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JÓZEF LESZCZYŃSKI

**THE PART PLAYED BY THE COUNTRIES
OF THE CROWN OF ST. WENCESLAUS
AND BY HUNGARY IN THE FREEDOM
IDEOLOGY OF THE POLISH GENTRY (1572–1648)**

The Polish gentry secured from the reign of Louis d'Anjou (1370–1382) all the main privileges, laws and liberties which gave them domination over the other estates and the monopoly of political power. During the reign of the last Jagiellon – Sigismund II Augustus (1548–1572) – a movement for “execution of the laws”, linked closely with the Reformation and the Renaissance established the model for gentry democratic government. The entire political power in the Commonwealth was in the hands of a single estate – the gentry whose monopolistic position was confirmed during the first interregnum following the death of Sigismund Augustus. The Henrican Articles passed in 1573 established the principles of free election and election *viritim* and greatly curtailed the power of the king by transferring to the Sejm, as the representative and voice of the gentry, a number of the royal prerogatives. The article *de non praestanda oboedientia*, released the gentry from their oath of allegiance to the king in the event of his trespassing on their privileges.¹

Until the Sandomierz Rebellion (1606–1607) one may observe, anxiety to consummate the “execution of the laws” by cleansing from blemishes the political system of the State. Henceforth they concentrated on defending, consolidating and developing the existing laws, not so much by enacting new laws, as by introducing adjustments. They acted on the assumption that “*omis mutatio periculosa*”. From time to time, in particular when exterior or interior danger threatened so that the blemishes were most obvious and obstructed defence, the gentry proposed reforms of the political structure. But they limited themselves to such proposals

¹ A. Sucheni-Grabowska, *Walka o demokrację szlachecką. Polska w epoce odrodzenia. Państwo – społeczeństwo – kultura.* (The Struggle for gentry democracy. Poland in the period of Renaissance. The state, society, culture). A. Wyczański ed., Warszawa 1970, pp. 9–67.

as would not threaten their privileged position in the State.² They were clearly hostile to laws which might conflict with existing ones. Thus the provincial diets often instructed their deputies to the Sejm, the sole legislative organ in the country, that “nic takiego nie stanowili, co by miało uchodzić prawom, starym przywilejom, wolnościom naszym” (Not to introduce any principle which is not inherent in our old established laws and liberties). That “pierwszy fundament wolności” (the prime foundation of freedom), “cardinallissimum ius Rzeczypospolitej” (Cardinal to the State) “nieoszacowany klejnot wolności” (Freedom’s priceless gem) were free elections. That “Ius vetandi” was the second “pupilla libertatis” “narodowi polskiemu est pro summo et cardinali obiecto” [for the Polish nation est pro summo et cardinali obiecto.]³ In the middle of the XVII c., this was transformed into the famed liberum veto. While the gentry fiercely defended the notion of equality and rigidly refrained from establishing formal differences within their estate — such as the introduction of aristocratic titles and orders — they failed to observe the enormous existing differences, in particular those relating to property. They were convinced that they alone comprised the Polish nation, that the existing form of government was the best and under God’s particular protection, and further that as a bulwark of Christianity Poland had a special mission to discharge in Europe. Moreover, the Polish gentry, by reason of their privileges was different from and superior to the gentry of other nations. Characteristic of the Sarmatian ideology was the solidarity of the gentry in confrontation with peasants and burghers and aversion, sometimes amounting to hatred of foreigners, to whom they considered themselves superior.⁴

In defending their laws, privileges and liberties against enemies real and imaginary — in particular their sovereigns — the Polish gentry often pointed to the example of their neighbours in the Kingdom of St. Wenceslaus — notably the Czechs, Silesians and Moravians — and also the Kingdom of Hungary, where under the Habsburgs the estates had lost the position they had achieved earlier, especially during the reign of the Jagiellon kings. The present work will deal with the influence of changes in the political structure and nationality in the country of the crown of St. Wenceslaus and in Hungary, under the Habsburgs, on the freedom

² J. Maciszewski, *Szlachta polska i jej państwo* (The Polish gentry and their state). Warszawa 1969, 105–155.

³ J. Włodarczyk, *Sejmiki łęczyckie* (The provincial diets of Łęczyca). Łódź 1973, pp. 260, 291.

