, especially as the legate, at seventy-five, was beginning to weaken physically. In his place Martin V appointed, after a short interim filled by cardinal Jordan Orsini, a man whom he had quite recently (in May 1427) raised to the rank of cardinal: Henry Beaufort, a half-brother of the late king Henry IV of England. The new legate tried to revive the crusading movement by being present at the diets and eventually also in the field. But before there was an effective reawakening of the movement the Czech Hussites and their German neighbors fought a climactic battle which was not technically part of the crusades, the battle of Ústí.⁶⁷

This city, together with a few other places in northern Bohemia, had been pledged by Sigismund to Frederick of Wettin, since 1423

65. Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 409–415, and Frankenberger, *Naše velká armáda*, II, 79 ff.

66. See on him Urbánek, *Lipany*; Maček, *Prokop Veliký*; Bartoš, *Prokop Veliký* (Brno, 1934); and briefly, in English, Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 457–471.

67. Probably no other battle of this war has received so much attention and literary treatment. We shall name only H. Ermisch, "Zur Geschichte der Schlacht bei Aussig," in *Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, XLVII (1926), 5–34; E. Kroker, "Sachsen und die Hussitenkriege," *ibid.*, XXI (1900), 1–28; Bezold, *König Sigismund*, II, 81–86; R. Jecht, "Der Oberlausitzer Hussitenkrieg," *Neues Lausitzer Magazin*, LXXVI (1910), 138 ff.; O. Frankenberger, *Naše velká armáda*, II, 115–130; and J. Durdík, *Husitské vojenství*, pp. 152–156.

the elector of Saxony, and had therefore been occupied by Saxon troops. But in June 1426 a strong Hussite army began to besiege Ústí, and the Saxon rulers, with the elector's wife Catherine especially active, sent a large army to raise the siege and safeguard Saxony's possession of this important Elbe town. The Saxon army—until then considered among the best—was certainly larger than the Hussite army of about 24,000 men, under the overall command of Korybut, with Prokop commanding the Taborite forces. Apparently none of the previous battles fought between Germans and Czechs had resulted in losses as catastrophic as the battle of Ústí, even though the assertion, made by German chroniclers, that the German dead numbered 15,000 was probably much exaggerated. Prokop, after the victory, tried to convince the other commanders that this was the right moment to enter Saxony in "hot pursuit" and reduce that country's war-mindedness, but as yet without success.

Even so it seemed likely, in the eyes of the Germans, that the terrible heretics would not wait long before crossing the border. If the idea of destroying the "heresy" was not to be given up for good, preparation for a new crusade could not long be postponed. Modest invasions of Silesia and Austria were undertaken by Czech-Hussite troops in the winter of 1426–1427, and in March 1427 a Taborite army under Prokop defeated an Austrian army, causing it heavy losses, at the Austrian town of Zwettl,⁶⁸ midway between Budweis and Vienna. It seemed increasingly doubtful whether the margraviate of Moravia, solemnly presented to duke Albert by his father-in-law Sigismund, could be maintained in Hapsburg hands. In addition, some vague possibilities for an understanding between the Catholic powers and the conservative Hussite elements, rather strongly represented by some of the masters of Prague University and some nobles, collapsed when negotiations with Rome secretly conducted by Korybut were discovered in April 1427. The more determined Utraquists, with John Rokycana at their head, undertook to prevent what seemed to them pure treason.⁶⁹ The prominent conservatives, among them the masters at the University who had supported a policy of compromise or even submission, were banished from Prague, and Korybut not only lost his already somewhat enfeebled position as regent but was even imprisoned for several months.

It was not, however, this development which led to the final decision for a fourth crusade. This had already been decided upon at the very beginning of the year, at a rather remarkable meeting at

68. Macek, *Prokop Veliký*, pp. 52–53.

69. Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, II, 19–22.

Bamberg of members of the lesser nobility, mainly Franconian, who concluded a solemn alliance against the Hussites.⁷⁰ The more detailed arrangements were made at a Reichstag convened at Frankfurt am Main in late April and May (1427).⁷¹ The Reichstag accepted a military ordinance which, in some of its points, showed a remarkable similarity to the type of ordinance issued by Žižka in 1423.⁷² The crusade was to be organized in four separate armies, the first containing troops from the Rhineland, Alsace, Swabia, Franconia, and Bavaria; the second from Saxony; the third from the princes and cities of Silesia; and the fourth from the Hapsburg lands and the archbishopric of Salzburg.⁷³ If all those armies had really been put into the field, they would have formed a powerful force, one which the Czechs would not have found it easy to defeat. But as in the preceding crusades much of the planning remained on paper.

The impending campaign was to be led by the princes, under Frederick of Brandenburg,⁷⁴ whose bitter struggle with Sigismund had been terminated early in 1426.⁷⁵ Frederick, at this stage, considered a combination of military with diplomatic means, aimed at splitting the Hussite camp. Correspondence exists which shows that suggestions were made to Frederick by some unknown agent, possibly one of the Czech royalists.⁷⁶ He was urged to write letters to the cities of Prague, Žatec, and Louny, and also to a number of prominent moderates, trying to win them over to a measure of political rapprochement. This, however, was to go hand in hand with the invasion, to be concentrated upon the town of Slaný, whose supposedly easy conquest would drive the Prague people toward fast and bloodless surrender.

It was odd enough, after the previous campaigns, to assume that such an easy success could be expected, yet to some extent the Brandenburg elector did, indeed, follow the advice. His letter to Prague has survived, together with the answer, while of the correspondence with Žatec only the answer remains.⁷⁷ In any case the

70. Bezold, *König Sigmund*, II, 95–97, and *RTA*, IX, 11–14.

71. *RTA*, IX, 41–44.

72. See *U.B.*, I, 503–509, and Žižka's military ordinance, translated into English in Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 492–497.

73. *RTA*, IX, 41–44.

74. *RTA*, IX, 136–138.

75. See Brandenburg, *König Sigmund und Friedrich I*, pp. 195–200.

76. Published first by Bezold, *König Sigmund*, II, Appendices, pp. 161–163. It is only a draft but the fact that many of its recommendations were followed by Frederick indicate that the letter was indeed received by him.

77. See *U.B.*, I, Frederick's letter, pp. 516–518, as well as the answers of the cities on pp. 519–520 and 522–523.

correspondence emphasized not only the sadness and horrors of the war (which the crusaders were just about to renew) but also the close relationship between the elector and the Bohemian capital as well as the Bohemian king. The Praguers, in their answer, acknowledged Frederick's warm feelings for the city, but also declared that specific proposals for peace had to be submitted to the estates of the realm.

The whole procedure—an urgent call for peace at the moment of starting a massive invasion—is, of course, strange, though not unique. It can hardly be doubted that some prominent men among the more conservative Hussites would have been willing to make very far-reaching concessions—indeed, almost any short of surrendering their insistence upon access to the chalice for laymen. These men had supported prince Korybut in the months preceding the events of the previous April, and their political goals had not radically changed as a result of Korybut's fall and imprisonment. But it was surely a mistake to assume that they would become more amenable under the threat of imminent invasion. On the contrary, past experience showed that the considerable internal differences, occasionally even amounting to civil war, temporarily lost their power as soon as foreign attacks, especially those taking the form of crusades and thereby exposing the country to German and Hungarian armies, threatened the very existence of Hussite Bohemia. This, indeed, would also be the result of the 1427 invasion. There was, as always, a measure of coöperation between the established royalists, such as the Pilsen "Landfrieden," and the crusaders, and a few Hussites went over to the Catholic side, but the majority even of the more conservative Hussites did nothing to support the enemy, and the most important units—the brotherhoods and the city of Prague—were sufficiently willing and well prepared to stand up to the crusaders. They may not have expected that their task would be quite so easy.⁷⁸

Of the four great armies that were supposed to invade Bohemia in July 1427 from the north, the northwest, the southwest, and the south, only two ever appeared, and they were weaker than had been expected.⁷⁹ One, led by Otto, archbishop-elect of Trier, with

78. Of the detailed treatments of the 1427 crusade Bezold's is still one of the best: *König Sigmund*, II, 109–122. A later monograph by Georg Juritsch, oddly titled *Der dritte Kreuzzug gegen die Hussiten* (Vienna and Prague, 1900), did not add much to it, but he had the *Reichstagsakten* at his disposal. Among the Czech treatments the best is that by V. V. Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy*, IV, chapter 14, pp. 366 ff., especially valuable for the political background. The most recent treatment, rather concise, is Bartoš's *Husitská Revoluce*, II, 23–24.

79. See Altmann, *Windecke*, pp. 221–227, and Juritsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 24–25. The com-

additions from the dukes of Bavaria and from Franconian and Swabian cities, crossed the mountains near the still-royalist border city of Tachov and moved eastward toward Střibro, a town that had been part of the Pilsen "Landfrieden" but had been conquered, with very little resistance, by Taborite troops in September 1426.⁸⁰ This town, midway between Tachov and Pilsen on the old highway leading from Nuremberg to Prague, had considerable strategic value for the Hussites, since their capture of it established them in the rear of the forces of Pilsen and the Pilsen "Landfrieden." Some of the leaders of the allied crusaders, with Otto at the head, considered that a quick reconquest of Střibro would be valuable, and hence decided to concentrate their forces first upon the siege of this small but strategically important place. This decision was made, however, without the knowledge of Frederick of Brandenburg and young Frederick (II) of Saxony (the Saxon elector was ill, but his son and early successor by the same name took over in his father's place). The siege took a long time, and so gave the "heretics" an excellent opportunity for the preparation of their counter-measures.

Frederick of Brandenburg was highly dissatisfied with this strategic decision made without his agreement, and with the consequent delay in marching in the direction of Prague. He sent most of his troops and those of Saxony to Střibro but himself went to Tachov, claiming illness. Meanwhile, apparently, little was done to compel the early surrender of Střibro. The crusaders had a rather large number of siege guns at their disposal, but seem to have made very inadequate use of them.⁸¹ And word soon reached the crusaders that a Hussite army was approaching.

What followed was an extraordinary combination of confusion, disorganization, cowardice, and stupidity in the arrangements made by the leaders of the crusade. A trustworthy, though in some details not quite unprejudiced, report was presented to king Sigismund by Frederick of Brandenburg, who should have been the supreme leader but had not really played this role, largely because he was aware of the difficulties, and hence had not taken steps similar to those which had helped prevent any major catastrophe during the 1422 crusade. Frederick's letter, sent from Plassenburg, his castle at the western-

bined size of the crusading armies is presented by Bartošek of Drahonice (ed. Goll, *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, V, 596) as 80,000 horse and as many infantry, probably an exaggeration.

