

DECREE OF KUTNÁ HORA: THE CONTEST FOR UNIVERSITY, CHURCH, NATION AND MAN IN THE MIRROR OF HISTORIOGRAPHY AND IDEOLOGY

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This paper does not address the events as they indeed happened, their actual causes, actual protagonists and actual consequences. Instead, it is an attempt to overview what various people in various epochs were thinking and saying about the events, their causes, protagonists and consequences. Few years ago I tried to look in a similar way at the Hussite movement as a whole, because it struck me that western authors see Hussitism as a primarily nationalist movement, while Czech historians mostly underline its social or religious aspects.¹ The result was a parade of citations, by far not sufficiently representative, but certainly symptomatic enough. The parade started by citing two contradictory accounts of the Hussite wars, coming from the middle of 15th century, namely, the *Historia Hussitica* by Lawrence of Březová² and the *Historia Bohemica* by Aeneas Silvius.³ I found out that the events around the Decree of Kutná Hora belong to most disputable issues.

In the case of the Decree of Kutná Hora, we have no report from Lawrence. And this is what Aeneas writes:

Before, the Prague University was controlled by Germans. The Czechs, people naturally wild and untamable, could not bear it. One of them, ... who studied ... in Oxford, when he acquainted himself with the works of John Wyclif, ... brought their copies with him. ... He used to lend these writings ... mainly to those who hated Germans, among whom a certain John stood out, a man of low lineage who derived his name from a village called Hus ... He took hold ... of Wyclif's teaching and started to annoy German masters with it, in a hope that the Germans will leave the University in confusion. When this plan failed, he pushed it through with Wenceslas that the Prague University adopted the rules of the Paris University. This took the control of the schools away from the hands of the Germans. The German masters became irritated by this ... and ... left Prague...⁴

¹ Eva DOLEŽALOVÁ, *Nacionální a náboženské aspekty pohledu na české reformní hnutí 14. a 15. století a husitskou revoluci v západní historiografii*, in: Eva Semotanová (ed.), *Cestou dějin. K počtě prof. PhDr. Svatavy Rakové, CSc. Kolektivní monografie, I*, Praha 2007, pp. 63–75.

² Vavřinec z BŘEZOVÉ, *Husitská kronika. Chronicon Laurentii de Brzyezowa*, ed. Jaroslav GOLL, Prague 1893 (*Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, V), pp. 329–534.

³ Enea SILVIO, *Historia Bohemica. Historie česká*, edd. Dana MARTÍNKOVÁ – Alena HADRAVOVÁ – Jiří MATL, Praha 1998.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

We are fortunate to have some accounts of direct participants of the events. The Czech lawyer John of Jesenice wrote a defence of the Decree, called *Defensio Mandati*. He argues as follows:

*The most illustrious ... Lord Wenceslas ... has dominion over the realm of Bohemia by the [favour of] divine grace. Therefore, ... it pertains ... to him to dispose over his realm and to provide for his subjects, over foreigners, with peace and special prerogatives. ... The Bohemian nation should be the chief ruler of the other nations in the University of Prague. This appears from the similar case in the divine law. For it is the promise of the Lord: "... the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail ..." ... [Then] similarly the King of Bohemia can ... make the Bohemian nation ... the head and not the tail ...*⁵

Jan Hus was reported to say, in one of his sermons in the Bethlehem Chapel:

*Children, praise the Lord Almighty that we have expelled the Germans and reached the goal we had been striving for. We have won!*⁶

It seems more difficult to find direct accounts of the opinion of the other side. The Leipzig University Codex contains a complaint of the three German nations, addressed to the king Wenceslas IV and written evidently before the exodus:

*Your Majesty has issued a decree concerning the university, your daughter, from which it follows that it has been indeed ordered that from now on the Bohemian nation should have three votes at councils, courts, examinations, elections and other occasions and the mentioned other three nations only one [vote]. However, as this order is very burdensome and unbearable for these three nations, would lead to a total consumption of these nations and its [actual] effect would be an infallible destruction of [the whole] university, ... we humbly ask your most esteemed Dignity with all urgency that the hitherto observed status of the above-mentioned three nations ... is acknowledged ...*⁷

A derisive song of German students, composed after the exodus, puts it as follows:

*Prague, mother of arts, used to boast of her pregnancy,
giving birth and nurture to twice two nations.
enduing her home country with descendants,
and maintaining her chastity and purity.
Now she has become adulteress bearing realists,
chimeras and diluvial Wycliffist monsters.*

...

