

Imperial Cities and the Second Hussite War (1467–1471) Using the Example of Nuremberg: Efforts to Support the Imperial Cities in the War Against the Bohemian King*

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Using the example of Nuremberg, the study follows the attempt to use imperial cities for the purpose of the pope and the Roman Curia to unseat the Utraquist George of Poděbrady from the Bohemian throne and launch a new crusade against the Czechs. It analyses their position as military powers and, to a lesser extent, intelligence centres, and shows the composition of city councils and their efforts to maintain independent political progress.

Keywords: History; Urban history; Politics; Late Middle Ages, Bohemian Kingdom, Nuremberg; Imperial cities; Crusade.

Powers within the Holy Roman Empire, especially the German princes and large cities, learned a clear lesson from the years of the Hussite revolution (1420–1436). The war against the Bohemian Utraquists was a losing business in all respects. Nevertheless, in the 1460s, the princes and cities had to face strong pressure from the pope and, to a lesser extent, the emperor, to join the renewed campaign for the suppression or outright extermination of the Bohemian heresy and to support the new crusade militarily and financially.

The ban on trade with Bohemian heretics announced as early as 1420 by Pope Martin V did not bring about a complete economic blockade of Bohemia, as evidenced by, among other things, the activities of the Nuremberg firm Imhoff, or the Kress or Stomer families, and by the beginning of the 1430s, threats of ecclesiastical punishments already made against merchants from nearby cities of the empire were having only a questionable effect.¹ As a result of the Hussite wars and the subsequent period of political instability in the land, the so-called Lipany Interregnum (1439–1452), trade contacts dampened between the Holy Roman Empire and Utraquist Bohemia, but never completely stopped.

And which of the imperial cities could compete with Nuremberg in terms of financial resources and volume of goods in trade with Bohemia? The Nuremberg City Council

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1 POLÍVKA, K., *„černému obchodu“ s kutnohorskou mědí v husitské době*, 25–33. The estimate from the 1430s alone amounts to up to 5 tons of Kutná Hora copper, which reached Nuremberg ore merchants through Cheb's mediation. Hans Imhoff circumvented the papal ban as early as 1426 – KLIER, *Nürnberg und Kuttenberg*, 51–78; and SCHENK, *Nürnberg und Prag*, 78.

continued to monitor the development of the political situation in Bohemia throughout the 1430s and 1440s and responded flexibly to the changing risks and benefits of the transfer of goods, although the first more tangible results of its diplomacy came only in the following decades, in the form of the confirmation of the old Nuremberg privileges by King Ladislaus the Posthumous in 1455 and George of Poděbrady in 1459–1460.²

George of Poděbrady as a monarch endeavouring for the economic prosperity of his state had a great interest in connecting to German markets and financial centres. In that connection, he included the city of Cheb (Eger), which, in addition to its church ties to the important Regensburg, had an important commercial connection precisely to Nuremberg, among other trade privileges and other expressions of favour. Tin (trade and mining) received the most attention, but the Cheb burghers were also involved in the trade in Bohemian cloth, which they sold at regularly occupied markets, and in the export of food and food products, including fish. Nuremberg weapons made up part of Cheb's imports, and the city's gunsmiths also came from Nuremberg.³

In addition to the link with Cheb, the route from Nuremberg to Meissen, Saxony and further east was very important. For the Bohemian king, even more important than the transit of Mediterranean, Oriental and South German goods were the Nuremberg investments in the mining business in the tin areas, partially in cooperation with Cheb investors, and especially the credit policy.⁴

Already at the time when George was "merely" the land administrator, Nuremberg repeatedly contacted the Kutná Hora (Kuttenberg) mintmaster Jan of Sútice, who was the main financier of Poděbrady's party.⁵ The Nuremberg merchants especially manifested interest in Kutná Hora copper, the sale of which was fully guaranteed in their mother city.⁶ In the middle of the fifteenth century, Nuremberg was a key city in the sphere of metal trade in Central Europe, which was due to the highly developed processing of copper, and to the fact that the local smelters were able to remove silver even from black copper using the so-called *saigerprozess* (also *Seigerhüttenprozess*, extraction using lead). In addition to a non-negligible amount of precious metal, they also obtained copper that could be easily monetized. Nuremberg crushed copper ore, processed it in its smelters and further distributed it to German markets.⁷

For the first time, in May 1459, King George confirmed to the burghers of Nuremberg all the trade privileges granted by the previous Bohemian monarchs.⁸ In October 1460, he expressly took the merchants of Nuremberg under his special protection, granting them the privilege that no one should be a pledge for another who owed anything,

2 POLÍVKA, *Role říšského města Norimberka při získávání zpráv o husitských Čechách*, 178. On the communication with Prague, see WÜST, *Nürnberg und Prag im Kommunikationfeld spätmittelalterlicher Städtelandschaften*, 85–122.

3 SEČKAŘ, *Cheb'ský dálkový obchod ve 14. a 15. století*. KUBŮ, *Cheb'ský městský stát*, 62, 138, 141. At the end of 1465, Cheb bought in Nuremberg 203 rifles and 52 handguns with hooks to steady them for almost 200 Rhenish guilders and another 100 helmets – iron hats for 84 guilders. They were intended mainly for the city militia (hueste), whose hejtman (captain) was Oto of Sparneck – Státní okresní archiv Cheb (State District Archives Cheb; hereinafter SOKA Cheb), fund I, book no. 2447, pag. 43.

4 For more on the trade in tin, see LASCHINGER, *Die Amberger Zinnblechhandelsgesellschaft*, 65–85.

5 KLIER, *Nürnberg und Kuttenberg*, 54. HOUDKOVÁ-HÁSKOVÁ, *Obchod s kutnohorskou mědí*, 87–102.

6 POLÍVKA, *K „černému obchodu“ s kutnohorskou mědí*, 25–35.

7 JANÁČEK, *Die böhmische Aussenhandel in der Hälfte des 15. Jahrhundert*, 50–52; KRASCHEWSKI, *Das Spätmittelalter*, 266–272.

8 SCHENK, *Nürnberg und Prag*, 97.

nor pay for it with body and property.⁹ From 1462, the trade in the already mentioned Kutná Hora copper developed, trade in which the city of Nuremberg itself was very interested, as it meant the certainty of the profit several times over.¹⁰

With the increasing stability of the Czech region, the confidence of foreign traders in the Czech situation was renewed. In addition to Praha (Prague, Prag) and Kutná Hora, Nuremberg also had ties to Plzeň (Pilsen), Domažlice (Taus), Klatovy (Klattau) and Cheb.¹¹ A significant part of the Bohemian long-distance trade was built precisely on Nuremberg loans.