80. *RTA*, IX, 51-54.

81. See Juritsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-38, with the sources, especially "Chronicon veteris collegiati Pragensis" in *Fontes rerum Austriacarum*, VI, 89. Cf. Hans Rosenblüt in *Volkslieder der Deutschen*, I, 295 ff.

most point in his Franconian principality of Bayreuth, was dated August 24, rather late after the painful events which had begun on the 3rd or 4th and concluded on the 14th of that month.⁸²

In his report Frederick described the first stages of the invasion and strongly criticized the decision to besiege Střibro. He then explained that, having reluctantly joined the southern army, he had fallen ill and had to seek help from the physicians at Tachov. Meanwhile a reconnaissance force of cavalry had reported on August 2 that the Hussite army was approaching in great strength. This led the German princes to move the siege artillery away from the vicinity of Střibro to a hill in the neighborhood where the crusaders would be better positioned to resist the expected Czech attack. A second order, to burn the tents of the previous encampment, seems to indicate that a degree of panic had already infected the commanders, but according to Frederick's letter it was this step that caused the panic reaction: "In view of such conflagration," he writes, "a misunderstanding arose among the common people and the wagon drivers, so that part of them drove hither and thither and struck at one another, and thus the army got as far as Tachov, where I and the cardinal of England were staying, and we were much shocked, as is easy to understand. Thus all those of us in command and the cardinal got together to consult, and decided to move up to a mountain near Tachov and from there to approach the enemy. When we therefore [on the following morning, August 4] went up to the mountain and looked for our troops, many of the people had left during the preceding night, riding on horseback or walking or driving on those wagons that should have been used to construct a *Wagenburg* [wagon fortress], as had been planned and ordered; and so many had left and the army had become so small that the advice was given to the cardinal and the other princes by most of those present that no attempt ought to be made to engage the enemy without a *Wagenburg*."

It seems from our other sources⁸³ that at least two of the leaders disagreed: cardinal Henry Beaufort and young Frederick, the son of the elector of Saxony. Both wanted, even with the totally inadequate forces still at their disposal, to mount an active resistance against the Hussites. Both offered to fight in the first row of warriors, and could only with some effort on the part of more experienced men, among them almost certainly Frederick of Brandenburg, be dissuaded from what would at this stage have been a totally hopeless enterprise. Nevertheless the cardinal, believing deeply in the righteousness of the

82. *U.B.*, I, 539–542; *RTA*, IX, 66–68.

83. Juritsch, *op. cit.*, p. 42, note 5.

crusade and desperate in the face of defeat, tried to save his cause by displaying the papal banner. As none of the former leaders was willing to renew the enterprise without much of an army, the cardinal decided to pass the banner on to John, the young palsgrave of Neumarkt, but this gesture had no influence upon the ensuing events, as the palsgrave could not collect even a small army. Nor is there any reason to assume—as Frederick of Brandenburg claimed toward the end of his report to the king⁸⁴—that the chances of this crusade for success would have been much better if only “der Cardinal von Engellant” had arrived sooner at the main theater of war.

In fact the slaughter of the crusaders had just begun at the time when the German armies started their headlong flight from the region around Tachov across the mountain forests of Bohemia's western border to the safer region of the Upper Palatinate. The losses that the crusaders suffered during their hasty retreat remain unknown. The only source which attempts an estimate, the Augsburg chronicle,⁸⁵ presents the obviously impossible figure of 100,000 dead. All we can guess is that the losses, both in men and in materiel, were heavy, until their flight had taken the crusading troops over into Germany.

There was no further pursuit beyond the border on the part of the Hussites. Their army, led again by Prokop but including also, in addition to the Taborite troops, those of the Orebiters (since Žižka's death called “Orphans”) and of Prague, found a more immediately challenging object to attack: the strong border city and fortress of Tachov. It had seemed unconquerable, since it had, six years earlier, successfully resisted even the great Žižka, who had conquered so many towns.⁸⁶ Now, apart from its largely German and exclusively Catholic population, it had been strengthened by a number of crusaders, who may have felt safer there than in continued flight westward, or have stayed there with the purpose of resisting the enemy. The Hussites acted more effectively than the German army had only a few days earlier when they besieged Střibro. Prokop used not only siege artillery but also incendiary missiles, and ordered his forces to dig holes in the base of the walls.⁸⁷ After less than a week the city's defenses collapsed. Urgent calls for help, sent to Frederick of Brandenburg (then at Wunsiedel near Bayreuth) and to other princes, either were ignored or arrived too late.⁸⁸ Three days after

84. *U.B.*, I, 542.

85. *Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, V-2, 92.

86. See Heymann, *Žižka*, p. 202.

87. Bartošek of Drahonice, in *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, V, 597.

88. *U.B.*, I, 542.

the city's fall, on August 14 (1427), the Hussites also gained the strong castle with its recently reinforced garrison.

With the conquest of Tachov, the second-strongest royalist position in western Bohemia—after Pilsen—had fallen. This region had been a convenient base for crusading invasions from the western border toward the center of Bohemia. Apart from Sigismund's personal invasions from Hungary via Moravia in 1420 and 1421, and some other invasions from Silesia and Saxony, all the main crusading forces had advanced from Franconia into the western territories of Bohemia. Tachov, in its central position between Cheb in the north and Domažlice in the south, had been considered a particularly valuable point of operation for any further crusades and also for the minor military enterprises called "daily war" in which the Catholic circles of the Pilsen "Landfrieden" had often engaged. Thenceforth this base was lost, and Hussite Bohemia had correspondingly gained. Its leaders did not, at this time, consider an invasion of Germany, even though German fear of such an attack was growing, especially in the most exposed cities of Franconia.⁸⁹ Some Silesian forces which had been intended to strengthen the crusade by an invasion of northwestern Bohemia halted as soon as they were informed of the fate of Tachov.⁹⁰

To the Hussites, or at least to the more determined among them, the victory gave tremendous satisfaction, even though a somewhat half-hearted attempt at attacking Pilsen did not succeed.⁹¹ On the other side there was a small but not insignificant clique which had, in coöperation with prince Korybut and probably also with Frederick of Brandenburg, worked for an arrangement going far toward capitulation.⁹² To them, of course, the fate of the crusade was anything but happy, but they hoped that a sudden coup in Prague might change the whole situation and might also free Korybut. The resulting enterprise was led by two prominent Utraquist leaders, Hynek of Kolstein and John Smiřický, and was supported by two old Czech servants of king Sigismund, John Městecký of Opočno and Půta of Častolovice. Their attack, however, proved a total failure when their limited force, some six hundred horse, reached the center of Prague and tried to gain the support of the people with the slogan "holy peace." The masses of the Utraquist people, largely under the influ-

89. See, for example, *Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, I, 374.

90. Tomek, *Dějepis Prahy*, IV, 387.

91. *Ibid.*, IV, 388.

92. The main sources are the "Old Annalists" ("Stáří letopisové") *Dílo F. Palačského*, ed. Charvát (Prague 1941), II, 77 ff., and "Kronika Bartoška z Drahonice," *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, V, 597 ff.; see also Tomek, *Dějepis Prahy*, IV, 389 ff.

ence of John Rokycana, the successor as theological leader of Jacobellus of Střibro,⁹³ stood unanimously against the invaders, whom they considered traitors. Some of them, including Hynek of Kolstein, were killed, others imprisoned. But so as to forestall similar developments in the future, Korybut was released from his imprisonment, in the justified expectation that he would leave Bohemia and return to Poland. There he maintained, despite his imprisonment, his generally favorable attitude toward the Hussites.

The defeat of the conservative party among the Hussites, with their strong base among members of the high nobility as well as among the less radical Hussite masters at the University, had a liberating effect upon the whole foreign and military policy of the standard-bearers of the revolution. This was true especially of the two strong brotherhoods—the Taborites under Prokop the Great and the “Orphans” under another Prokop, “the Short”—but also of the majority of the people in the New Town of Prague. The main leader of this coalition, Prokop the Great, had, as mentioned before, already tried to capitalize on the great victory of Ústí in 1426 by an invasion of Saxony. The purely defensive strategy which had been ordained at the beginning of the war by the masters of the University was finally abandoned in 1427, and offensives into enemy territory now became a systematic policy. The reasons were obvious: in spite of the long series of victories over the invading armies of the crusaders the country of Bohemia had suffered grave damage. The enemies, whether crusaders or other invaders from Hungary, Austria, Saxony, or Silesia, had always done their worst to destroy houses and fields, villages and small towns, had killed Czechs, often with little regard to their religion, age, or sex, and had thereby also reduced the number of productive hands. Occasionally, too, destruction resulted from internal strife between Hussites and Catholics or even between more conservative and more radical Hussites. Therefore it seemed to be most urgent to shift the theater of war from the suffering lands of Bohemia to those of her hostile neighbors.

The Hussite leaders could well assume that the morale of their enemies would decline when the latter had to fight on their own soil. As long as the crusaders could decide when, where, and how the war should be conducted there would not be any great pressure toward serious consideration of compromise and peace: even though the first few crusades had been utter failures, it was still possible to claim that

93. See Heymann, “John Rokycana,” in *Church History*, XXVIII (1959), 240–280.

the defeats represented a divine punishment which would sooner or later, with God's help, turn into victory. If, however, as the Hussites could hope, future battles could be won in the countries of the enemy, the impression upon their inhabitants would be infinitely greater. After so many years of military success the Hussite claim that God had been and remained on their side could no longer be considered an empty boast. What was even more dangerous in the eyes of the church and the German princes was that with Czech armies marching almost at will through the countries surrounding Bohemia, the "heretical poison" might infect some of the masses of the people in Germany and elsewhere. All these considerations strengthened the determination, especially of the more active brotherhoods, to mount a steady sequence of campaigns into the neighboring lands. They would, of course, not use the term "crusade" for these enterprises. Instead they called them "spanilé jízdy" (something like "beautiful, noble rides").⁹⁴ In the eyes of the neighbors who until recently had felt quite safe these rides were anything but beautiful. The usual defeat of the Catholics, and especially the vast destruction wrought by the Hussite armies, resulted in a bitter reaction on the part of the victims. There was, of course, hatred for the "heretics," but also a considerable degree of disappointment and of accusations against those who presumably had the responsibility for providing protection.⁹⁵ These attacks were directed against many of the rulers, from Sigismund down to the various temporal and ecclesiastical princes. But the relationship between the king and the princes was bad enough to lead to mutual accusations of secret coöperation with the "heretics." Sigismund himself was, in 1427 and the spring of 1428, engaged in a struggle with the Turks over northern Serbia. He seemed, for a short time, to be successful in establishing a strong fortress near the Danubian port city of Golubats, where however in late May 1428 he suffered one of his worst defeats, barely escaping with his life and forfeiting Hungary's strong claim to suzerainty over Serbia.⁹⁶

In this situation the king seemed to have very nearly forgotten the urgent problems of Bohemia and the empire. It was by no means the Hussite movement alone with which he would have to deal. Just when the Holy Roman empire was for the first time exposed to dangerous Hussite attacks, the realm was also the theater of a

94. The term is used as the heading of the relevant chapter of Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, II, 46-76, and of that of Macek, *Prokop Veliký*, pp. 65-122.