⁵ František PALACKÝ (ed.), *Documenta mag. Joanis Hus vitam, doctrinam, causam ... illustrantia*, Praga 1869, pp. 355–363. The citation and English translation is taken from: Howard KAMINSKY, *A history of the Hussite revolution*, Berkeley–Los Angeles, 1967, p. 68. The citation of the Scriptures is from Deut., 28, 13. The full Czech translation of the original Latin text (Defense of King Wenceslas's mandate), ascribed incorrectly to Jan Hus, was published by Václav FLAJŠHANS (ed.), *Mistr Jan Hus. Proti Němcům a cizozemcům. Obrana Kutnohorského mandátu krále Václava IV. z r. 1409*, Praha 1900. The words cited can be found *ibid.*, pp. 17, 19 and 20.

⁶ Carl Adolf Constantin HÖFLER, *Magister Johannes Hus und der Abzug der deutschen Professoren und Studenten aus Prag 1409*, Prag 1864, pp. 245–246; František ŠMAHEL, *Husitská revoluce*, II, Praha 1993, p. 238; F. PALACKÝ, *Documenta*, pp. 183–184.

⁷ Johannes Theobald HELD, *Tentamen historicum illustrandis rebus anno MCCCCIX in Universitate Pragensi gestis extractum editum*, Praga 1827, p. 31.

*Shamelessly she takes on a coat of scandal,
assigning power to the Bohemian voice.
An unfaithful mother, a filthy whore,
who casts the bile of heresy ashore.
Oh, unfortunate Prague, already rejected,
favouring forbidden teachings, short of true faith.
Her happiness was ruined by the heresy.
She is fond of empty talks of her new Wycliff.
Without a comfort, full of depravity,
the poor Bohemian nation, villainous and disdained,
lost its primacy and remains in misery,
Another nation stole her riches from her.
Stand up, Leipzig and seize the glory of Bohemians,
their fame and honourable memories.⁸*

These were the testimonies and opinions of the direct participants and those who lived shortly after the events. Over the following centuries, i.e., the rest of the 15th century and then the 16th, 17th and even the 18th century, only few surviving texts refer to the Decree of Kutná Hora events. Some of them were later collected by Johannes Theobald Held (see below). We have an indirect testimony, perhaps a little bit glamorised, from Václav Hájek of Libočany, a Czech chronicler, a defender of the Bohemian State of the Estates and a priest who converted from the Calixtine church to the Roman Catholic one. He described the events of 1409 from the distance of more than a hundred years (as he wrote his chronicle in the second quarter of the 16th century). He sees the Decree of Kutná Hora as a “just verdict” of the king. He probably exaggerates the extent of the exodus by writing that Prague was left by “forty thousand [German students and masters] accompanied by many Czechs”. At length he describes the impact of the secession:

When the mentioned students had left Prague, the towns of Prague remained like widows, because all amusements and benefits had gone with them. The citizens of Prague bitterly regretted what had happened. They blamed Master Jan of Husinec for having been the first and greatest initiator of it and they defamed him in many ways, because they had been enjoying considerable benefits from the mentioned students. Due to them, Prague used to be very strong, thriving and extremely rich, because those who had been studying in Prague were sons of great princes, knights and merchants. Their fathers used to send them plenty of gold and silver in order that they study [properly] and have a good time. Swordmakers, whitesmiths, cutlers, canmakers, hatmakers and other craftsmen had been greatly profiting from them, because they used to buy gifts from them for sending them to their friends in their countries. Tailors, shoemakers, bakers, drapers, furriers, brewers and butchers, too, had been profiting from them ... Not only Prague itself but the whole land of Bohemia had been benefiting from them, but the Germans disdained the