Regensburg was also important for Bohemia, although it lost its position as a trade and financial centre, but the discovery of silver, the development of Saxony and Meissen, and the rationalization of routes strengthened its importance as a trade crossroads connecting Venice and the Danube via Cheb with Saxony. In addition, the general orientation of Cheb trade towards Bavarian markets remained.¹²

The campaign that the curia launched in Summer 1465 against King George, who was labelled as a heretic oppressing faithful Catholics in the Bohemian Crown, was unpleasant not only for the Bohemian side, but also for the imperial cities. From the points of view of trade, politics, previous contacts and as an intelligence centre, the most important for the Bohemians were Nuremberg, Regensburg, Passau and Bamberg.

The Bohemian question again began to resonate in the imperial milieu. Already at the end of July 1465, the pope sent letters to the imperial princes in which he released them from friendly and allied obligations towards George of Poděbrady. Nevertheless, in December of the same year, the famous diplomatic mission of the king's brother-in-law Lev of Rožmitál was received in a very friendly manner in Nuremberg; the Nuremberg goldsmith Tetzl even took part in securing a loan for the expedition and, along with the rich merchant Gabriel Muffel, was willing to accompany the expedition.¹³

Papal legate Fantinus de Valle demonstrated the implacable position of the Roman Curia before the eyes of the restless citizens of Nuremberg in November 1466. When a message sent by King George (George was officially invited by Emperor Frederick III) was also allowed to be heard at the ongoing Imperial Diet despite his protest, he forbade the holding of religious services in Nuremberg churches as long as Poděbrady's envoys stayed in the city.¹⁴

9 Text of Poděbrady's deed of 27 October 1460 – Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Päpstliche und fürstliche Privilegien, Urkunden 291, Altsignatur LS/A no. VIII.

10 HOUDKOVÁ-HÁSKOVÁ, *Obchod s kutnohorskou mědí*, 87–102; POHANKA, *Kutnohorský důlní revír v době poděbradské*, 77–84; and POHANKA, *K intenzitě dolování v kutnohorském revíru*, 19–32. The king tried to forbid the export of black copper temporarily, not copper in general, from the land and bought black copper himself – "His Grace condescended to pay for it", cf. Státní okresní archiv Kutná Hora, Archiv města Kutná Hora – knihy, no. 7, fol. 29r, which shows that the royal mint also began to compulsorily buy black copper.

11 AMMANN, *Die wirtschaftliche Stellung der Reichsstadt Nürnberg*, 55–57; DIEFENBACHER, *Obchod norimberského patriciátu*, 9.

12 On Regensburg – FREITAG, *Kleine Regensburger Stadtgeschichte*, 70–82.

13 Informace o Tetzlovci a Muffelovi na výpravě Lva z Rožmitálu URBÁNEK, *Ve službách Jiříka krále*, 85–189. JÁNSKÝ, *Kronika česko-bavorské hranice IV*, 66.

14 It was a large delegation; contemporary sources speak of 260 horses. On the Reich Diet of 1466, see MÜLLER, *Des Heil*, 211–259; CHMEL, *Regestachronologico-diplomatica Friderici III*, 485; KRAUS, *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, 158, 164f; FUCHS – KRIEGL, *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, 156f, 164; HOLTZ, *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, Heft 16, 83; OTTNER, *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, 182; HOLTZ, *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, Heft 31, 140; BACHMANN, *Briefe und Acten zur österreichisch-deutschen Geschichte*, 622–624, 640–642; JANSSEN,

If anyone still doubted that the dispute between the curia and the Bohemian king would escalate into an open conflict, then the ban on trade with Bohemian heretics under the threat of an anathema or even an interdict over the entire imperial city, announced by Pope Paul III on 20 March 1467, had to open his eyes. The ban was definitively revoked only in 1495 by Pope Alexander VI.¹⁵

In 1467, a civil war broke out in Bohemia and subsequently the new papal legate Rudolph of Rudesheim symbolically announced a new crusade against the Bohemians after 37 years in Silesian Wrocław (Breslau, Vratislav). For the time being, however, there was a lack of a secular power that could carry out the crusade in such strength; nevertheless, the heretic king George of Poděbrady was very much threatened by it. So far, the weight of the fight had therefore rested only on the domestic opposition formed by a group of leading Catholic noble families, the so-called League of Zelená Hora, and the city of Pilsen. The Catholic lords, who started the conflict with King George out of purely secular motives, sought allies on all sides and, especially in the face of the empire, began to present their resistance as a selfless struggle to protect the Catholic faith and the Church.¹⁶ Thanks to the skilful leader Zdeněk of Šternberk, they obtained the formal patronage of the emperor, but they hoped to receive real military and economic help from the imperial princes and cities.¹⁷ They therefore launched an extensive propaganda campaign and contacted the neighbouring German princes in writing, but they did not intend to underestimate the rich imperial cities either.¹⁸ Saxony and Brandenburg, united by treaties and marriage diplomacy with King George, held little promise of giving support, the Bavarian and Frankish cities seeming more promising.

The representatives of the imperial city of Nuremberg were personally confronted by the representatives of this opposition bloc in July 1467. At that time, a delegation of the League of Zelená Hora arrived at the Imperial Diet in Nuremberg to ask the imperial estates for military and financial assistance in the war against the Bohemian king. Zdeněk of Šternberk and Jan Zajíc of Házmburk, the two true heads of the association, were, however, bound by the civil war and could not appear in person. Despite that, the tactics of the League of Zelená Hora were very sophisticated. They now tried to present their originally purely secular dispute with the Bohemian king over the dominant position of the old lordly families in the king's council and at the land court as a matter of faith: the Catholic lords were now purportedly fighting not for personal motives and material interests, but to defend the Catholic Church and the faith, which the king/

Frankfurts Reichs correspondenz, 251, 253; KLUCKHOHN, *Ludwig der Reiche*, 263; BEMMANN, *Zur Geschichte des deutschen Reichstages*, 18 and 22. HEYMANN, *George of Bohemia*, 429–431; SCHÖNEWALD, *Kanzlei, Rat und Regierung Herzog Ludwigs*, 590–593.

15 On the development of trade at the time of the Poděbrady reign and the consequences of the papal ban, see JANÁČEK, *Der böhmische Aussenhandel*, 39–58. MACEK, *Jagellonský věk v českých zemích 1–2*, 115–116.

16 On the League of Zelená Hora, see MARKGRAF, *Die Bildung der katholischen Liga*, 48–82 and 251–273; VÁLKA, *Stavovství a krize českého státu*, 65–89; on the same, see ŠANDERA, *Zelenohorská jednota*, 172–182 and 270–276. On the intertwining of Unity by kinship ties, see NOHOVÁ, *Příbuzenské vztahy členů Zelenohorské jednoty*.