⁴ T. Ulewicz, *Sarmacja. Studium z problematyki słowiańskiej XV i XVI w.* (Sarmatia. A study on Slavonic problems of the 15th and 16th c.). Kraków 1950, pp. 131–132; S. Cynarski, *Sarmatyzm — ideologia i styl życia, Polska XVII wieku. Państwo — społeczeństwo — kultura* (Sarmatism — the ideology and manner of XVII c. Poland. The state — society — culture). J. Tazbir ed., Warszawa 1969, pp. 223 ff. Sarmatism was not a purely Polish phenomenon. On a basis similar to that in Poland it developed also in Hungary, and still later in Bohemia. It was an important factor in drawing together the gentry of those countries. Cf. Cynarski op. cit., pp. 222–223; A. Angyal, *Die osteuropäische Bedeutung des Sarmatismus. La Renaissance et la Réformation en Pologne et en Hongrie*. Budapest 1963, pp. 501–509; J. Tazbir, *Zum Vortrag über den Sarmatismus* (Diskussionsbeitrag). Ibid., pp. 511–512.

ideology of the Polish gentry. These changes were used as an argument against Habsburg candidates to the Polish throne, and any attempt by the Polish court to enter into closer relations with the Habsburgs, notably during the reigns of Sigismund III Vasa (1587–1632) and his son Władysław IV (1632–1648). The author wishes to emphasize that from a factual point of view he does not seek to be exhaustive since that would require a considerable volume. His aim is only to show the main themes involved in the problem, the evolution of the subject in the years 1572–1648, and its firm roots in gentry ideology.

The choice of Hungary and the Kingdom of St. Wenceslaus is not accidental since with both these countries Poland had many prolonged links. Up till XVI c. the two Slav nations — Poles and Czechs — were linked not only by strong tribal connections but also by language, customs, culture and politics. The Reformation, together with similarities in political structure tended to bring closer together the gentry of Silesia, Bohemia, Moravia and Poland. The Czechs had free elections from 1458 when they chose George of Podiebrad. Ferdinand I was chosen by 24 Commissioners in a free election to the Bohemian throne (1526). He had to enter into a bond stating *expressis verbis* that he had received the crown of St. Wenceslaus not by rights of heredity but following a free election. He had to reaffirm all privileges and laws, undertake to maintain intact the countries of St. Wenceslaus Crown — *article de not alienando* — even try to extend their boundaries — and not to give fiefs or offices to foreigners. The feature which, together with the free election most appealed to the Polish gentry was the rule that the opposite number of the Polish Senate or State Council, might not take decisions without the consent of the gentry expressed during a sitting of Parliament. The gentry also emphasized other privileges of the Czech estates, such as the possibility of obstructing political initiatives of the King. And last but not least, former frequent dynastic ties involving the two nations played an important role in the sympathy felt by the Polish gentry for the Czech estates.⁵

Silesia, too, was kin to the Polish gentry. This province was an integral part of Poland until the thirtieth of the XIV c., and on its links with Poland largely depended its economic development during the Renaissance and the Reformation period. Silesians played an important part in the cultural and scientific life of Poland, and in turn were attracted by the achievements of the Polish Renaissance. Familiar to Poles were the liberties of the gentry who, up to the time when the Habsburgs took possession of their throne, had full rights to determine their country's policies.⁶

⁵ S. Gruszecki, *Walka o władzę w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej po wygaśnięciu dynastii Jagiellonów 1572–1573* (The struggle for power in the Polish state after the passing of the Jagiellon dynasty 1572–1573). Warszawa 1969, pp. 108–111; J. Maćcurek, *Čechové a Poláci v 2. pol. XVI. století 1573–1589*, (The Czechs and Poles in the second half of the XVI. c. 1573–1589), *Tři kapitoly z dějin česko-polské politické vzájemnosti* (Three chapters from Polish-Czech political contacts), Praha 1948, pp. 8–11.

⁶ *Historia Śląska* (History of Silesia), vol. I up to 1763, K. Maleczyński ed., part II from the mid-XIV c. to the third quarter of the XVI., Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1961, pp. 309–327 and the chapter entitled "Intellectual Culture" p. 361 ff.

The Polish gentry were not indifferent to the lot of the Hungarians. Ties dating to the early middle ages, with special reference to the XIV c., and lively commercial contacts kept them alert to what was happening in the countries of St. Stephen's Crown. Also familiar was the political structure of Hungary, with free election, considerable Parliamentary rights, extensive privileges of the gentry who like the Poles fought the aristocracy, particularly the latter's attempts to strengthen their position by enthroning a representative of the Habsburg dynasty.⁷