⁸ The Latin derisive song is taken from Ferdinand SEIBT, *Johannes Hus und der Abzug der deutschen Studenten aus Prag 1409*, in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 39/1, 1957, p. 77. Seibt cites the manuscripts from which he took it. Few verses of the same and similar songs are also cited by Zikmund WINTER, *Děje vysokých škol pražských od secesí cizích národů po dobu bitvy bělohorské (1409–1622)*, Praha 1897, p. 8, n. 2. I thank Dr. Jana Zachová for the translation of the song from medieval Latin into Czech.

*Czechs, which [the latter] (as well driven by defiance and pride) did not want to swallow. Those who had left Prague, both Germans and Czechs, regretted later very much that they had conspired and swore. Long afterwards they were still yearning for Prague, expecting a letter [of invitation] from the king or from Prague citizens.*⁹

There evidently existed two parallel, but otherwise contradictory, views: one, blaming Hus and the Hussites for the hate of Germans and for the damage done, and the other one, sympathising and approving of the ethnical and religious cleansing that made the Prague University “small but ours”. Zikmund Winter gives brief references to several sources from the beginning of 17th century.¹⁰ He cites an utterance of Jan Jesenius, a medical professor of Slovak origin at the Prague University at the beginning of the 17th century:

[The king] *Wenceslas was kind to his nation as a father and made a good deed in favour of his Academy, in the same way as everybody helps and prefers his own.*¹¹

Winter further cites Master Vavřinec Benedikt Nudožerský who in 1611–1612 referred to the Decree of Kutná Hora when suggesting an ethnic template for composition of the University corps of rectors’s counsellors.

The affirmative attitude towards the Decree probably disappeared from the Czech public space after 1620, but did not cease to exist; otherwise we would not see its rapid revival in the 19th and 20th centuries. František Kavka, a Czech historian, wrote in 1959, on the occasion of 550th anniversary of the Decree:

*After the defeat on the White Mountain, the government in Vienna never allowed any commemoration [of the Decree]. The years 1709 and 1809 passed in total silence. ... In 1827 the rector of the University ... Johannes Theobald Held, leaving his office, parted with it by issuing a pamphlet “Tentamen historicum”, a first attempt whatsoever to collect reports on the events of 1409 and a first modern defence of the Decree of Kutná Hora.*¹²

Returning to Held,¹³ it is fair to say that we owe him an extensive collection of citations referring to the Decree of Kutná Hora. One of these citations (from the Codex of the University of Leipzig) is quoted above. Other important Held’s citations are those of Enea Silvio, Johannes Cochlaeus, Václav Hájek z Libočan, Jan Dubravius, Zacharias Theobaldus Jr., Bohuslav Balbín, Adauctus Voigt, František Martin Pelzel, František Pubitschka and Josef Jungmann, but also of anonymous chronicles and codices. Held tries to reconstruct the true course of events from these texts, which inevitably makes his book “not polemical enough” from our point of view. Held concludes, defending cautiously the Bohemian faction:

⁹ Václav HÁJEK Z LIBOČAN, *Kronyka česká*, Praha 1819, s. 365.

¹⁰ Z. WINTER, *Děje vysokých škol*, pp. 7, 108, 110.

¹¹ Z. WINTER, *Děje vysokých škol*, p. 7; Jan JESSENIUS, *De Restauranda Antiquissima Pragensi Academia*, Pragae 1619.

¹² František KAVKA, *Dekret kutnohorský a jeho místo v dějinách*, in: *Dekret kutnohorský a jeho místo v dějinách*, Praha 1959, pp. 11–17 (*Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Philosophica et historica* 2). F. M. Bartoš thinks that the true author of the pamphlet was František Palacký (e.g. *Sborník historický* 4, 1956, p. 37 – cited after Václav VANĚČEK, *Dekret kutnohorský z hlediska státu a práva*, in: *Dekret kutnohorský a jeho místo v dějinách*, pp. 55–69.)