17 On its efforts to involve the emperor, see ŠANDERA, *Zelenohorská jednota a císař Fridrich III*, 537–564.

18 On the propaganda campaign, BACHMANN, *Fontes rerum Austriacarum* (hereinafter FRA) 46, *Urkundliche Nachträge zur österreichischen-deutsche Geschichte*, 37, nos. 26, 44–45, and no. 34; BRETHER, *Politische correspondenz Breslaus*, 181–190, 222. About the presentation of unity at the Diet in Nuremberg, PALACKÝ, FRA 20, *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte Böhmens und seiner Nachbarländer zur Zeitalter Georgs von Podiebrad (1450–1471)*, 635–637.

heretic and his officials were being said to have oppressed and dishonoured. But they ran headlong into the completely dismissive attitude of the secular imperial princes. The countries neighbouring the Kingdom of Bohemia especially – Electoral Brandenburg, Electoral Saxony, Thuringia, the Frankish possessions of Margrave Albrecht Achilles and temporarily even Bavaria – were united by the policy of not irritating the still powerful Poděbrady.¹⁹

Fortunately, the cities could stay in the background and leave the imperial princes “in the front line” of the de facto boycott of the new crusade. The situation at the Diet even enabled them to gain some influence from the Bohemian question and not be mere accessories to the curia of the princes. As a pretext, they chose the objection that while their present representatives were authorized to vote on the matter of the war against the Turks, they were not authorized to take a clear position on the matter of the anti-Bohemian crusades. The people of Nuremberg, who could not use such an excuse with their city council and municipality, declared that they could do nothing in the Bohemian affairs without the other cities.²⁰ The League of Zelená Hora could offer almost nothing to Nuremberg itself; of the Bohemian cities that maintained contact with Nuremberg merchants in the 1460s, only Pilsen and České Budějovice (Budweis) claimed it. Still, it seems to have established closer contact with some representatives of the city council, or at least it thought so.

However, it was not in the power of the city councils in Nuremberg, much less in Regensburg, Passau, or Bamberg, to prevent the curia in their municipalities from demonstrating their determination to destroy King George and using the full range of ecclesiastical punishments against anyone who wanted to oppose this plan.

The Nuremberg councillors experienced some unpleasant moments during the Diet, when King George’s messengers, led by Otto von Sparneck, arrived in the city accompanied by Margrave Albrecht Achilles. The legates strongly protested when he entered the chamber, so the organizers led him to a small room where he was supposed to wait until everything had been cleared up, but such an action offended Margrave Albrecht, who declared that he would much rather have Sparneck with him in Cadolzburg (seat of the Burgraves of Nuremberg in today’s Furth) than have to sit in the Nuremberg servants’ quarters. The representative of the city council, Councillor Ruprecht Haller, negotiated with Sparneck, who was willing to stay in Cadolzburg for the time being, so that he could later be officially introduced to Nuremberg by city representatives. But the city council vainly asked the legate to allow that if someone from Bohemia wanted an escort, the matter should first be presented to it, then it would decide on the advice of the others, but the legates refused its request. The Wrocław chronicler Eschenloer recorded with obvious pleasure the news that Poděbrady’s emissaries had been thrown out of Nuremberg’s Cathedral of St Lorenz. Then the legates reached for the heaviest

19 On the appearance of the representatives of the League of Zelená Hora at the diet, see DVORKÝ, *Archiv český XX*, 542–550, no. 1. On the background and course of the diet, see MÜLLER, *Reichs-Tags-Theatrum 2 (IV. Vorst.)*, 260–290; CHMEL, *Regesta Friderici III*, 521; *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, Heft 4, 247–250, 253–255; KRAUS, *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, Heft 7, 159, 164; HOLTZ, *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, Heft 10, 183, 186; FUCHS – KRIEGL, *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, Heft 15, 164; HOLTZ, *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, Heft 16, 84; OTTNER, *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, Heft 22, 178, 182; Heft 25, 123; HOLTZ, *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, Heft 31, 141; BACHMANN, *Briefe und Acten*, 627, 630, 633, 640–643; BACHMANN, *FRA 42, Urkundliche Nachträge zur österreichisch-deutschen Geschichte im Zeitalter Friedrich III.*, 43 and 52–54; JANSSEN, *Frankfurts Reichs-correspondenz 2,1*, 251–254; BEMMANN, *Zur Geschichte des deutschen Reichstages im 15. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig 1907, 20; HEYMANN, *George of Bohemia*, 461–463.

20 BEMMANN, *Zur Geschichte des deutschen Reichstages*, 27.

calibre weapon and on 26 July 1467, by order of the papal legates, an anathema was once again proclaimed against King George and his family in Nuremberg churches.²¹

The second aspect of the anti-Bohemian campaign by the Roman Curia was the same as during the First Hussite War. Even now Utraquist Bohemia was to be hit by a trade blockade. But Nuremberg had already experienced during the first war that trade with Bohemia could be very profitable at such a time, when it had not even hesitated to offer potassium nitrate for Kutná Hora copper.²² The sons of important and successful Nuremberg businessmen at the time logically looked for a way to repeat that successful business. One example offered itself – during the Hussite revolution, it helped the city of Cheb bypass the trade blockade and it still did not break with King George despite the church's threats. But it was on Cheb that the curia demonstrated that they were serious about their threats. An interdict was imposed on the city, which was only conditionally lifted in 1470, when the city publicly renounced King George.²³

In some ways the situation was more favourable, in others it was more difficult. The crucial Nuremberg was now under a more careful eye than in the 1430s, and its beyond-standard contacts with the Czech milieu and the favour of the "heretic king" shown precisely to Nuremberg merchants did not escape the curia. The importance and fame of the city played against its interests here, Nuremberg being simply too visible in the imperial milieu, and it had to be more careful than many "less visible" cities.

For this reason alone, the city council outwardly presented itself as a completely obedient and devoted congregation to both the church and the pope. Apparently for these reasons, the council received "with due sincere affection" the emissary of the League of Zelená Hora, who brought it the report of the conclusion of an armistice in Bohemia at the beginning of December. In a very ornately formulated letter of 5 December 1467, the councillors expressed their joy at the news that the league was now free from immediate danger, and gave thanks to God and the almighty Son of the glorious Virgin, believing that all would be brought to the desired peace and happy end.²⁴ The joy of the Nuremberg aldermen can be considered to be sincere – it seemed

21 On Sparneck's case, see Nürnberger Kreisarchiv, Rathbücher von 1467, fol. 132. Published in an edition in BACHMANN, FRA 46, *Urkundliche Nachträge zur österreichisch-deutschen Geschichte im Zeitalter Friedrich III*, 52, no. 45; ROTH, Peter Eschenloer, *Geschichte der Stadt Breslau*, 665. On the announcement of the curse in Nuremberg churches, see PALACKÝ, *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a v Moravě*, 965.