95. See, for example, *U.B.*, I, 551 ff., 581-582.

96. Aschbach, *Geschichte Kaiser Sigmunds*, II, 269-279.

number of grim civil wars.⁹⁷ There was a repeated bloody struggle between palgrave Louis of Wittelsbach and margrave Bernard of Baden, in which duke Charles of Lorraine and a number of cities—Strassburg, Basel, Freiburg, and others—were also involved. Another war was being waged between archbishop Conrad of Mainz and landgrave Louis of Hesse; archbishop Dietrich of Cologne, bishop John of Würzburg, and prince-abbot John of Fulda, as well as a number of lay princes, were drawn into this struggle. Margrave-elect of Frederick of Brandenburg—still trying to maintain his close friendship with Poland and at the same time under continuous pressure from the holy see—had had, up to the summer of 1427, difficulty in defending the Brandenburg province called Ückermark against attacks by the dukes of Mecklenburg and Pomerania, though eventually he maintained his position.

Perhaps of even more significance were the rebellions in a considerable number of German cities. It is especially noteworthy that the majority of these cities were the seats of bishops and archbishops, such as Mainz, Cologne, Magdeburg, Speyer, Strassburg, Constance, Würzburg, and Bamberg, or, in the case of Erfurt, a city dependent on the archbishop of Mainz. While in some of them the rebellions were, as in earlier times, directed mainly against the patricians, the majority displayed a special hatred for the clergy and above all for the bishops, some of whom had been the allies of the patrician families. It is not easy to decide to what extent these developments reflect a direct influence from the Hussites, with their antagonism against leading clerical figures such as the newly promoted cardinal John “the Iron” of Olomouc. In some regions where the Hussite armies had not only begun to invade repeatedly but had also tried to establish contacts with the local population—as was, for instance, true in some corners of Silesia—there is little doubt that there had been some direct influence.⁹⁸ There were also attempts at broadcasting leaflets over territories quite distant from Bohemia. In any case the worry that such an influence might spread contributed to a changed attitude on the part of those who until recently had taken it for granted that the only proper policy was to destroy the “heresy”—and the “heretics”—by force. This was true also in the case of Sigismund, who wanted at least a prolonged truce which would enable him to go to Rome to be crowned emperor. A measure of willingness toward compromise could also be found on the other

97. See, for example, for what follows, J. Gustav Droysen, *Geschichte der preussischen Politik*, I (Berlin, 1855), 504–507.

98. See *U.B.*, II, 175 (no. 712) and 181–183 (nos. 719 and 720).

side, including the most powerful leader of Hussite militancy, Prokop the Great. One hope was, on both sides, the expectation of a new church council.

Some feelers from the side of the king were answered by a positive reaction at a diet called early in January 1429 to Český Brod. The result was that the Hussite leaders, including Prokop, accepted Sigismund's invitation to meet him and some of the German princes at Bratislava (Pressburg) in western Hungary. The very fact of such a meeting seemed remarkable—it could hardly have been imaginable as long as John Žižka still led the Hussite armies. Prokop, though probably just as determined to fight for the basic ideas of Hussitism as long as necessary, was less rigid in his tactics.⁹⁹ He was cautious enough, however, to demand, in addition to a normal safe-conduct, some very high-ranking hostages, including two Silesian princes. The Hussite representatives arrived, accompanied by a strong retinue with two hundred horse, on April 3, led by Prokop the Great as leader of the Taborites, Peter Payne ("Master English") as speaker for the brotherhood of "Orphans," and lord Menhart of Hradec as representative of the less radical Hussites, especially in Prague; Menhart appears to have been used by both sides as a go-between. Among the Catholics there were cardinal John of Olomouc, long the most "iron" among the Czech orthodox clergy, lord Ulrich of Rosenberg, Sigismund's most faithful and powerful Czech noble, and a considerable number of German princes (including Albert of Austria), Hungarian and German ecclesiastical princes and nobles, and representatives of universities, among them four doctors of Paris and one or two from Vienna.

The king had just returned from a short visit to Poland, where he had tried, with some temporary success, to split Vitold of Lithuania from his cousin Vladislav by offering the grand duke a royal crown.¹⁰⁰ If this had succeeded it would indeed have led to a considerable weakening of Poland, the only potential ally (at least temporarily) of the Hussite Czechs. This, of course, was one of Sigismund's aims, but old Vitold was to die before the promised crown could be put on his head.

Back in Bratislava the negotiations began on April 4 (1429). The discussion started with a speech by the king, who tried to convince the Hussite representatives that they were in deep error—a claim

99. See Heymann, *Žižka*, p. 458. For the sources regarding the Bratislava meeting the most complete bibliography is to be found in Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, II, 46, note 1. For the most important single source see *U.B.*, II, 22–26.

100. See Aschbach, *op. cit.*, III, 319–327, and Paweł Jasiencia, *Polska Jagiellonów* (Warsaw, 1964), pp. 136–137.

which the Hussites naturally refused to admit—and that consequently they should be willing to be taught in the true faith. This would be done best by the priests and teachers expected at the impending Council of Basel. Until then Sigismund urged a complete truce on both sides, and the return of estates taken over by the Hussites during the war. After a largely negative short answer on the part of Prokop, the main speech on the side of the Hussites was delivered by Peter Payne, the former Lollard who had often undertaken important diplomatic missions for the Hussite cause.¹⁰¹ He tried to convince the king and his Catholic associates that it was quite possible for them to follow the truth of God and still to accept the demands of the Hussites for a far-reaching reform, a step which would make Sigismund fully acceptable to the Hussites as ruler of Bohemia. The speech, teeming with quotations from the bible, was, of course, far too doctrinaire a presentation of the Hussite position to be acceptable to the king. Sigismund's immediate reaction seems to have been utterly negative, to judge from letters which he wrote to some of the leading German princes right after the meeting: since the negotiations had been totally unsuccessful a new crusade must immediately be prepared, with all strength, for that very summer.¹⁰²

In fact, plans for the supposed great invasion of Bohemia did not get beyond rather vague discussion. The king had, it seems, not completely written off the possibility of a rapprochement based on the forthcoming ecumenical council. Without it his chances of regaining the throne of Bohemia seemed hopeless, and even his position as ruler of the Holy Roman empire would be steadily weakened, unless he could obtain the Roman imperial coronation in the near future. But he also had to counteract the constantly increasing rumors that he was ready meekly to accept the Hussite "heresy." It was a difficult position, but Sigismund was shrewd enough to play the game.

At this stage the problem, quite apart from defending his prestige as a good, orthodox protector of the Roman church, was to devise an arrangement which would convince the Hussites that they would be accepted at Basel without too many difficulties, and especially without abandoning their own religious convictions and rituals. As yet the Hussites, and especially Prokop, were quite unwilling to conclude the truce which the king had tried to gain rather cheaply for the

101. The text is printed in Bartoš's book *M. Petr Payne, diplomat husitské revoluce* (Prague, 1956), pp. 51–73.

102. *U.B.*, II, 27–35 (nos. 575–577); cf. Altmann, *Windecke*, pp. 261–263.

period up to the opening of the council in Basel. But after some hesitation the Czech representatives did, at least, agree to present the issue to another diet which was to be convened in Prague and to which Sigismund was invited to send representatives. In fact there were two such meetings, one at the end of May 1429, on which Prokop reported in person to the king, and a second, again in Prague, in mid-August.¹⁰³ The outcome was that both brotherhoods, Taborites as well as "Orphans," refused to accept the truce, as did the New Town of Prague. The future participation of Hussite Bohemia in the Council of Basel was not completely excluded, but the conditions for such participation were still uncertain, and in view of what had happened to Hus and Jerome of Prague fourteen years earlier at the Council of Constance it was obvious that the Hussites would want very strict guarantees.

Meanwhile the military initiative remained in the hands of the brotherhoods under Prokop's leadership. From the fall of 1429 through the early months of 1430 the "beautiful rides" reached the climax of their power.¹⁰⁴ The first offensive was directed against Saxony-Meissen and Upper as well as Lower Lusatia. Soon afterward, in mid-December, this was followed by the most tremendous of all these enterprises: Prokop organized five armies under his command, the total strength being reported as 40,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry, and 3,000 battle wagons, perhaps the greatest single military force that the Hussites had assembled during the whole long war. Again the first target was the territory of Saxony-Meissen, and even though Frederick II of Saxony, with support from other princes, mobilized a still larger army, the one collision, near Grimma, ended as usual with the flight of the defenders. Avoiding the strongest cities but conquering a number of smaller towns, the offensive turned toward Leipzig, where Frederick ordered the burning of all the suburbs. In many cases the towns occupied were found to be empty of men, since the Germans had long since realized that the Hussites were careful not to harm women and children. From the region of Leipzig the Czech army made a sharp turn south, conquering Altenburg and Plauen and then crossing over into Franconia, attacking the Bayreuth lands of the Hohenzollerns and of the bishopric of Bamberg, and threatening the neighboring Upper Palatinate. Returning from the meeting at Bratislava to deal with this terrific attack, Frederick of Brandenburg tried to mount an effective defense, but it was already too late, and

103. Tomek, *Dějepis Prahy*, IV, 425 ff.

104. See, for this whole phase, Bezold, *König Sigmund*, III, 26 ff.; Macek, *Prokop Veliký*, pp. 86 ff.; and Grünhagen, *Die Hussitenkämpfe der Schlesier* (Breslau, 1872), pp. 178 ff.

the two important towns in his possession, Kulmbach and Bayreuth, were conquered without much resistance. The next target was Bamberg, whose bishop Frederick had left the city with almost no means of defense. In fact part of the city's population anticipated the expected destruction and plundering by doing it themselves.