¹³ J. T. HELD, *Tentamen historicum*.

It clearly follows from these reports and memories:

1. The Germans at the University of Prague had by no means an immutable and necessary right to avail of three votes, but only at the beginning, when the University was divided into four nations: Bohemian, Bavarian, Polish (especially Silesian) and Saxonian, because the Bohemian nation did not have a sufficient number of masters, ... they received three votes...

...

3. It by no means follows from the citations ... of the mentioned reports that the Bohemians demanded these three voices or that they were instigated by Jan Hus; the decree was issued by King Wenceslas up to his [own] intimate conviction.¹⁴

Let us now focus on the modern discourse as it took place over the rest of the 19th century and in the 20th century. Most typical for the 19th century are the opinions of two great opponents, Constantin Höfler and František Palacký. Höfler blames Hus for bad intentions, in the same way as Aeneas Sylvius did. In a long chapter, entitled “Catastrophe”, he writes, among many other things:

Hence, the suggestion for separation [of the Bohemian nation from the other three nations, which would mean the creation of two separate universities] did not come from the Bohemian nation ... and did not collapse because of obstinacy of the other parties, but it was made by the other three nations as a last resort in order to save the University from destruction. These three parties saw that, when they would break [their] oath, they would find themselves a helpless majority, terrorised by the fanatic leaders [of the Czechs] and exposed to brutal violence. It is difficult to guess what [the Czechs] could have undertaken against the remonstrance [of the three nations] if they [the Czechs] had remained in the position of justice. However, the position of justice and law was not the position of Hus, Hieronymus and their party; they wanted domination, and not the equality of rights.¹⁵

In conclusion, Höfler states:

As soon as the principle of equal rights of individual nations had been abandoned, [it meant that] also the main rule of the Christian era, [the rule of] coexistence, was abandoned. The Bohemians, who pretend that their ancestors were a vehicle of freedom, were [in reality] very far from that. They were rather suppressors of freedom, because freedom without recognition of the rights of others is a fiction.¹⁶

Palacký’s opinion can be demonstrated by the following citations:

Since long ago, German professors and students developed a habit of offending their Czech colleagues, calling them suspect from heterodoxy and heretics, and the Czechs, not without pain and anger, were forced to accept posts of teachers in small towns and villages, while the “foreigners” divided among themselves more honoured posts in the capital, endowed with rich benefices.¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 36–38.

¹⁵ C. HÖFLER, *Magister Johannes Hus*, p. 231.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 323.

¹⁷ František PALACKÝ, *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a na Moravě*, III, *Od roku 1403 až do roku 1439. Jubilejní vydání*, Praha 1937, p. 57.

Then he continues:

*A critical time for the reform and national movement then came; it was possible to suppress the vainglory, authoritativeness and predominance of Germans in Prague, using the enraged king, either now or never more.*¹⁸

and concludes:

*This move of German professors and students away from Prague, initiated and carried out in anger, had very important historical consequences ... Prague lost its priority among German cities ... The German nationality suffered ... a first heavy blow ... However, the nearest and mightiest emphasis was put ... on further development of the reform ideas among the Czechs. ... The strongest obstacle, which had defied these ideas up to this moment, was overcome ... and [the ideas freely] dispersed all over the country in all directions...*¹⁹

Ferdinand Seibt recapitulates about a hundred years later (in 1992):

*It is well-known that František Palacký labelled the Hussite revolution as being “at once” religious, national and social. This triple definition, however, is not valid. The religious, national and social motives do not act “at once” but against each other, in variable constellations. One element of the triad is always excluded. [The modern nationalism] overpowers the two other elements and becomes a substitute religion, as well as a substitute solution of social troubles. It is not difficult to observe how it acted in this role over the last two hundred years and goes on acting even today.*²⁰

And Seibt is right. Indeed, the majority of modern utterances about the Decree of Kutná Hora is more or less nationalistic. In order to characterise the Czech environment of 19th century, we may start with a citation from a novel by Josef Kajetán Tyl, published in 1841. A Czech student of the University says to his German professor:

*If the students of my kind and sort, my weight and manners are not good enough for you – then close the book, step off from the teacher’s desk, wipe off the dust from your shoes and leave our alma mater and Prague ... You may go, if you do not like Czech bread any more; there is enough men among native Czechs who can replace you in your post honourably and with the same success.*²¹

Many years later, namely in 1900, a prominent Czech historian Josef Pekař holds an equally passionate nationalistic stance:

Hus’s reform efforts have certainly a strong national flavour, he may even have been totally absorbed by the national conflicts at the University. It is mainly Hus’s and

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 58–59.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 60–61.

²⁰ Ferdinand SEIBT, *Natio Bohemica*, in: Hans Rothe (Hg.), *Deutsche in den Böhmischesen Ländern*, Köln–Weimar–Wien 1992, pp. 29–46 (Studien zum Deutschum im Osten 25/1).

²¹ Josef Kajetán TYL, *Dekret kutnohorský*, Praha 1928, p. 208.

*Hieronymus's credit that the king in 1409 issued the Decree of Kutná Hora, in which the German nation was told that it had no right of domicile in the country, and the Czech nation was declared a just heir to this country ... This was the greatest victory of Hus, which aroused greatest hatred against him abroad, in the Empire. – Hus was hated there not only as a heretic, but also as a destroyer of the Prague University.*²²

The Czech textbook of history for secondary schools from 1910 teaches Czech children (of the age 12 to 13 years) in the following manner:

*Wenceslas, advised by Hus, ordered in his memorable Decree of Kutná Hora from 1409 that the Czechs should henceforward have three votes at the University and the other nations altogether one vote. Many German masters and students then moved away from Bohemia ... However, the ancient desire of the Czechs was fulfilled through the Decree...*²³

On the German side, we can cite, for example, Heinz Zatschek, a professor at the German University of Prague and a member of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, who wrote in 1941:

*A special role in the European history and in the history of the German nation fell to the year 1409 ... The Czechs were mainly striving for posts in the colleges; therefore many [Germans], tired by incessant disputes, used to leave Prague for other German universities. These conflicts started earlier than the division in religious and scientific questions due to the imported Wyclif's teaching. In other words, the roots of the conflict must be sought in national antagonisms. ... The national conflict flared up after the Decree of Kutná Hora. When Master Jan Hus had been burned to death, [this conflict] changed into persecution of the Germans, during which vent was given to an unrestricted and cruel eviction. ... The question, whether the Prague riots of 1419 would have ever occurred, if hundreds of German students had been present in the town as before, has never been raised. The mere fact that it could emerge, should be a warning for us not to see the Hus-site chaos as an unavoidable necessity.*²⁴

The Second World War meant a new boost for the nationalism. In the post-war Czechoslovakia, the nationalism was further modified by the communist ideology, especially by the Lenin's doctrine claiming that nationalist and democratic revolutions occur as preliminary stages to socialist revolutions. The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia from 1953 contains the subject word "Decree of Kutná Hora", probably formulated by a Czech contributor, which is explained as:

*The act which eliminated the underprivileged position of the Czechs at the University of Prague and the privileged position of foreign, German professors. ... [The Decree] was issued under the pressure of the progressing Czech national liberation movement.*²⁵

²² Josef PEKAŘ, *O době husitské*. A lecture delivered at the Hus commemoration festival in Slaný on 8 July 1900, in: idem, *Postavy a problémy českých dějin*, ed. František Kutnar, Praha 1990, pp. 105–106.

²³ Marie GEBAUEROVA – Antonín JIRAK – Antonín REITLER, *Dějepis pro školy měšťanské*, II, *Pro druhou třídu škol měšťanských*, Praha 1910, 2nd unchanged edition, p. 23.

²⁴ Heinz ZATSCHEK, *Deutsche Geschichte. Als Handschrift gedruckt*, Wien 1941–2, pp. 243–247.

²⁵ *Boľshaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya*, XXIV (kukuruzna – lesnichestvo), Moskva 1953, 2nd edition, p. 144.