22 Státní okresní archiv Kutná Hora, fund: Archiv města Kutná Hora, 1314–1953 (1954), part: Norimberští měšťané-členové městské rady v Kutné Hoře (rodina Schicků, Grossů, mincovní písař Konrád zvaný Münzcshreiber) [Nuremberg burgher-members of the city council in Kutná Hora (Schick family, Gross family, mint scribe Konrád called Münzcshreiber)]. DIEFENBACHER, *Obchod norimberského patriciátu*, 7–29, here p. 8; cf. revised version of the study: DIEFENBACHER, *Der Handel des Nürnberger Patriziats*, 49–81. For the latest on that, see BUŇATOVÁ, *Obchod mezi Prahou a Norimberkem*, 25.

23 Cheb renounces King George, PALACKÝ, FRA 20, *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte Böhmens und seiner Nachbarländer im Zeitalter Georgs von Pondered*, 631, no. 524.

24 BACHMANN, FRA 42. *Urkunden und Actenstücke zur österreichischen Geschichte im Zeitalter Kaiser Friedrichs III*, 442–443, no. 330. On 5 December 1467, the Nuremberg city council wrote directly to the representatives of the League of Zelená Hora: *Venerabilis, magnifici, generosi, nobiles et strenui domini ac prudentes spectabilesque viri! Post optatos ad vota successus literas jocunda, quas nuncius vesstratum dominacionum ac circumspencionium nobis detulerit, qua decuit affectione sincera recepimus. Et ae, que in illis continebantur, pleno suscepimus intellectu, pro quibus reuerencijs ac magnificencijs et circumspencionibus vestris condignas referimus graciaram acciones, unde letamur et exultamus in domino sperantes, quod ex eisdem susceptis treugisreipublice orthodoxequefidei catholice laudabiles fructus diunio suffragante auxilio exinde provenire gaudemus, in quam de ipsa accepta tranquillitate nec noc jucunditate reficimus, quod tanta dissensio gerrarum tot ignibus incensa oportune medele remedia recepit. Ipsi deo ad grates et laudes uberiore in corde et ore iubilo prosternimur incessanter, nec hesitamus sed firma spe consolamur, quod vestre dignitates et prudencie, quas rex pacifibus in sancte pacis reparatores eligere et*

that the city would not have to spend any additional funds in connection with the Bohemian war, and in the armistice it would be possible to resume profitable trade in Bohemian copper and other commodities without much risk. But the League of Zelená Hora, although it had given up hope of military intervention by Poland, did not think of peace with King George. The Roman Curia itself hardened its stance still further.²⁵ These facts were soon to have consequences for Nuremberg itself. In the next year Jan II of Rožmberk, returning to the ranks of the League of Zelená Hora and declaring hostility towards King George, used his contacts with Nuremberg and gave Nuremberg financiers higher sums, such as the pledge of a church jewel.²⁶

The escalated attitude of the curia could not be ignored, regardless of the sober attitude towards the role of the clergy among some merchants: the ecclesiastical punishments would lead to economic losses and the anger of the population deprived of church rites could easily turn against the city council. If the city as a whole was not affected, but a specific person and his family or clan, then other townspeople could take advantage of the situation and push themselves into his position; after all, a person affected by anathema cannot be a member of the city council and hold public office. The population of Nuremberg was soon to see with their own eyes how the hidden animosities and power struggles between the most influential patrician families could become impassioned.

On 20 April 1468, Pope Paul II explicitly renewed the ban on trade of 20 March 1467. As with the outbreak of the First Hussite War, the export of goods to Bohemia was interpreted as direct support for the heretics. The Bishop of Bamberg commissioned the provosts at the cathedral of St Lorenz and the church of St Sebaldus and the abbot of the monastery of St Egidien with oversight of the observance of this ban in Nuremberg.²⁷ Nevertheless, the Bamberg bishop himself proved that in terms of his personal and economic interests, he did not take the order of his ecclesiastical lord very seriously, and conducted a brisk trade with Jan II of Rožmberk who was then still loyal to King George, both of them having an interest in maintaining the prosperous Gold and Kloffar Roads.²⁸ Although the Nuremberg city council objected to this, as the interests of merchants in the eastern trade were affected by the trade ban, it gave official approval.²⁹ Nuremberg now had two faces. The official, public one was strictly Catholic orthodox.

In 1468, Nuremberg had to face the loss of the advantageous role of a mere observer, outwardly respecting the ban on trade and demarcating itself against the Bohemian Utraquists, but not interfering in any way in the war in Bohemia. Niklas III Muffel Senior was the most prominent among the councillors at that time (even his son had been burgomaster several times in previous years), but had no idea what a tragic fate awaited

constituere dignatus est, operam solícite dare dignentur, ut in futura dieta ipse incepte treugue ad pacem optatam et felicem finem deducantur, ad quod omnipotens virginis gloriose filius graciosum sumum suffragium et diuini auxilium benignissime elargie dignetur. Proconsules et consules imperialis civitatis Nürnberg.

25 ŠANDERA, *The League of Zelená Hora*, 116–148.

26 Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň (State Regional Archives in Třeboň), fund Historica, sg. 2357.

27 The text of the papal bull of 20 April 1468 is printed in MARKGRAF, *Politische Correspondenz Breslau*, 265–267, no. 392. From the literature, see SCHENK, *Nürnberg und Prag*, 108.

28 On the common interest of Jan II of Rožmberk and the Passau bishop, see JÁNSKÝ, *Kronika česko-bavorské hranice IV.*, 82–83 and 92–94. On the only partially successful economic blockade of Bohemia, because foreign countries needed Bohemian grain and were happy to provide salt and other goods for it, RYBA, Jan z Rabštejna, *Dialogus*, 66, 68.

29 SCHENK, *Nürnberg und Prag*, 108. The only explicitly mentioned exception was the city of Pilsen.

him within a year. The others seated in the city council were Hans Koler, Berchtold Pfitzing, Hans Volcknamer Senior, Lienhart Grolant Senior, Ruprecht Haller, Carl Holtschuer, Wilhelm Derrer, Hans Lemmel and Erasm Schurstab, and there were also the representatives of a company that already during the First Hussite War had been able to bypass the papal ban on trade with the Bohemian heretics and transport Kutná Hora copper to the local smelters, namely Hans Imhoff, Anthony Ebner and Heimeran Zinggell. Jobst Tetzell, Niclas Gross, Gabriel Nutzell, Endres Geuder, Jeronimus Kress, Anthony Tucher, Wilhelm Löffelholz, Ulrich Gruntherr, Frantz Rummell, Martin Holtzschuer, Jobst Haller, Peter Harsdorfer and Paulus Rieter appeared as *scabini* (municipal judges).³⁰ The real elite of one of the most important cities of the empire sat here not only because of the antiquity of the families, but above all because of their property power. They received the news with concern that the truce in Bohemia was a thing of the past and that the civil war was turning into an international conflict with an impact on the whole of Central Europe.