The strong city of Nuremberg now seemed in danger, but before the Hussite forces penetrated that far south an unexpected development took place. Frederick of Brandenburg learned that at least a provisional understanding with the Czechs was possible. He met on February 11, 1430, with the Czech commanders at the castle of Beheimstein, three miles from Nuremberg, and there a temporary truce was concluded.¹⁰⁵ It provided that Frederick himself, the city of Nuremberg, the palsgrave John, and several other princes would pay the Hussites a total indemnity of over 30,000 guilders, but this was secondary to the political arrangement, which appeared to be of decisive importance. The Hussites were to be invited to a great public religious discussion with the leading scholars of the six German archdioceses, and would have the right to present in detail and in full freedom the Four Articles, orally and in writing. They would also have the right to worship in their way—with communion under both kinds—in Nuremberg, as well as in the places through which they would travel, without trouble and without having an interdict imposed upon those towns. Finally, even if no final understanding were to be achieved, the Czech representatives would, under a reliable safe-conduct, be allowed to return to Bohemia.¹⁰⁶

It is obvious that these arrangements and promises would not, with such far-reaching concessions, commend themselves to the Catholic establishment in Rome, in Germany, or at the court of Sigismund. The change from a policy of utter, merciless annihilation to a careful effort to achieve mutual understanding was too rapid and radical to be acceptable. True, the promise of concessions had been the only way to avoid a dreadful catastrophe, and this was emphasized in all the many letters sent out by Frederick, especially through the city council of Nuremberg.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, none of these letters outlined frankly the decisive concessions regarding Czech participation in the promised Nuremberg meeting. Frederick had obviously exceeded the special authority which the king, in August 1428, had conferred on him: the permission to accept the submission of any

105. See *U.B.*, II, 109–129, Bezold, *König Sigmund*, III, 41 ff., and Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, II, 66 ff.

106. For the drafted texts, see Bezold, *op. cit.*, III, Appendix, pp. 165 ff.

107. *U.B.*, II, 111–114, 120–122, and Bezold, *op. cit.*, III, 49–50, 54–55. See also *RTA*, IX, 382–385 (no. 292).

Hussites who offered their obedience to the church and to Sigismund.¹⁰⁸ No such intention could, of course, be assumed on the part of the Hussites, especially the more radical ones who had directed the outcome of the Prague diets and the military conduct of the "beautiful rides." Indeed, the cautious and apologetic letters sent out by Frederick indicate that either from the beginning, or at least from soon after the negotiations leading to the armistice of Beheimstein, Frederick had doubts as to whether he would be able to carry through those far-reaching promises, which had been taken very seriously by the Hussite leadership. It would, however, be wrong to assume that Frederick had meant to deceive the Hussites. The fact that he continued to meet the Czech leaders at their encampments, not once but repeatedly,¹⁰⁹ that he made serious preparations for the reception of the Hussite delegation in Nuremberg, and that he energetically enforced the indemnity payments (though these were not very large)¹¹⁰ indicates that he meant to do his best, and his Czech enemies never accused him of an attempt to cheat them.

Even so there was considerable disappointment on both sides, resulting in an immediate decision by both to resume the military initiative and offensive. The Hussites were already active toward the end of March (1430). The "Orphans," under Prokop the Short, went into Moravia and Slovakia, and met a Hungarian army sent out upon Sigismund's orders near the city of Trnava. Though the Czech losses were considerable, those of the enemy were three times as large.¹¹¹ Of greater significance were the enterprises of the Taborites in Silesia, especially noteworthy since the Czechs received some strong support from Poland.¹¹² This was largely the result of Sigismund's attempt, mentioned earlier, to split Lithuania from Poland by giving grand duke Vitold the crown for a Lithuanian kingship, against the energetic protests of king Vladislav Jagiello. In consequence the Polish king no longer took, as he had sometimes done, Sigismund's side against the Hussites. Prince Korybut, in spite of the difficulties he had had in Prague, now helped the Czechs in Silesia and established a strong military center through the conquest and occupation of the city of Gliwice, while some other important cities, including Brzeg, were taken by a combined Czech-Polish army led by the

108. *U.B.*, I, 637.

109. *U.B.*, II, 135, in a well-informed report to the grand master of the Teutonic Knights, Paul of Rusedorf.

110. Bezold, *op. cit.*, III, 45, note 3.

111. Altmann, *Windecke*, p. 280, claiming 2,000 dead Czechs and "well six thousand Christians, may God have mercy on us."

112. Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, II, 71-72, 75-76.

Polish Hussite Dobeslav Puchala. The Hussites, who had experienced nothing but grim hatred from the Silesians and especially from the (mostly German) cities, now occasionally succeeded in gaining some Silesian adherents, including duke Bolko of Opole, who fully took the side of the Czech reform. An effort to gain the understanding and friendship of the citizens of Namslau, a little east of Breslau, appears to have failed, whereas another town, Bernstadt, accepted the Hussite recommendations completely and consequently were, as being piously devoted to the truth of God, taken under the full protection of the Hussite armies.¹¹³

The renewed military successes of the Hussites, the support they had recently received from Vladislav, the beginnings of serious doubts as to the heretical character of the Czechs and God's impending help against them—all these developments made it clear that a decisive change in the attitudes and actions of the Catholic world was necessary. Either crusading invasions would now have to be organized and carried out with a far stronger and more decisive effort, or else reconciliation would have to be tried; for this the earlier attempts at Bratislava and, more hopefully, at Beheimstein would point the direction, and the expected Council of Basel would provide an opportunity. But this, to succeed, would require a readiness to make concessions which only a few princes, especially Frederick of Brandenburg, and cities, such as Nuremberg, were willing to make; and pope Martin was implacably opposed.

The mood that spread to some regions far from the Hussite war is shown by a remarkable letter sent, it appears, "To the Bohemian Heretics" by Joan of Arc. The Maid of Orleans had at this time (early 1430) reached the peak of her dramatic career and had recently received noble rank from king Charles VII. The letter threatens the Bohemian "heretics" with military destruction if they persist in their "terrible blindness."¹¹⁴ Whether or not Joan of Arc had, at any time, seriously considered acting against the Hussites, she was not to have an opportunity to do so. Soon afterward, in late May, she fell into the hands of the Burgundians, and one of the most determined enemies of the Czech "heretics," the cardinal and papal legate Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, became one of Joan's jailers when the English accused and finally burned her—as a heretic—in 1431.

Strong pressure from Rome continued. To be sure that another

113. *U.B.*, II, 181–182.

114. See *U.B.*, II, 132, and Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, II, 74. The question of whether this letter is genuine is still not definitely solved.

crusade would be started under the supervision of a trusted prelate, Martin V appointed as his legate the young Julian Cesarini, who earlier had served as assistant to the legate Branda and had only recently been promoted to cardinal.¹¹⁵ In addition, the pope entrusted Cesarini with opening the session of the council and directing it, but this authority was contained in one letter while another one gave Cesarini the right to dissolve the council or transfer it to another place, an expression of the pope's displeasure with its very calling. Martin V, however, died on February 20, 1431. On March 12 the Venetian cardinal Gabriel Condulmer was elected and took the name Eugenius IV. The new pontiff inherited from his predecessor a strong reluctance to permit a council to accomplish the necessary reforms. Cesarini retained his position as legate and considered his first duty to be the support of the plans for another crusade. Therefore he took part in the great Reichstag which had begun at Nuremberg in early February and lasted through nearly all of March.¹¹⁶

Hardly any of the numerous diets of the Holy Roman empire during the previous twelve years had boasted so magnificent a representation, especially of electors and other princes. It was one of the few assemblies to which king Sigismund himself found his way, as did some Czech Catholic nobles. The general consensus was that this time, largely through the efforts of Cesarini, the crusaders' preparations were far greater than ever before and were bound to be successful. On paper, indeed, the strength of the crusading army appeared most impressive,¹¹⁷ for the princes had come to the conclusion that a concentrated crusading effort should be made, although the cities, at one time supported by Sigismund, preferred the "daily war" as the best way to exhaust and defeat the Hussite enemy.

In addition to planning for the fifth crusade itself an attempt was made by the king and some of the princes to establish a solid "Landfrieden," a domestic peace settlement to make sure that existing feuds were eliminated and new ones prevented, thus strengthen-

115. On Cesarini see, among other sources, Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, I (5th edition, Freiburg, 1925), 278-280, and for bibliographical information note 7 on p. 279; also Creighton, *The Papacy*, II, 194 ff., and Bartoš's article "Manifesty Nuncia Cesariniho" in *Sborník prací věnovaných J. B. Novákovi* (Prague, 1932), pp. 178-188.

116. See, on this Reichstag, *U.B.*, II, 194-204; Bezold's careful discussion in *König Sigismund*, III, 89-118; and above all the very complete presentation of all available sources in *RTA*, IX, 493-628.

117. See *RTA*, IX, 517-535, which seems to permit the conclusion that with the coöperation of the cities some 33,000 men would be mobilized, with the use of artillery and battle wagons in a way which appeared to follow the Hussite example quite closely. The Hussite example can also be found in the military ordinance ("Heeresordnung") on pp. 536-540. See also, on all these arrangements, Bezold, *König Sigismund*, II, 110 ff.

ing the sources for the crusade. But the decision of the Reichstag, like so many others, remained essentially a paper decision, all the more so as it was given the limited duration of only twenty months.¹¹⁸

During the later phase of the Nuremberg Reichstag another meeting had begun which was meant to improve the situation of Hussite Bohemia: a conference with king Vladislav Jagiello of Poland. The two West Slav nations had recently drawn closer together, almost concluding a formal alliance. It seems absurd that Vladislav, himself born a heathen and converted to the Catholic religion only in his late thirties, should have received from Martin V encouragement in dealing with the Czech "heretics."¹¹⁹ The pope, indeed, had expressed his dislike of Sigismund's scheme of a separate Lithuanian kingdom with Vitold as king. Martin had, by that time, lost most of his confidence in the genuineness of the intentions of the king of the Romans to continue the old struggle with the Hussites. If Sigismund could not be trusted, perhaps, was the papal assumption, Vladislav could be more successful in destroying the Hussites by force, a goal fully supported by Zbigniew Oleśnicki, the bishop of Cracow, Poland's first cardinal and a highly influential counselor of the king. But the pope's letters did not eliminate the possibility that Vladislav might, again more successfully than Sigismund, be able to lead the Hussites "back into the arms of holy church."¹²⁰ With that aim Vladislav, at prince Korybut's suggestion, declared his readiness to receive at his castle in Cracow a number of the leading Hussites, including especially Prokop the Great and William Kostka of Postupice, a man who had long had close friends in Poland, had taken part in the great battle of Grünwald, near Tannenberg, in 1410, had been Korybut's chief adviser during his regency in 1422–1423 and again in 1424–1427, and had played an especially important role in directing the policy of the Old Town of Prague. On the Polish side the Hussites received their strongest support from a group led by John Szafraniec, the lord chancellor, while bishop Oleśnicki tried, not without success, to limit the readiness of the king to help the Hussites.¹²¹ While Vladislav was willing to support the safe-conduct for the Czechs if they should accept an invitation to the Basel council, he hardly deviated from the demand presented at Bratislava by Sigismund—that

118. *RTA*, IX, 497, 508, 511–512.