A secondary school textbook from 1955 (for the same 12 to 13 year-old children) puts it as follows:

*The Decree changed the voting ratio at the University in favour of the Czechs ... Thereby the Czechs acquired a decisive word... In protest, about 5000 German students and masters moved away from Prague in a body... Progressive ideas of Czech masters then prevailed...*²⁶

In 1959, the Rector of Charles University and the Head of the Department of Soviet History, Professor Jaroslav Procházka, said on the occasion of the 550th anniversary of the Decree:

*Today we commemorate an anniversary of the document which had a decisive meaning for the development of our university and became a symbol of the revolutionary process which ... ended up with the glorious Hussite movement ... Today ... we need not rally in order to fight for the right ... of our nation ... to have our own university... The community of progressive thinking associates the Charles University with the descendants of the German masters and students who, after the Decree, left ... mainly for Leipzig, with these descendants and successors and the universities of the German Democratic Republic in general...*²⁷

Czech historians of the post-war period were more cautious in their formulations, but none of them was able to refrain totally from looking for positive aspects of the Decree. Václav Chaloupecký wrote, on the occasion of the Charles University anniversary in 1948, in a rather objective way:

*The University of Prague, as most other European universities, lost its prevailing international character and became a national institution. The Decree of Kutná Hora ... only accelerated and accomplished the natural course of development of universities in Central Europe. The University ... obviously also lost ... its European reputation and its meaning... In this sense, the year 1409 meant a certain decline for Prague. Shortly afterwards, however, Prague regained its world-wide fame ... as a prominent seat of the revolution and the Hussite heresy.*²⁸

František Kavka wrote in 1959:

*This development was necessary and had to take place, as soon as the Charles University ceased to be a centre of scholarship for almost a half of Europe north of Alps. The nationalisation of universities was a pan-European phenomenon, and the Decree of Kutná Hora does not represent ... an arbitrary swingback, but only an acceleration of the process that would have to take place even without it.*²⁹

²⁶ Jaroslav ŠLAJER – Václav TYR – Alois SOSÍK – Emil STRAČÁR – Vojtěch VRABEC – Václav ŽÁČEK, *Dějiny středověku a novověku pro 7. postupný ročník*, Praha 1955, pp. 60–61.

²⁷ Jaroslav PROCHÁZKA's opening speech of the rector of Charles University at a ceremony commemorating the 550th anniversary of the Decree of Kutná Hora, in: *Dekret kutnohorský a jeho místo v dějinách*, pp. 7–9.

²⁸ Václav CHALOUPECKÝ, *Karlova universita v Praze 1348–1409*, Praha 1948, pp. 103–104.

²⁹ F. KAVKA, *Dekret kutnohorský a jeho místo v dějinách*, pp. 11–17.

Josef Petráň wrote in 1983:

*This is one of the greatest milestones of our university. [As a consequence, the university] changed so profoundly that its founder would hardly recognise ... his work. It ceased to be Sorbonne of the Empire and Central Europe, but it surpassed all others in becoming a kindling fireplace of the revolution. No other epoch in the past history of the Charles University was more important than this one.*³⁰

Vilém Herold wrote in 1985:

*... the Prague texts on ideas show the high philosophical culture of the Prague university environment and its Czech component, including the period after the Decree of Kutná Hora, which is still sometimes depicted ... as a downfall of the universitarian scholarship in Prague.*³¹

On the German side, the Decree still used to be evaluated as a prevailingly negative thing, if not through reference to facts, then through the use of negative vocabulary. Peter Moraw in 1986 concludes that:

*The so-called Decree of Kutná Hora initiated the phase of agony of the university, which lasted until the cancellation of its privileges by the Council of Konstanz and until an open outbreak of the Hussite movement (1417– 19).*³²

Roderich Schmidt wrote in 1992:

*Situation in the Church and power politics ... lead then to a decision, the far-reaching consequences of which could the protagonists hardly imagine. [These consequences] affected not only the University, the Church and the state, but the whole country and its inhabitants, both Czechs and Germans, and went on acting in their further history.*³³