Before the Feast of St James in 1468 (27 July) the Minorite monk Jakub arrived from Głogów (Glogau, Hlohov) as a representative of the legate Rudolf of Rüdesheim to gather men willing to go fight against the heretical Bohemians. The city council was in the hot seat, it already being recalled that it had been guaranteed superior trade relations with the Bohemians by King George, and despite the fact that it had formally subscribed to the papal prohibition of trade with heretics, their final destruction by joining the crusade was unthinkable to them.

Nevertheless, it was impossible to hinder the friar Jakub in his activities, because not long after his arrival, the same bishop of Ferrara, Lorenzo, arrived in the city, who moreover announced the granting of papal indulgences to all those who would sign up for the crusade. With the approval of the city council, indulgence tills were placed in the city, the proceeds of which were to be used to finance the anti-Bohemian army. The poor received one letter of indulgence for 7 pfennigs; the wealthy burghers had a higher tax, 1 Rhenish gulden. The legate Rudolf evidently chose the right man in the person of the Minorite Jakub: he had many years of experience from Wrocław of how skilful preachers can arouse passions, evoke strong emotions and literally fanaticize the crowd. The agitation among the population therefore did not go unanswered even in Nuremberg, and the city council watched with concern whether the lower classes of the population would become radicalized and the city government would lose control over the situation. The example of the silesian Wrocław, a city "under the rule of the preachers", was well known.³¹

There are contradictions in the preserved sources as to how many men were willing to participate in the expedition to Bohemia, and how many actually set out from the city for the military campaign. The first group left the city solemnly, the Minorite carrying a cross in front of them in his raised hands, accompanied by eight disciples with lighted candles. The city provided six wagons with supplies; we are not sufficiently informed about the armament, but it was an infantry troop.³²

30 Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, Familienarchiv von Tucher (E 29). On the position of the Haller family in Nuremberg in the second half of the fifteenth century, see FLEISCHMANN, *Rat und Patriziat in Nürnberg*, 505–551. On the economic elites of the city, see FUHRMANN, *Wirtschaftliche Eliten der Reichsstadt Nürnberg*, 505–528.

31 ČAPSKÝ, *Město pod vládou kazatelů*, 79–103.

32 HIRZEL, *Die Chroniken der Deutschen Städte*, 298–306.

In August 1468, another 260 infantrymen left Nuremberg for the crusade against the Bohemians. It took place without the consent of the city council. Although the council did not dare to oppose the legate present to the extent of forbidding the new Nuremberg crusaders to leave the city, it resorted to covert sabotage of the entire expedition. It did not levy a tax for these purposes, did not appoint commanders to the assembled soldiers, and deliberately did not supply them with gunpowder. The situation was further complicated by the knight Michael Magnesreuter, who appeared at the town hall and asked to be appointed the commander of these 260 men who had already set out from the city. However, the councillors refused to entrust him with this role. Nevertheless, he went after them accompanied by three horsemen, offered to take over their command and divided them into four divisions, each of which he assigned a command sergeant major.³³

Difficulties with the poorly equipped and undisciplined Nuremberg volunteers were not long in coming. The legate's envoy Jakub himself experienced first-hand that the assembled crusaders were primarily guided by the vision of material gain. When he left town, word quickly spread that he wanted to keep the indulgence money. He was ambushed by the captains of the second crusader division and dragged to a tavern in the village of Megeldorf. The enraged men threatened him with death and backed up their threats with drawn swords and pointed crossbows. Only the personal intervention of councillor Ruprecht Haller saved him from lynching.³⁴ Haller, with a detachment of Nuremberg guards, first deceived the crusaders, locked them in the church and managed to safely transport the frightened monk under armed protection to the safety of the Nuremberg walls. The atmosphere was indeed tense, the enraged crusaders chasing the city guards with the shocked Minorite to the city walls despite the councillor's warning that the city council would bring them to trial and immediately confiscate their property.³⁵

The representatives of the city council subsequently showed great dexterity. They played the role of impartial authority, forced respect, and managed to turn a terrible incident into a celebration of reconciliation on 10 August, where the repentant guilty crusaders were forgiven. They calmed the legate in Wrocław with a skilfully styled letter, and presented themselves in front of the population as a group of righteous men, whose wisdom had prevented misfortune and apparently even saved a number of human lives.³⁶

In Czech historiography, it is possible to find references according to which the Nuremberg councillors took an unprecedented step – on 30 August, a letter was secretly sent to King George in which the city council apologized for this crusader troop, saying it could not resist the papal representatives, who threatened to declare an interdict over the city. This would not only be a manifestation of evasion, as it appeared in the Czech milieu in 1466 and 1467 when the cities of Pilsen and České Budějovice, which sent similar letters to the Bohemian monarch, but it would have been an obvious attempt

33 MÜLNER, *Annalen der Reichstad Nürnberg II*, 574.

34 HIRZEL, *Die Chroniken der Deutschen Städte*, 298–306.

35 *Ibidem*, 304.

36 *Ibidem*, 305. On the same, see JÁNSKÝ, *Kronika česko-bavorské hranice IV*, 91.

not to endanger commercial interests. The trade in Kutná Hora copper continued, under the cover of suppliers from Cheb.³⁷

The first Nuremberg contingent was already back in its maternal city on 30 August. Some of the men even returned on their own still earlier; the commander of the Bavarian crusaders, Sebastian Pluh, wrote to the Nuremberg council that many "Nuremberg men" deserted before his army even crossed the Bohemian border. He also sued for damages caused to his villages. The supply of the divisions was slow, and the starving Nuremberg crusaders therefore took grain and other food from Pluh's subjects despite their resistance.³⁸

The Nuremberg council soon understood that the participation of the local men in the crusade against King George would only bring them more and more problems. It had its informants, who repeatedly apprised it of the movements of the imperial troops led by Sebastián Pluh. The last straw was the news of the defeat of the German crusaders near the village of Nýrsko, where many Nuremberg men also perished.³⁹ The councillors no longer hesitated to raise serious objections to another campaign and the recruitment of men in the city and the surrounding area. They invited all important church leaders in the city to the city hall and urged them to consider that compared to the other cities of the empire, not to mention the princes, Nuremberg had already contributed more than enough and that now there lay the threat of social upheaval, because the fathers of large families were also leaving, especially from the poorer classes.⁴⁰ The city council even resolved that it would no longer employ craftsmen who were with the crusaders in Bohemia and entrust them with municipal contracts.⁴¹ The representatives of the city council thus clearly and courageously demonstrated that this body did not intend to allow any weakening of its authority; it alone was charged with decision-making on behalf of the inhabitants of the city, and they could not afford to circumvent it, even by appealing to the holy war and the will of the Pope.