119. Bezold, *op. cit.*, III, 81 ff.

120. See J. Macůrek, ed., *Češi a Poláci v minulosti*, I (Prague, 1964), 136 ff., and J. Caro, *Geschichte Polens*, IV (Gotha, 1875), 43 ff., especially, on p. 46, the king's letter to his brother Svidrigello.

121. See Jan Długosz, *Opera omnia*, publ. Alexander Przedziecki, XIII (Cracow, 1877), 437 ff., 462 ff. On the battle near Tannenberg see above, chapter XVI, p. 581.

the Hussites should, in advance, promise to submit to the theological decisions of the council. On the whole, therefore, the meeting had, in spite of a thorough presentation of the Four Articles by Peter Payne, less value to the Hussites than they had expected. To submit in advance to the decisions of the council was in any case unthinkable, as it would have made it easy to destroy all the elements of even the least radical demands for reform, and especially the Four Articles. The meeting in Cracow thus ended without any real improvement.¹²²

The same was true when the Hussites, clearly eager to end the wars, offered to attend another conference with Sigismund. The meeting took place in late May (1431), this time in Cheb, which, though originally a free German city, had been pledged more than a century earlier to the crown of Bohemia.¹²³ Sigismund was accompanied by Frederick of Brandenburg, and the Hussites were represented by a number of prominent priests and knights (but none of the lords). Again the Czechs suggested that all Christian churches, including those of the east, be invited, and that the Czechs receive complete freedom in presenting their views without being forced to accept the council's decision in advance. The king, on his own, might have agreed to some of the Hussite demands, since he was eager to gain the long-desired and often-postponed imperial crown, and was, as king of Hungary, deeply involved in struggles with Venice. Having learned by now that the chances of a military conquest of Bohemia were remote, he would probably have been ready to make at least some of the concessions which he had refused at Bratislava.

At this moment, however, the Council of Basel—from which people on both sides had expected progress toward peace—intervened in just the opposite direction: to put all possible effort into the next, the fifth, the greatest crusade, which would have to achieve what the earlier ones had so shamefully failed to. This, above all, was the firm conviction of cardinal Cesarini. The papal legate, who was reconfirmed very soon in his position by Eugenius IV, had left the official opening of the council to two of his assistants. He himself, after the decisions of Nuremberg which he had influenced so decisively, had spent several weeks on an expedition down the Rhine, all the way to the Netherlands, and had received firm promises of participation in the crusade, not only from the many Rhenish bishops and archbishops, but even from duke Philip the Good of Bur-

122. Długosz, *op. cit.*, pp. 472 ff.

123. For the sources see Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, II, 84–85, and Bezold, *König Sigmund*, III, 123–128.

gundy, who, of course, never seriously intended to fulfill his promise.¹²⁴ Cesarini's feverish activity in the west had prevented him from taking part in the meeting at Cheb, but he had sent as leader of the Basel delegation the Dominican John Stoikovich of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), an active and determined enemy of Hussitism. His presence, if nothing else, doomed the Cheb conference to total failure.¹²⁵ The next step, it was now utterly clear, would be a crusade, and the general mood, expressed not only by the Basel delegation but also, it appears, by Sigismund and Frederick, was to proceed as energetically as possible. At once the Hussites, whose main parties—Taborites, "Orphans," and the more conservative Prague masters led by John Rokycana—had only recently been involved in rather harshly antagonistic religious discussions,¹²⁶ began to prepare for the expected invasion.

The center for the mobilization of the crusade was again Nuremberg, with the same solemn ceremonies used on June 29, 1431, as had been employed in the same city and the same church (St. Sebaldus) in 1422, except that the papal legate then had been Cesarini's friend and mentor cardinal Branda. Again Frederick of Brandenburg was appointed commander-in-chief by Sigismund, who had promised to participate in the crusade but had changed his mind, supposedly because he had had a painful accident.¹²⁷ The appointment of Frederick¹²⁸ was similar to earlier ones but gave him a still stronger position as the only commander-in-chief, which had not in fact been the case in 1427, as well as more freedom to negotiate with the enemy. It is not likely that he undertook the task with great pleasure, but it was hardly possible for him to refuse. He must have had some serious misgivings when he found that the participation of the German princes as well as the cities would be by no means as extensive as had been assumed during the later phase of the spring meeting of the Reichstag at Nuremberg.

If Frederick began to look at the whole enterprise with little enthusiasm, the same was not true for the cardinal-legate Cesarini. But even he was shocked when at the last moment he was informed that the firmly promised army of duke Philip of Burgundy was not available, and that palgrave Louis of Wittelsbach also had his army engaged in other fields. Nevertheless he managed to convince himself

124. Bezold, *op. cit.*, III, 129–130.

125. *Ibid.*, III, 127.

126. Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, II, 81–82.

127. *U.B.*, II, 276.

128. *U.B.*, II, 218–221.

and some others that the crusading army was adequate to achieve—with the help of God—the final cleansing from the country of the sickness of heresy. He also, to do his utmost, wrote letters to those princes and cities whom he considered tardy, claiming that most of the others had followed his urging, so that now huge armies were marching east and would soon cross the Bohemian borders.¹²⁹

In fact, by mid-July of 1431 the main contingents of the crusaders from western and central Germany had passed Nuremberg on the way to Weiden or to one or two other places near the Bohemian border.¹³⁰ Among the main princely troops there were those of the electors of Brandenburg and Saxony, of the archbishop-electors of Mainz and Cologne, and of count Louis of Württemberg, as well as of some of the greater cities such as Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Basel, Strassburg, Cologne, Aachen, and some of the Swabian towns. Somewhat farther south, but intended to maintain contact with these troops, were the Bavarian dukes with considerable forces. This army was directly under Frederick of Brandenburg's command and was accompanied by the legate; it was meant to attack Bohemia from the west. There were two other army groups, one, consisting mainly of the Silesians and Lusatians, coming from the north, and a second, stronger, based on Austria and commanded by duke Albert, Sigismund's son-in-law. Altogether, therefore, the forces of the crusaders were not insignificant, though the often accepted figure of 40,000 cavalry and 90,000 infantry is probably exaggerated.¹³¹ All these armies, put in motion with reasonable coördination, would probably have been at least as strong as any of the earlier crusades. In one respect the planning of the fifth crusade seems to have been better than that of the earlier ones: for the first time the strategy of the crusaders appeared to be coördinated, with the three principal units supposedly attacking from west, north, and southeast simultaneously.¹³² In earlier attempts this had never been accomplished,

129. *U.B.*, II, 226–227, where the city council of Nuremberg defends itself against such reproaches.

130. The most detailed and up-to-date treatment of the military aspects of this crusade is the chapter "Bitva u Domažlic" (Battle of Domažlice) by Urbánek, in the collection of earlier works published under the title *Z husitského věku* (Prague, 1957), pp. 135–157, with a fairly complete bibliography on this final crusading conflict on the last two pages.

131. The basis here is the Czech royalist (Catholic) captain Bartošek of Drahonice, whose "Kronika" was published by J. Goll in vol. V of *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, pp. 589–628, with the report on the 1431 crusade on pp. 604 ff. Palacký (German ed. of 1851, vol. 3, II, p. 541) accepted Bartošek's statement, followed by others. O. Frankenberger (*Naše velká armáda*, III, 89) thinks that the crusaders were numerically weaker than the Czech armies—an almost certainly wrong assumption. See also Bezold, *König Sigmund*, III, 144, and Urbánek, *Lipany*, p. 138.

132. See Sigismund's letter to Ulrich of Rosenberg in *Archiv český*, I, 33, and the report

especially in the case of the 1421 crusade, when Sigismund's strong invasion from the southeast had started only after the western forces had been driven out by the Hussites. This time hopes were strengthened when it was learned that the Hussite armies, apparently somewhat frightened, had pulled back from the border regions to the center of Bohemia and were thereby giving the invaders more freedom of movement. In the event, the Hussite strategy turned out to be highly effective.

Shortly before the crusaders crossed Bohemia's border the two sides exchanged, as it were, manifestoes trying to explain their positions. The first, dated July 21, 1431, came from the Hussites,¹³³ who tried, by referring to their meetings at Bratislava, Beheimstein, and Cheb, to prove that they had done their best to achieve understanding. They would do so again, but would not submit themselves to one-sided and arbitrary decisions on the part of the bishops and prelates at Basel, men who, it was claimed, all had reason to subject themselves to those badly needed reforms that had been formulated by the Four Articles of Prague. If the attempt were to be made again to subject the Czech people to the old ways by force, they would know how to defend themselves. This declaration sounds almost like an answer to a manifesto directed to the whole population of the kingdom of Bohemia by cardinal Cesarini which, however, was sent out only on July 26 from Weiden, just before crossing into Bohemia.¹³⁴ The legate's statements sound quite devoted to the hope of a return of the Czech kingdom to the old, great church of Christ. Repeatedly he emphasized the readiness of the crusaders to embrace all those that would rejoin the church of Rome, promising that no harm would ever be done to those who belonged or returned to the loving mother church. The reasoning presented by Cesarini, though impressively styled and probably quite honestly meant, contained few if any new arguments and certainly none which could convince the Hussites. One, indeed, of the legate's assurances proved immediately to be utterly wrong—the assurance that the crusading army was coming not to do any damage to the people of Bohemia but to bring peace and happiness. The early phases of the crusading campaign proved the exact opposite.

of Kilian von der Mosel to the grand master of the Teutonic Knights in *U.B.*, II, 233, 238–239.

133. *U.B.*, II, 228–231.

134. There is an authentic publication by Bartoš in his contribution to *Sborník prací věnovaných J. B. Novákovi* (Prague, 1932), pp. 188–191, correcting the date which was assumed, by Palacký and others, to have been July 5.