Ferdinand Seibt was much more objective and self-restrained. He was able to demonstrate that Jan Hus, very probably, was not the main leader of the campaign around the Decree.³⁴ Seibt's overall evaluation of the Decree is as follows:

... the royal Decree ... also breached the freedom of academic self-government ... At the same time, [the Decree] made the rest of the university a provincial [institution], assimilating it to the other recently founded universities in Vienna, Cologne, Erfurt and Heidelberg. Ten years later, Prague was embarking again on a great mission, offering moral

³⁰ Josef PETRÁŇ, *Nástin dějin filozofické fakulty Univerzity Karlovy v Praze (do roku 1948)*, Praha 1983, p. 33.

³¹ Vilém HEROLD, *Pražská univerzita a Wyclif*, Praha 1985, p. 268.

³² Peter MORAW, *Die Universität zu Prag*, München 1986 (Schriften der Sudetendeutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste 7), here IDEM, *Die Universität Prag im Mittelalter. Grundzüge ihrer geschichte im europäischen Zusammenhang*, pp. 114–115.

³³ Roderich SCHMIDT, *Die Prager Universitäts-Nationen bis zum Kuttenger Dekret von 1409 und die Anfänge 'nationaler' Gedanken im Königreich Böhmen*, in: Hans Rothe (Hg.), *Deutsche in den Böhmisches Ländern*, Köln–Weimar–Wien 1992, p. 63 (Studien zum Deutschtum im Osten 25/1).

³⁴ F. SEIBT, *Johannes Hus*, pp. 63–80.

leadership to the Hussite revolution. The university, however, remained provincial because the revolution remained provincial. The university did not even have time to enjoy its new status as a first national university in the international orbis academicus, because it lost its [official] recognition by the Church during its struggle for the Hussite chalice already in 1417.³⁵

Lenka Bobková informs us about the image of Hussitism in general and of the Decree of Kutná Hora in particular in German school textbooks since 1880 up to this day.³⁶ The textbooks published before the First World War always accentuate the anti-German character of the events. The Weimar Republic textbooks from the years 1919 to 1933 do not mention Hus at all, but pay tribute to Charles IV as a founder of the first German university. The textbooks from the Federal Republic of Germany published in the 1950's mention the exodus of German academics from Prague in 1409 without analysing its causes. Even the contemporary textbooks ascribe to the Hussitism a primarily nationalist, i.e. anti-German, character, albeit in a very moderate form.

Finally, it may be worth citing the evaluation of the Decree provided by the *Cambridge Illustrated History of the Middle Ages* from 1986, which was written by a French scholar Jacques Verger:

*Since 1409, the expulsion of Germans from Prague University had demonstrated that the rise of Czech nationalism was closely linked with the idea of religious reform ... Hussitism ... under the spiritual direction of the University of Prague ... rallied a good part of the nobility and the Czech bourgeoisie to its cause...*³⁷

We notice that, today, different opinions tend to converge. Some differences persist, but this is the right state of the things. The opinions should be different, interact with each other and cross-fertilize each other. The long history of different opinions and attitudes we have just had an opportunity to overview was not futile and fruitless. Perhaps the best last citation would be that of a great philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel from his *Phenomenology of the Spirit*:

*... the genuine whole is not obtained as a mere result, but as the result together with the way in which it arose.*³⁸

³⁵ IDEM, *Natio Bohemica*, p. 41.

³⁶ Lenka BOBKOVÁ, *Karel IV. a Jan Hus v německých gymnaziálních učebnicích. Několik poznámek k učebním textům od konce 19. stol. do současnosti*, Historický obzor, 1998, No. 6–7, pp. 15–17.

³⁷ *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the Middle Ages* (translated from the French "Le Moyen Age"), III (1250–1520), ed. by Robert FOSSIER, Cambridge University Press 1986, here Chapter 3 Different values and authorities (by Jacques Verger), p. 145.

³⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich HEGEL, *Fenomenologie ducha*, Praha 1960, p. 54.