Nevertheless, the curia was not going to compromise on its demands. At the beginning of the autumn, imperial pressure joined the papal pressure on the city. Arnold von Loe, the Imperial Chamber Procurator, and the servants of the Roman Chancellor, Bishop Ulrich von Passau, delivered the emperor's letter to the Nuremberg Council asking for help against the Bohemian heretics. The council decided to respond

37 On the city council's letter to King George, see JÁNSKÝ, *Kronika česko-bavorské hranice IV*, 91 and ČORNEJ – BARTLOVÁ, *Velké dějiny země Koruny české VI*, 255. Nuremberg could have been inspired by how Pilsen once proceeded, it too once sent a letter of apology to King George, STRNAD, *Listář II*, 120–121, no. 132, and even enclosed a copy of the bull and the legate's letter. After the killing of burgomaster Ondřej Puklic loyal to the king, České Budějovice acted similarly, see pardon from George of Poděbrady – ČELAKOVSKÝ *Codex iurus municipais III*, 511–512, no. 296. An interdict was even declared over Budějovice for a period of about one year and the local parish priest Ondřej strictly followed it and did not even allow the burial of the dead, who were therefore buried in the hospital chapel of St. Wenceslas. On the cancellation of the interdict over České Budějovice, see Státní okresní archiv České Budějovice, *Archiv města České Budějovice*, *Codex diplomaticus Budwecensis*, 53. On the trade in Kutná Hora copper, see Státní okresní archiv Kutná Hora, fund *Archiv města Kutná Hora – knihy*, no. 7. From the literature, see KLIER, *Nürnberg und Kuttenberg*, 56 and HOUDKOVÁ-HÁSKOVÁ, *Obchod s kutnohorskou mědí v druhé polovině 15. století*, 87–102.

38 We learn about the complaints of Sebastián Pluh to the Nuremberg city council and local crusaders from the letter – BACHMANN, *FRA 42, Urkunden un Actenstücken im Zeitalter Kaiser Fridrichs III.*, 453, no. 341.

39 KAŠPÁR – PORÁK, *Ze Starých letopisů českých*, 385. The dating and course of the Battle of Nýrsko was dealt with in detail by JÁNSKÝ, *Kronika česko-bavorské hranice IV*, 96–102, who convincingly refuted its assignment to the autumn of 1467.

40 HIRZEL, *Die Chroniken der Deutschen Städte*. 298–306.

41 BACHMANN, *FRA 46, Urkundliche Nachträge zur österreichisch-deutschen Geschichte*, 56, no. 45.

in a way that at the same time meant a delay – as soon as the electors, princes and cities of the Holy Roman Empire agreed to the great crusade to Bohemia, the inhabitants of Nuremberg would be immediately ready for it.⁴²

However, the city did not refuse the next imperial demand related to the war with King George. Fredrick III asked the Nuremberg city council to send him potassium nitrate and gunsmiths as soon as possible at his expense. On 6 March 1469, the council was convened and answered the emperor that it had ordered the potassium nitrate and would send it as soon as possible, but that a number of its gunsmiths were outside of Nuremberg, precisely on a crusade against the Bohemian heretics, but the city would attempt to find some and send them along the selected route. But the council asked the emperor to ensure free passage through the customs posts and for some of his people to meet them.⁴³

Not even Nuremberg was spared what Prague experienced so often in the fifteenth century – a power struggle between groups of burghers and the bloody liquidation of the defeated. On the morning of 15 February, the people of Nuremberg were shocked by the report of the arrest of the holder of the supreme public function in the city and the main administrator of municipal finances (*Vorderster Losunger*), Niklas III Muffel. Muffel was the man, who in 1460 had represented Nuremberg in the negotiations in Prague and personally met with George of Poděbrady.⁴⁴ Now he was accused of a large-scale embezzlement of money from the main city tax.

The very next day, a series of interrogations were begun in the cellar of the city hall, which lasted until 23 February. Subjected to torture, Muffel could not stand it and confirmed all the accusations. He repeated the confession even during subsequent interrogation, although torture was not then applied, probably out of fear of further torture. Since he had made a full confession, although he recanted it in court, no other sentence could have been passed in accordance with the then common criminal law practice. On Tuesday 28 February 1469, the municipal court was convened and sentenced Muffel to suffer the death penalty.⁴⁵

In parallel with the Muffel affair, the city council was dealing with renewed pressure from the Roman Curia. On Wednesday 15 February 1469, only a day after Muffel's arrest, the Franciscan friar Angelus as the papal commissioner appeared before the Nuremberg city council at the behest of Legate Lorenzo of Ferrara to seek support in "those errors (missteps)" connected with the crusaders sent out against the Bohemians. The city council wanted no further involvement in the matter, but Angelus demanded that these crusaders be properly informed and their property released. It was said that this was already happening, but not everything had been released yet. Had the city fulfilled Haller's threat the previous year and confiscated some of the crusaders' property in the city? The commissioner, however, demanded that his support in collecting additional money owed should only apply to those applicants who were not under anathema.

42 Ibidem, 76, no. 65.

43 Ibidem, 86, no. 74.

44 On that, see the deed Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Reichsstadt Nürnberg, *Päpstliche und fürstliche Privilegien*, Urkunden 291.

45 On the Muffel affair – according to the originators of the report, in June 1468, when he was leaving the premises of the city treasury, several guilders fell out of his coat sleeve. Two weeks later, he allegedly stole a bag with 1,000 guilders, the loss of which at first went unnoticed. HIRSCHMANN, Johannes Müllner, *Die Annalen der Reichstadt Nürnberg II*, 578–579. On Niklas's life and tragic death, see HIRSCHMANN, *Die Familie Muffel im Mittelalter*, 255–392, esp. 311–335; FLEISCHMANN, *Rat und patriziat in Nürnberg 2*, 708–711.

The anathema most likely covered those who had returned home from the crusade on their own. In order to avoid ecclesiastical punishment, the city council announced that it was ready to support the collection of money for the war against the Bohemian heretics, and pledged that the association of anyone subject to the city's jurisdiction with heretics would not be tolerated.⁴⁶ In a tense atmosphere, the city retreated from the previous year's attempt to prevent more men from going to the Bohemian war and not to support those who had done so without the consent of the city council.

An indisputable positive for peace in the city was that Angelus and his guides did not start a new series of sermons against the Bohemian heretics in Nuremberg, but decided to go to Regensburg. After all, the delegation sent by Nuremberg was also headed there, as a new Imperial Diet was convened in Regensburg in February.