The crusaders, who had concentrated their forces in and around Weiden, crossed the mountain forests into Bohemia on August 1 and seemed to be headed for Pilsen, which would have given them a strong base for further penetration in the direction of Prague and the center of Bohemia. The first town of significance in their way was Tachov, which the Hussites had taken near the end of the 1427 crusade, and which since then had remained an important Hussite fortress near the border. The legate suggested that the place should be surprised by a sudden onslaught, but the army commanders, probably including Frederick of Brandenburg, decided against this, arguing that the troops had to have a day of rest. The result was that the next day the town appeared well prepared for defense against the crusaders. Immediate assault, therefore, seemed out of the question,¹³⁵ but the commanders of the crusading troops hoped in the end to gain the city by besieging it. Hence a large part of the army remained for about a week in the same neighborhood, with only relatively short marches undertaken by smaller units, mostly in a northeasterly direction, as far as Teplá and Bezdrůžice. Their main purpose, as no enemy armies were as yet visible, was to burn and destroy as many places as possible and kill their Czech inhabitants. In the town of Brod not a stone was left standing, and all the inhabitants were killed; some two hundred villages in the same region between the border and Pilsen suffered similarly. This reckless destruction and mass killing, often done without regard to the religious beliefs of the people involved, was surely the exact opposite of what cardinal Cesarini had promised, but even if he had wanted to prevent or limit these activities, he would have had no effective influence upon the masses of the crusaders. After all, their attitude, inflamed by the Roman propaganda, had been characteristic from the beginning of the Hussite wars, as is fully confirmed by German Catholic sources.¹³⁶

While the crusaders gained little or no profit by keeping the bulk of the western army near Tachov, it is not clear why after a lost week the army began to move—first, it seems, eastward via Kladruby in the direction of Pilsen, and then rather suddenly taking a sharp turn in a southerly direction, passing Horšovský Týn and then stopping before

135. Supposedly also upon the protest of "duke John of Bavaria," who claimed the city as his own heritage which should not be destroyed. See Kilian's report to the Teutonic grand master, *U.B.*, II, 237–239, with valuable details on the further events. "Duke John" was actually the Wittelsbach palsgrave of Neumarkt; see, with other works, Benno Hubensteiner, *Regententafel*, V (Munich, 1967), 382.

136. *U.B.*, II, 240, 241. For additional proofs see Piccolomini, *Bohemian History*, chapter 48, and Bezold, *König Sigmund*, III, 148.

the gates of Domažlice. This town had, almost alone in the western border region, early joined the active Hussite cities belonging to the Taborite brotherhood, and had been especially loyal to John Žižka;¹³⁷ it was certainly a stronger bulwark of Hussitism than Tachov. At the same time, by staying so close to the western border, the crusaders lost any chance of joining up with the other two strong armies, the Silesian-Lusatian in the northeast and the Austrian in the southeast; it began to be clear that the planned coöperation of the three main army groups would not materialize. Perhaps it was understandable that the Lusatian troops tried to regain the city of Löbau, as well as some other places which the Hussites had gained in a short but effective offensive during May. Indeed, the Lusatians, perhaps because they (and the Silesians) fought on their own soil, were the only crusaders who had any success.¹³⁸

Of far greater significance were the activities of duke Albert with his Austrian forces. This army was probably better organized than any of the others, and until quite recently the duke had given reason to his allies in the west to expect that he would join them soon. In fact he made not a single move in this direction. Instead of marching toward the northwest he led his troops—some 14,000 men—northeast into the eastern part of Moravia. The purpose is rather obvious: while he had a not unjustified doubt as to the efficacy of the crusading armies now in the west, his foremost interest was not so much the general destruction of heresy, although he was an orthodox Catholic. Rather, he wanted to use this opportunity to strengthen his position in Moravia, which his father-in-law, as king of Bohemia and of the Romans, had given him in 1423 by enfeoffing him as margrave of Moravia—a very substantial increase in his possessions. This position, of course, had never been acknowledged by the Hussite Czechs, and various parts of the country had changed hands several times. The leading cities, however—especially Olomouc as the residence of cardinal John “the Iron,” as well as Brno, Znojmo, and Jihlava, all inhabited predominantly by Germans—had accepted the Hapsburg prince. Now Albert decided to establish his hold more firmly, in the expectation that the main Hussite forces, which at other times would have reacted against him, would be busy in the defense of the Bohemian west. From Laa, south of the border, his army crossed the Dyje (Thaya) river into Moravia, easily took the small town of Kyjov, and killed, as a Catholic source claims, most of the defenders. Then,

137. See his letter to Domažlice, Appendix IV, in Heymann, *Žižka*, p. 488, and pp. 205 and 276 in the text.

138. *U.B.*, II, 245–246.

crossing the Morava river near Kroměříž, he besieged Přerov south-east of Olomouc, but, because Moravian Hussites were approaching, soon gave up the siege. The Hussites, however, were not strong enough to deal with him. Besides some struggles with a Moravian Hussite sect called "the temperate ones,"¹³⁹ it appears that the duke, though these were supposed to be his own subjects, burned some five hundred villages (probably an exaggeration), killing most of the inhabitants.¹⁴⁰

Meanwhile one looks in vain for any reasonable strategy on the part of the main army in western Bohemia. The lack of it, and of even minimal discipline among the crusading soldiery, is somewhat astonishing, since the crusading army was numerically much stronger than the Hussite army with which the German leaders, and especially Frederick of Brandenburg, had to cope. What were the causes that weakened the supreme commander to such an extent? In 1427, during the fourth crusade, he was subject to severe restrictions from other leaders as well as hampered by poor health, but the 1422 crusade had at least shown him to be a man of determination and clarity of purpose. In 1431 on the contrary, he seems to have been quite unclear as to his goals, and the results were correspondingly negative. It appears obvious that he had no confidence at all in the possibility of victory over the "heretics."

The bulk of Hussite military forces had, in the meantime, been assembled in the very center of the country, near the town of Beroun, less than forty miles west of Prague and a little over fifty east of Pilsen. It seems that at first, with the news of another great crusading army's having invaded Bohemia, at least a few war-weary nobles, including some well-known knights who had at earlier times firmly fought against king Sigismund and his anti-Hussite policy, refused to participate in the defense of the country and its religious reform.¹⁴¹ Yet the three main groups, Taborites, "Orphans," and Praguers, could be mobilized fast and effectively under the supreme leadership of Prokop the Great. The total number of the troops under Prokop's command is sometimes given as 40,000, sometimes as 55,000, with some 3,000 war wagons.¹⁴² If the second figure were

139. "Qui Mediocres vocantur." See Bartošek of Drahonice in *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, V, 604-605.

140. *Ibid.*, see also Piccolomini's *Bohemian History*, last pages of chapter 48; Rudolf Dvorák, *Dějiny markrabství Moravského* (Brno, 1906), p. 166; and T. Pešina, *Mars Moravicus* (Prague, 1677), pp. 562-563 and later.

141. See *U.B.*, II, 235.

142. See Bezold, *König Sigismund*, III, 149, note 3, and Frankenberger, *Naše velká armáda*, III, 89-90.

correct—which seems a little doubtful—then it would certainly have to include those Polish troops who had come to help the Czechs.¹⁴³ Their leader was, as in earlier times, prince Korybut, who had, with the support of the pro-Hussite members of the *szlachta* (gentry), put together an army which supposedly was 8,000 men strong. The assumption that this help was given directly upon the order of Vladislav is highly doubtful,¹⁴⁴ but the Polish king, still angry with Sigismund, does not seem to have taken any direct measures to prevent the support which his nephew gave to the “heretics.”

It is quite clear that the main Czech military effort was, as before, made by the brotherhoods, and that the specific credit belongs to the priest-general Prokop the Great. Starting from Beroun on August 11 or 12,¹⁴⁵ the Czech army went west at great speed, apparently bypassing Pilsen to the south, and stopping first for a short rest at Chotěšov. Early on August 14, having ascertained the position of the enemy, who had burned some of the suburbs of Domažlice, the Czech army, organized in three corps, approached the crusaders, who, astonishingly, had made few if any preparations for meeting the army of the “heretics.” Above all, no attempt had been made to employ the rich supply of war wagons which, if properly used, could have created a very strong mobile fortress.¹⁴⁶ In fact these instruments of technical progress in the history of late medieval war, which had helped the armies of Žižka and Prokop so much, functioned in the hands of the crusaders almost as impediments.

Meanwhile the only at all substantial effort made by the crusaders was the attempt to conquer Domažlice. The suburbs had been burned down, and according to some sources the besiegers had tried to persuade the defenders to surrender—a suggestion which was not accepted, since the Hussite army was not far away. The whole siege can, in any case, not have lasted long, probably not more than three or four days.¹⁴⁷

Early on August 14 (1431) the Hussite army, organized in its three divisions, moved on from Chotěšov, went southwest via Stod, bypassed in its main body Horšovský Týn to the east, and then marched

143. See, for the background, J. Macůrek, ed., *Češi a Poláci v minulosti*, pp. 137 ff.

144. Altmann, *Windecke*, p. 317.

145. See the “Old Annalists,” e.g. *Staré letopisy české z rukopisu křižovníckého*, ed. Simek and Kaňák, pp. 100–102, and *Archiv český*, VI, 424.

146. The war-wagons and their handling, originally invented and used by Žižka, had by this time ceased to be a new or secret weapon, and occasionally their use by the enemies of Hussitism is emphasized. See, for example, Sigismund’s letter to Ulrich of Rosenberg in *Archiv český*, I, 33.

147. Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, II, 91 and note 45.

almost directly south,¹⁴⁸ getting close to the old, strong castle of Ryžmberk (Riesenberg), quite near to Domažlice. Presumably Frederick had sent out reconnaissance patrols who warned him before the Hussites arrived near enough to be seen or heard. He ordered the forces which were directly under his command (especially the Brandenburg troops) to establish a defensive position on a hill, near the road from Domažlice to Kdyně. While the main body of war wagons had, it seems, been put up on the hill for defense against Hussite attack, he had ordered other wagons, used mostly for supply purposes, to be placed behind the war wagons, probably to protect and save them in case a retreat should be necessary.¹⁴⁹ This information, however, did not reach the neighboring army groups, nor their commanders, among them Frederick II of Saxony and cardinal-legate Cesarini, who, at the head of some Italian troops, had taken his own position with the Saxon army.

The Czech forces, it is generally assumed, attacked with their famous song "Ye who are the warriors of God,"¹⁵⁰ a song which had encouraged the Hussites and frightened their enemies more than once before. The details of the ensuing battle are not altogether clear. It is, however, obvious that the general mood among the masses of crusaders was almost from the beginning totally defeatist as soon as they had to deal with a strong, well-organized army instead of the helpless peasants who so far had been their victims.¹⁵¹ The sudden movement of the wagons in the direction of the border forests was noticed by the Saxon elector and the papal legate, who had climbed another hill to ascertain the military situation. Cardinal Cesarini angrily protested, jumping to the erroneous conclusion that Frederick of Brandenburg had intended to betray the purpose of the crusade (the cardinal did not maintain this painful suspicion). Frederick apparently tried to maintain discipline, even during the retreat which he must have considered inevitable. But his army, demoralized, had already begun to dissolve, and a determination to escape from any fight was steadily growing among the masses. There

148. Urbánek, *Z husitského věku*, pp. 148 ff.

149. See "Staří letopisové čeští," *Dílo Palackého*, ed. Charvát, II, 83, and the addition in *Censura*, 1945, pp. 15–16 (also valuable for what follows).

150. See Bezold, *König Sigmund*, III, 151 and footnote. The text is given in literal translation in Heymann, *Žižka*, pp. 497–498.

151. John of Segovia, "Historia gestorum synodi Basiliensis," in *Monumenta conciliorum saec.*, XV, 2 (1873). See also, for what follows, the letters in *U.B.*, II, 237 ff. and 240–241; Altmann, *Windecke's* report on pp. 311, 317, and 340; *Staří letopisové čeští*, as cited in note 145, above; and Bartošek of Drahonice, *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, V, 604–605. For later presentations see Urbánek, *Z husitského věku*, pp. 148 ff., and Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, II, 90 ff.

were a few exceptions, the most impressive being the two hundred Italians who had joined the crusade with the papal legate. Near the entrance into the border forests a lone attempt was made, mainly upon the repeated urging of Cesarini, to stop the wild flight by the hurried construction of a wagon-fortress, a procedure that the more experienced of the German and Austrian soldiers had begun to learn from the Hussites. But the Czech forces were following too closely after their enemies, and soon penetrated the crusaders' position. Of the defenders, especially the Italians, hardly anybody escaped alive, while many others were taken prisoners.¹⁵² Cesarini himself escaped only with difficulty, having changed his clothes because he was in danger not only from the "heretics" but even from the crusaders, many of whom held him responsible for the terrible disaster.

After this episode not the slightest attempt was made to resist the frightening enemy. Whereas at first the German troops had tried to use wagons for fast travel by keeping to the few existing roads across the mountainous forests, a steadily growing number now looked for, and sometimes found, forest trails on which they might have a better chance to escape with their lives. The Czech soldiers, having again easily defeated a numerically superior army, were in an ecstasy, which was further increased when, on seizing all sorts of war materiel, they also gained large quantities of wine, which they consumed that night.¹⁵³

The actual losses of Catholic soldiers of the fifth and last crusade have never been clearly established, either from Czech or from German sources. We cannot even be sure whether the victims were numbered in hundreds or in thousands. The first reports emerging from the nearby German cities, such as Nuremberg, claimed that the loss of life was rather small, and thus did not give the recipients even a partial idea of the pitiful collapse of the great crusading army.¹⁵⁴ At most there was an admission that much of the war materiel had been lost. Somewhat more accurate was a report sent by the council of the town of Cheb, expressing deep pessimism, since there was now

152. See Bartoš, *op. cit.*, II, 92, and the other sources quoted in his note 138.

153. It is rather odd that, especially at this phase, some information has come to us by way of two works of poetry. One, from the side of the crusaders, is written by the German poet and occasional war reporter Hans Rosenplüt, in a poem called "Von der Hussenflucht," in Liliencron, *Historische Volkslieder der Deutschen*. The other is by the town secretary of Prague, Lawrence of Březová, author of the "Kronika husitská," who wrote a long, triumphant Latin poem published by Goll in *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, V, 543-563, and republished by Hrdina and Ryba, with Czech translation as *Piseň o vltěžství u Domažlic* (Prague, 1951).

154. *U.B.*, II, 241, 243.

hardly any chance of eliminating, by military means, the danger that the heretics presented to "us poor people."¹⁵⁵

Among those who had not been present at the great disaster, the man with the fewest illusions was probably Sigismund, king of the Romans. He had, in the last weeks before the decisive battle, still received optimistic reports. They came from, among others, his close friend and supporter, lord Ulrich of Rosenberg,¹⁵⁶ and the king, on the last day of July 1431, thanked him warmly for this promising (and in some details quite wrong) information, and urged him to give support to Frederick of Brandenburg and his forces. He probably did not consider a miraculous victory completely impossible, but he can hardly have expected it to be likely. A few weeks later when, still dwelling at Nuremberg and busy preparing for his long journey to Rome, he was informed of the events of August 14, he wrote two remarkable letters, one to Frederick of Brandenburg, the other to Ulrich. The former is somewhat difficult to evaluate.¹⁵⁷ There is no outspoken reproach to the man who, if anybody, might have been held responsible for the defeat. The king presents a picture which seems to be the direct echo of a report sent to him by Frederick himself. "The army," he writes, "as you know well, has regrettably broken off its position in Bohemia and has returned home without much damage to the people, by the grace of God." The situation, he continues, "cannot be simply left as it is. Christianity and the neighboring countries [next to Bohemia] must not be allowed to remain totally hopeless, nor must the heretics further remain so delighted and strengthened." He informs Frederick that he has already called a meeting of the Reichstag at Frankfurt for October 16 with the purpose of organizing a "daily war." Specifically, he urges him to prepare for further possible invasions by the heretics across the forests (of the lands west of Bohemia), a measure which anyhow would be very much in the interest of Frederick and his Franconian lands if—which was doubtful in view of the recent fights in Franconia—the margrave and his friends could deal effectively with Husite invaders.

Two days later Sigismund wrote to Ulrich of Rosenberg. This letter seems to express the king's feelings more genuinely. Ulrich appears to have given him a much clearer idea of the defeat at Domažlice and the way in which the German princes and their armies were thrown

155. *Ibid.*, II, 242.

156. B. Rynešová, *Listář a listinný Oldřicha z Rožmberka*, I (Prague, 1929), 125 ff.

157. *U.B.*, II, 243–245.

out of Bohemia.¹⁵⁸ There is no claim that the armies had returned to Germany nearly undiminished; obviously the Czech-royalist magnate knew better. The king simply expressed his deep sadness about what had happened. He had, he says, discussed the whole development with the German princes and the papal legate, but none of them had made it fully clear what had caused the catastrophe, except perhaps what Ulrich had already written to him: that it was their sins which had been punished. This, indeed, had long been the only acceptable explanation for the painful fact that God, throughout those twelve years, had always withheld his blessings from those who had tried to eliminate the "heresy."

The old expectation—that before long God would change his mind and help the papal party—was less and less maintained by princes, nobles, and even clerics in Germany and elsewhere. Frederick of Brandenburg, a thoughtful man, had been one of the first among these skeptics. Now the question why God had withheld his help in five great crusades became a subject of doubt even in the mind of cardinal Cesarini. From what he had seen with his own eyes the chances for military successes, even on a modest level, seemed to have vanished. On the other hand the Council of Basel, he began to feel, might lead to some solution, and this was now his chief responsibility. The council had been opened, with as yet sparse participation, on July 23, 1431, just one week before the crusaders had invaded Bohemia. Now, on September 9, the legate himself joined the council. His was not an easy task.

The final chapters of the Hussite wars are no longer part of the history of anti-Hussite crusades in the strict sense. No real attempt was made by the Catholics to build another such army, let alone to send it into the Bohemian lands; even the "daily war" was tending to disappear. Yet the war as such was not quite finished: especially the Taborites and the "Orphans" continued fighting in neighboring lands after the victory of Domažlice. In Silesia Prokop the Great relieved one of the strongest Hussite positions, Niemcza, which had for some time been under siege. After that he turned south toward Moravia, where the Hussite field armies drove duke Albert of Austria out. For some time the rural regions, as well as many of the castles belonging to Hussite nobility, could be considered Czech dependencies. Yet a number of cities, lightly fortified and strengthened with additional Austrian troops, maintained loyalty to the Hapsburg prince. The Hussites continued marching into the northern regions of Hungary

158. Again the letter to which Sigismund specifically refers has not been preserved. See Rynešová, *op. cit.*, I, 127–128.

(today's Slovakia), but some struggle between the two brotherhoods led to Prokop's returning to Bohemia and, as a result, to a painful defeat of some "Orphan" troops by combined Austrian and Hungarian forces.¹⁵⁹ On the whole, however, the Hussites, in the fall and winter of 1431, could feel stronger than at any time before.

For the other side, especially the Germans, all hopes were now pinned on Basel. While some members of the council still looked for a military solution, the majority began to hope for a constructive diplomatic settlement. In many ways this was, at this stage, the most important issue with which the council had to deal. It was Cesarini who played the leading role, since the earlier expectation that Sigismund, on his way to Italy, would spend some time at Basel was not fulfilled.¹⁶⁰ If the king had personally contributed to the early work of the council, pope Eugenius IV would probably have been less tempted to try to throttle it. One of the main reasons was the pope's unwillingness to permit negotiations (and, of course, a compromise) with the Hussites. But if Eugenius had been successful all chance for peace would have been killed. At this stage of the prolonged struggle between pope and council not only the overwhelming majority of the members of the council but many of the leading prelates of Italy and France fought against the pope.¹⁶¹ The struggle went on for a long time. In the main it was Cesarini's stubborn fight for its survival and the support by king Sigismund which eventually forced the pope to tolerate its continuance.