Here, the hesitant approach of the imperial estates to the Bohemian war was to be broken and a clear decision was to be made of when and in what strength the empire would raise an army. The papal legate Roverello directly took over the management of the diet's proceedings in the absence of Emperor Frederick III. There was a precedent for such a case: already in 1460 Cardinal Bessarion had acted in a similar role. The imperial estates intended to counter Roverello's very energetic and uncompromising demand for the sending of military divisions of the imperial princes and cities on the Feast of St John, in a strength of at least 24,000 men (of which 6,000 cavalry) with the usual delaying tactics and pointing out that such a fundamental decision and commitment could not be accepted without the presence of the emperor. This procedure was fully supported by the representatives of Nuremberg present, effectively negating the concession that the city had made two weeks before under the pressure of the papal commissioner. However, the legate's efforts were thwarted by a completely different matter – the news of the conclusion of a truce between George of Poděbrady and Matthias Corvinus, whose attempt to penetrate from Moravia into the interior of Bohemia itself had been stopped in the Iron Mountains.⁴⁷ The Diet set aside four years to answer when and in what strength the empire would enter the war, effectively putting the whole thing on ice.

On 3 May 1469, the League of Zelená Hora and its allies declared Matthias Corvinus Bohemian king in Olomouc (Olmütz). A Hungarian on the Bohemian throne was, in the eyes of the imperial estates, much as they did not say it out loud in front of the representatives of the curia, even less acceptable than the Utraquist George. Was Germany supposed to make human and financial sacrifices because of him? The war for the Bohemian throne continued, but there was no longer a case where hundreds of men were drawn from Nuremberg or other Bavarian or Franconian cities, even for a short time. Nevertheless, the eyes of the church representatives continued to monitor the behaviour of the imperial cities. They were also watched by Corvinus, who in connection with the Turkish threat had contacted the Nuremberg council a year before his entry into the Bohemian war.⁴⁸

46 BACHMANN, FRA 46, *Urkundliche Nachträge zur österreichisch-deutschen Geschichte*, 78, no. 69.

47 On the course of the diet, see the letter from Margrave Albrecht Achille to his brother Frídrieh dated 23 March 1469 from Bayreuth, PALACKÝ, FRA 20, *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte Böhmens und seiner Nachbarländer zum Zeitalter Georg von Podiebrad*, II, 567–568, no. 478. On the legate's reaction to the news of the conclusion of a truce between Poděbrady and Corvinus, see the letter from Dean Jan of Krumlov to the lord of Rožmberk dated 16 March 1469, SOA Třeboň, fund Historica, sg. 3177.

48 Corvinus's letter to the Nuremberg City Council in BACHMANN, FRA 46, *Urkundliche, Nachträge zur österreichisch-deutschen Geschichte*, 43, no. 33. NEHRING, *Matthias Corvinus, Kaiser Friedrich III, und das Reich*.

However, it was not only the party of Poděbrady's opponents who tried to gain the support of the imperial cities. King George issued a manifesto to the princes and cities of the Holy Roman Empire in Prague on 1 January 1470. After a detailed recapitulation of the history of his dispute with the pope, and his defence against the accusation of heresy in the matter of his alleged statement and acceptance under both species as conditions of salvation. George asked the princes and cities for a public congress with the pope and a hearing of the Bohemian king, which had been refused by the curia for years. Otherwise, the situation threatened that Bohemia, against the king's will and to his considerable regret, would be torn from the union of the Holy Roman Empire, as the surrounding kingdoms had been.⁴⁹ Undoubtedly, a copy of it was also delivered to Nuremberg, where, as already mentioned, the pope's legates and other representatives of the curia were repeatedly. However, was it conceivable that the city council, even of the second largest and most populous city in the empire, would dare to call on these dignitaries to accommodate the proposals of the accursed Bohemian king?

The trade blockade by the empire was, however, developing serious cracks, regardless of the official positions of the city councils on the Bohemian question. In a report of 12 March (1470?), Prague dean and administrator Jan of Krumlov informed the papal legate Lorenzo that Meissen merchants had supplied Prague with salt, iron and other mercantile goods. He also learned that merchants from Nuremberg and Regensburg would also send goods to Prague. As far as Nuremberg was concerned, this report did not exactly correspond to the facts, but the reproach was justified in view of the trade of the Meissen merchants.⁵⁰

As far as the mundane outcome of the war was concerned, the Nuremberg patricians could rest easy. Both warring parties and both men now using the title of Bohemian king were willing to respect their interests. The Hungarian ruler Matthias Corvinus in 1470, as king of Bohemia, confirmed the privileges for Nuremberg merchants – the freedom of trade and the promise to protect their property on the territory of the Bohemian Kingdom and the Moravian Margraviate to the same amount and on the same legal basis as in Hungary. If one of their servants or foreman were to commit a crime, the merchants should not be attacked for it, but the person concerned should be punished according to their guilt, and the one should not be a pledge for the other. On the territory of Corvinus's kingdom, however, only three cities recognized him – Pilsen, České Budějovice and finally Cheb, which did so only under papal pressure, in actuality boycotting Mathias's requests and instructions in the following years.⁵¹

The same Corvinus, along with the papal legate Roverello, again contacted the Nuremberg council in writing in the same year and asked for support in a new round of the war with George of Poděbrady, when the battlefield was mainly southern and central Moravia.⁵²

Not even Poděbrady's death in March 1471 and the accession of the Polish prince and Catholic Vladislaus II of the Jagiellonian Dynasty to the Bohemian throne was to

49 The text of Poděbrady's manifesto is published in PALACKÝ, FRA 20, *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte Böhmens II.*, 610–615, no. 505.

50 The source is again PALACKÝ, FRA 20, *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte Böhmens II.*, 646, no. 532. From the literature on that, see SCHENK, *Nürnberg und Prag*, 8.

51 The text of Mathias's privilege – see MÜLLNER, *Annalen der Reichstadt Nürnberg*, 3. On the Bohemian towns, which recognised Corvinus as the Bohemian king, see ŠANDERA, *The Bohemian Royal Towns*, 6–44.