At an early date, on October 10, the council, mainly directed by Cesarini, sent a warm and open invitation to the Hussites, and after some difficulties the issues were given a fairly thorough discussion at Cheb between representatives of the council and of the Hussites. Above all, the certain safety of the Hussites, as well as their complete freedom to speak out and express their views, had to be guaranteed, and indeed were by the representatives of the council. The result was that a strongly representative Hussite embassy arrived in Basel on January 4, 1433, and was received with great politeness, especially

159. Bartošek of Drahonice, *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, V, 605–606.

160. Aschbach, *Geschichte Kaiser Sigmunds*, III, 384–385.

161. The most recent treatment of Eugenius's fight with the Council of Basel is presented by J. Gill in his book *Eugenius IV, Pope of Christian Union* (London, 1961), especially in chapter 3 (pp. 39–68). A considerably older, but more detailed and still highly valuable, treatment is that by Creighton in *A History of the Papacy*, II, chapter VI. A shorter treatment is in Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste* (5th ed.), I, 299–305. Among the basic sources there are especially Raynaldus, *Annales ecclesiastici*, vol. IX, and Mansi, *Monumenta conciliorum generalium*, vol. II (Vienna, 1873). The difficulties between Eugenius and Sigismund (mainly before his imperial coronation by the pope) are treated in detail by Aschbach, *Geschichte Kaiser Sigmunds*, III, 17–106. For the decisive letter of Cesarini to the pope see the partial translation in Creighton, *op. cit.*, II, 204–207.

by Cesarini.¹⁶² It could hardly be expected that mutual understanding would be easy. Repeatedly it looked as if the negotiations would fail. The demand for a general truce was refused by Prokop the Great—still the dominant personality among the Czech leaders—since this would eliminate the only strong pressure which could be exerted upon the council. In almost all issues he was supported by the leading figure among the Utraquist clergy, John Rokycana. Both also tried to gain a concession which the council refused to grant: the rule that in all parts of Bohemia and Moravia communion under both kinds should be obligatory. For the Czechs it would mean the prevention of regional struggles within the realm. But in the eyes of the members of the council it would have meant forcing the principles of Utraquism upon those cities that had maintained the orthodox Catholic ritual, such as Pilsen, and on the surrounding royalist castles whose owners were considered as the “Landfrieden” of Pilsen. Apart from one of the most impressive “beautiful rides”—the successful march of the “Orphan” army, supporting its Polish ally in a war against the Teutonic Knights and getting as far as the West Prussian Baltic coast¹⁶³—the armies of the brotherhoods hoped to enforce religious unity in Bohemia by besieging and conquering Pilsen. Since the Hussite demand could not be accepted by the council, the more determined Hussites decided to impose this change by military means.

The enterprise against Pilsen, first limited to the Taborite field army under Prokop the Great, later also strengthened by “Orphans,” proved a failure.¹⁶⁴ An attempt to seize provisions in neighboring Bavaria resulted in serious losses, and as the great priest-general was held responsible, some of his soldiers—many of them no longer devoted fighters for God—exploded in a mutiny and even kept Prokop under arrest for a short time, after which he left the army and settled in the New Town of Prague. This led to a considerable weakening of the military strength of the Taborites. In military terms this loss of power by the brotherhoods and their cities turned out to be the beginning of the end. In 1424 Žižka had defeated an army consisting of many nobles and of citizens of the Old Town of Prague. For ten years the fairly radical Taborite brotherhood, the somewhat

162. The history of the Hussite Czechs at Basel is well presented by Tomek, *Dějepis Prahy*, IV, 541–587, 689–713; by Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, II, 120–162, 187–196; and in English by the concise but lively and excellent treatment of E. F. Jacob under the title “The Bohemians at the Council of Basel, 1433,” in R. W. Seton-Watson’s collection of articles called *Prague Essays* on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the Caroline University of Prague (Oxford, 1949).

163. Macek, *Husité na Baltu a ve Velkopolsku* (Prague, 1952).

164. Macek, *Prokop Veliký*, pp. 176 ff.

more moderate "Orphans," and to some extent the inhabitants of the New Town of Prague had maintained most of the ideas and policies of the original revolution. All attempts at a counter-revolution had so far ended in a fiasco. Now, finally, an alliance of the majority of the high nobility, some of the knights, and the people of the Old Town of Prague combined for action against the brotherhoods. The first step was the rapid conquest of the New Town. Prokop the Great, having barely escaped, decided to take the initiative to save the brotherhoods and the freedom of the many cities which had joined them in the course of time. He was welcomed back by the masses of the Taborite army, which now pulled away from Pilsen and was soon joined by Prokop the Short with his "Orphans." Even so, with about 18,000 men, they were weaker than the army of the League of Lords, which had grown to about 25,000. A battle fought on May 30, 1434, at Lipany, about thirty miles east of Prague, ended with the total defeat of the field armies of the brotherhoods, with both Prokops falling in the fight.¹⁶⁵

From then on the role of the brotherhoods and their cities, though not completely eliminated, was considerably reduced. Essentially this was the end of the Hussite revolution, though by no means of the Hussite reformation. Radicalism, in its various aspects, was no longer dominant, and in Basel hopes were strong that most of the Hussite demands for reform would be essentially reduced. It is difficult to decide to what extent this turned out to be true. The death, especially, of Prokop the Great certainly was a gain for those masters of the University who had always wanted to go back as far as possible toward Roman orthodoxy, and in this sense one could perhaps say that the "moderate" armies of the lords and of Old Prague had done the very work which the crusades had never achieved.

But this is only partially true, particularly because the final arrangement, based on the four so-called Compacts, had already, before the battle of Lipany, become the basis of a possible understanding, and also because of the dominant role played by John Rokycana, definitely the true leader of the Utraquist reformation, who had not lost his influence upon the further negotiations with the council.¹⁶⁶ It was another two years until the Compacts which were the final result of the negotiations were signed by both sides and

165. For the origins, the source, and the results of the battle of Lipany see the second part of Urbánek, *Lipany*; cf. Macek, *Prokop Veliký*, pp. 183-191, and Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, II, 163-174.

166. The role of Rokycana, together with that of Peter Payne, is remarkably well presented by E. F. Jacob, *op. cit.*

endorsed by emperor Sigismund,¹⁶⁷ in the Moravian city of Jihlava on July 5, 1436. True, they were a compromise, considerably weaker than the original Four Articles of Prague for which the Hussites had fought so hard.¹⁶⁸ Above all, the wording was such that they could be understood in very different ways, and those different interpretations were to cause difficulties from the first moment after the signing of the Compacts, even between such relatively moderate men as John Rokycana on the side of the Hussites and bishop Philibert of Coutances of the council. "Neither side," writes Creighton, "abandoned their convictions, and the peace which had been proclaimed affected only the outward aspect of affairs. The Bohemians remained the victors. They had re-entered the Church on condition that they were allowed an exceptional position."¹⁶⁹

The immediate winner was Sigismund, who after many years of fierce antagonism had in the end repeatedly supported the Czechs against the council, since he realized that only thereby could he regain the crown of St. Wenceslas. But once on his throne in Prague he expected, slowly but definitely, to destroy the religious autonomy of Utraquism. Thus it was characteristic that he first promised to support the election of John Rokycana as archbishop of Prague and then cautiously urged the council in the opposite direction.¹⁷⁰

A dangerous struggle might have broken out if Sigismund's rule, from August 1436 to his death in December 1437, had not been so short and had not been followed by another very short reign, that of his son-in-law Albert of Hapsburg, from June 1438 to October 1439. He had great difficulty in establishing his position in Bohemia as well as in Hungary. In the following period of interregnum, the Utraquist church, in spite of certain difficulties and weaknesses, established its position as an essentially autonomous national church under the leadership of Rokycana.¹⁷¹

This position became even stronger when, in the years from 1448

167. See Aschbach, *Geschichte Kaiser Sigmunds*, IV, 251–253, 293–305. Sigismund was crowned by the pope in Rome in May 1433.

168. The most thorough study of the Compacts is presented in vol. I of Urbánek, *Věk Poděbradský* (České dějiny, III, 1; Prague 1915), chapter 2. Cf. Tomek, *Dějepis Prahy*, IV, 617–628, 676–687, 704–711. See also O. Odložilík, *The Hussite King* (New Brunswick, 1965), pp. 5–13, and Heymann, *George of Bohemia* (Princeton, 1965), pp. 6–12.

169. *A History of the Papacy*, II, 291.

170. For the whole issue see Urbánek, *Lipany*, I, 120 ff.

171. See F. Hrejsa, *Dějiny Křesťanství v Československu*, III (Prague, 1948), 31–89; and in English, Heymann, "The Hussite-Utraquist Church in the 15th and 16th Centuries," *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte*, LII (1961), 1–16, and, on Rokycana, Heymann, "John Rokycana, Church Reformer between Hus and Luther," *Church History*, XXVIII (1959), 240–280.

to 1452, George of Kunštát and Poděbrady, a firm believer in Utraquism as it was understood and shaped by Rokycana, gained the position of regent for Albert's posthumous son Ladislav and then, soon after the young king's early death in 1457, was elected king.¹⁷² As a matter of principle and political wisdom George did his best to ensure that Catholicism and Utraquism might live peacefully with each other, a policy of determined tolerance based on the existence of the Compacts. For some time it also seemed as if his relation to the holy see was a good one, but later pope Pius II (Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini) tried to force him to give up, with the Compacts, the substance of Utraquism. Pius himself did not go beyond political and legal pressure, steadily harsher in his last years, when he still hoped to lead a crusade against the Turks, until he died in 1464.

Pius's successor Paul II, however, went farther, making use of the political antagonism of a clique of lords who disliked the king's strength, and of the ambitions of George's son-in-law, the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus. The result was a war which was at least presented, by papal bull, as a crusade and in various aspects looked like one.¹⁷³ Matthias was a much better general and a far more dangerous enemy than his predecessor Sigismund had been. Yet, in spite of Matthias's temporary gains, he was unable to accomplish the intended extermination of Hussitism. King George was unshakable in the defense of his basic policy. There were some desperately difficult phases, especially in the fall of 1468.¹⁷⁴ Yet George managed to turn the tide, to prove his strength in standing up to his enemies, and even to conclude peace and friendship with a number of them, including emperor Frederick III. But in March 1471, as the result of illness, he died, to be succeeded by Vladislav II (Władysław), the oldest son of king Casimir IV of Poland. George's heroic defense of his country and of the freedom of Utraquism led, in the final outcome, to the survival of the Hussite-Utraquist reformation down to the time when it became one of the branches of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The "second Hussite war," with its occasional aspects of a crusade, turned out to be as ineffective as had been the long, more painful, more solemnly organized series of five crusades which, in the years from 1420 to 1431, had ended almost every time in such utter disaster.

172. For the following see the two recent works in English on George by Odložilik and Heymann cited in note 168, above.

173. For these attempted crusades see Odložilik, *op. cit.*, pp. 194 ff., 208-209, and Heymann, *George of Bohemia*, pp. 420 ff., 437 ff., 460-461, 490-491.

174. Palacký (in second Czech ed., part 4, II, 475 ff.) called it eight horrible weeks. In fact the hard time lasted longer.



20. Bohemia and its Neighbors