52 MÜLLNER, *Annalen der Reichstadt Nürnberg*, Teil III, 7.

mean an end to the problems in the relationship with Bohemia for Nuremberg. This is clearly demonstrated by an event of June 1472. A Bohemian delegation arrived in the city. It was led by the Catholic lords Burian of Gutštejn, Karlštejn burgrave Beneš of Weitmile, and King George's former secretary Jošt of Einsidle, but this time they were sent by the new king, Vladislaus II, who had been elected by the Bohemian Land Diet after Poděbrady's death, thus denying Corvinus's Bohemian title. The position of the famous West Bohemian warrior Burian of Gutštejn, whom the Nuremberg councillor knew well as a member of the League of Zelená Hora, was especially interesting, but now he was "on the opposite side of the barricade". It was the first time since 1467 that someone from the Prague court had come to the city publicly, rather than secretly. The city council received them with the usual courtesy, but as soon as the local clergy learned of their presence, they protested and threatened the councillors that all religious services in the city would be stopped. The councillors declared that they were Catholics after all, not Calixtine heretics, and called on the parish priest of St Sebalduš to visit those in question at their abodes, and ascertain whether they were subject to papal anathema. Due to his past, he was able to believe that Burian of Gutštejn was not affected by the anathema. However, a mere word was not enough for Beneš or Jošt of Einsidle, and since neither could prove with a written document that they had been absolved, the city council chose a characteristically evasive solution. The envoys of King Vladislaus did not have to leave the city for the time being, but the councillors wrote to the papal legate Rudolph in Wrocław asking him to state whether these people were still under the papal anathema, since in that case they would have to respect the pope's ban on contact with heretics; they had not yet received any news about its cancellation.⁵³

So, the city outwardly still maintained the decorum of a strictly Catholic city obedient to all the commands of the holy father in Rome, but the question is how much caution was shown; the choleric Corvinus could be irritated by the hospitality shown towards the Prague messengers, which would endanger Nuremberg's commercial interests in the adjoining lands of the Crown and especially in Hungary. For example, the Imhoffs had business activities even in Brno (Brünn) and Olomouc, which were fully under Corvinus's power.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, in the first half of the 1470s, scattered reports about Nuremberg merchants in Prague began to appear. What was even more, despite the fact that the ban on trade with Bohemian heretics had still not been lifted, Bohemian merchants began to appear directly in the imperial cities. They were present not only at the annual markets of Nuremberg, but even in silesian Wrocław, whose bishop was the former papal legate Rudolf of Rüdesheim. This marked a slight, but already sufficiently clear revival of relations, interrupted by the renewed economic blockade of Bohemia, despite the fact that on 27 November 1473 the legate Rudolf wrote to the Nuremberg burgrave and councillors to make no mistake that the ban on trade with the Bohemian Utraquists still applied!⁵⁵

What was more, a political alliance between the emperor and the Jagiellonians was formed against the curia's preferred Matthias Corvinus. The Vienna–Prague–Kra-kow

53 On the difficulties with the Bohemian delegation, see MÜLLNER, *Annalen der Reichstadt Nürnberg*, Teil III, 19. On the Nuremberg clergy, LANDOIS, *Kirchliche eliten der Reichstadt Nürnberg*, 209–224.

54 SCHENK, *Nürnberg und Prag*, 112.

55 BACHMANN, FRA 46, *Urkundliche Nachträge zur österreichisch-deutschen Geschichte*, 235–236, no. 219.

axis stood in direct opposition to the hitherto asserted position of the Roman Curia on the isolation of Bohemia and the support of the empire in the Bohemian War. Now the lords of the League of Zelená Hora did not ask the princes and cities of the empire for support in the fight against the "King of Prague"; on the contrary, the head of the empire himself asked the members of this Catholic association in a letter from Augsburg in September 1474 to break away from Corvinus and recognize the "King of Prague" Vladislaus, because it was "in the interest of the Empire".⁵⁶

In April 1477 the new papal legate for Germany, Bishop Alexander of Forli, wrote to Pope Sixtus IV that, in his opinion, German merchants almost never obeyed the trade ban.⁵⁷

In 1477 the Old Town of Prague managed to obtain a privilege from Emperor Frederick, ensuring his merchants duty-free movement in the imperial territories and free trade with Vienna. The secular head of Western Christendom was evidently no longer worried about the papal decree. And it is in this year that the records of Nuremberg mention, despite the papal ban still being in place, trips of the people of Prague to the markets of this imperial city.⁵⁸ Therefore, no one announced ecclesiastical punishments over the city. There were even joint ventures; for example, Hans and Martin Wognar of Nuremberg along with Václav Rollar of Voháněk, an Old Town burgher, ran a business in the 1470s and 1480s in copper and shopkeeper's goods.⁵⁹

This same year, the Nuremberg envoys were able to enforce an exception in the papal office prohibiting trade with Bohemia, but the exception was supposed to be bound only to trades concluded in Nuremberg.⁶⁰

The final removal of the obstacles between Nuremberg and the Bohemian milieu was made by the authority that once had itself created them – the Roman Curia. On 13 July 1495, the new pope, Alexander VI, declared (until further notice) the ban on trade with Bohemia invalid.

The surviving sources do not allow us to determine more precisely what economic damage was caused to Nuremberg during the ban's existence. It was much more painful for the Bohemian side than for Nuremberg; in this respect, the papal campaign was successful, the volume of goods decreased and the much-valued Nuremberg credits became unavailable. The leading bourgeois families felt very uncomfortable with the threat to the city's extensive trading privileges and economic influence, which had been the result of a long-standing economic policy spanning several generations.

The attitude of the municipal administration can be described as very reasonable. The Nuremberg city council never allowed the city's politics to fall into the hands of radical preachers, as happened in Silesian Wrocław. The human losses of the inhabitants

56 The emperor's Augsburg appeal – copy of the deed in SOkA Cheb, AM Cheb, box 4, fasc. 4 B 70/26, published in the edition BACHMANN, *Regesten Kaiser Friedrichs III. Heft 26*, 297, no. 676 and FRA 46 *Urkundliche Nachträge zur österreichisch-deutschen Geschichte im Zeitalter Friedrich III*, 283, no. 266.

57 Original in Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Altbestände, Urkunden, sg. 38. On the legate's letter, see also SHENK, *Nürnberg und Prag*, 113.

58 The emperor's privilege for Prague's Old Town of 22 June 1477 – ČELAKOVSKÝ, *Codex iuris municipalis regni Bohemiae I. Privilegia civitatum Pragensium*, 281–284, no. 177. On the presence of Prague merchants in Nuremberg, see SCHENK, *Nürnberg und Prag*, 133; MACEK, *Jagellonský věk*, 116.

59 TEIGE, *Základy starého místopisu pražského I*, 155–156.

60 F. LÜTGE. F. *Der Handel Nürnbergs nach dem Osten im 15./16. Jahrhundert*. The Nuremberg exception applied only to deals concluded in Nuremberg – MACEK, *Jagellonský věk*, 1.2., 116.

of Nuremberg and its surroundings who were swept up in the anti-Czech campaign and joined the crusade can be estimated at 250–300 men. Without the clever policy of the city council leaders, the figures would have been much higher. Deftly taking steps to dampen the efforts of the church leaders to involve Nuremberg much more actively in the Bohemian war, both militarily and economically, at the same time the city was able to avoid the inconveniences that fell upon Cheb from the Roman Curia.

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