The fate of the countries ruled by the crowns of St. Wenceslaus and St. Stephen under the Habsburg regime became strife in Poland during the first three interregnums after the death of Sigismund Augustus. An important argument, also for those groups of gentry and sometimes magnates who opposed the Habsburg candidature to the Polish throne. Even during the lifetime of the last of the Jagiellons, the Habsburgs, knowing that he must die without issue, sought to obtain the succession for themselves. They found support among certain of the magnates, notably the ecclesiastics, who looked to a Habsburg regime to guard against the development of the Reformation, which made considerable strides among the gentry, and to defend interests of their group. The aspirations of the Habsburgs to the throne of Poland were supported even by Sigismund Augustus, but he entered into no obligation, and finally declared his opposition to such a succession. Even then the gentry "executionists" gave no countenance to the idea of enthroning in Poland any Habsburg representative. Political writers and publicists helped to direct gentry opinion into these channels.⁸

After the death of Sigismund Augustus, the Habsburgs, supported principally by Catholic magnates, proposed as candidate for the Polish throne archduke Ernest the son of Emperor Maximilian II (1564—1576). The archduke was not approved by gentry masses, who in general suspected the House of Habsburg of an inclination to introduce in Poland an absolutist regime, with intolerance of other religions. They also feared that a Habsburg on the Polish throne would involve the country in armed conflict with Turkey.⁹ These objections were not entirely justified, since the Habsburgs neither succeeded in introducing an absolutist regime in their hereditary countries of the crown of St. Wenceslaus, Hungary and the Austrian Alps, nor revided religious unity by liquidating the powerful Reformation movement there. Even so, it was certain that if occasion should arise, they would strive to strengthen the influence of the Catholic Church and secure their own position by restricting the prerogatives of the estates. However, the gentry remained convinced that with a Habsburg on the Polish throne there would be a danger of absolutism and religious persecution in the state. Consequently, the anti-Habsburg current among the gentry was so strong that even the most dedicated supporters of Ernest

⁷ S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 112; W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej* (A History of Modern Poland), vol. I 1506—1648, Warszawa 1936, pp. 127—128.

⁹ S. Płaza, *Próby reform ustrojowych w czasie pierwszego bezkrólewia 1572—1574* (Efforts to reform the political structure during the first interregnum) p. 84; S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

feared openly to advance his candidature, maintain contact with the Emperor's emissaries or even to correspond with them or with the court of Maximilian II.¹⁰ During the second interregnum after Henry Duke of Valois fled from Poland (1574–1576) and the Emperor¹¹ himself was a candidate for the Polish throne, there was little change in the situation despite the fact — according to the eminent expert on the period, J. Macúrek — Maximilian II was liberal in religious matters, made no attempt towards absolutism or a policy of Germanization in Bohemia, since he himself tended to be rather under the sway of southern (Italian) culture than German.¹²

The theme of unwillingness even fierce hostility in relation to the Habsburg candidature was dominant in the ample and versatile publicism evident in the first two interregnums. Representatives, mostly anonymous, of all political groups rushed into print: the supporters of the King compatriot, symbolically called Piast, brother of the French King Charles IX — Henry of Valois, of the Tsar of Russia Ivan IV the Terrible, or his son Fiedor, of the Duke of Transylvania Stephen Batory, of Wiliam of Rožmberk, Czech margrave, as also of archduke Ernest and afterwards of Emperor Maximilian II. Among the sworn opponents of the Habsburg candidature was, for instance, canon Jan Dymitr Solikowski, formerly secretary to Sigismund Augustus, a diplomat familiar with European affairs, and later Archbishop of Lwów. He agitated hotly for the election of Henry of Valois, winning for his services in obtaining the crown for the French candidate the high esteem of the French legate to Poland Jean Montluc and his secretary Jean Choisin.¹³ According to J. Czubek,¹⁴ Solikowski was in the years 1572–1576 the author of at least 17 political pamphlets. Among the writers of political pamphlets devoted to the concept of electing compatriot, uncompromising opponents of the Habsburgs were a modest vicar of Mały Płock near Kolno — Jan Głuchowski,¹⁵ and Andrzej Ciesielski,¹⁶ pupil of the most eminent Polish political writer of Renaissance times — Andrzej Frycz-Modrzewski. Opposed to the Habsburgs were also Piotr Mycielski, representative of the gentry of Kalisz voivodship, a supporter of the Russian candidate,¹⁷ and many other political writers, anonymous and to this day unidentified. The Habsburg supporters, much less numerous than their opponents also took to writing,

¹⁰ S. Gruszecki, op. cit. pp. 111–112.

¹¹ "A history of the second interregnum and the Habsburg candidature describes in detail W. Zakrzewski, *Po ucieczce Henryka. Dzieje bezkrólewia 1574–1575* (After Henry's escape. A history of the interregnum 1574–1575), Kraków 1878, passim. cf. also J. Macúrek, op. cit. p. 67. ff.

¹² J. Macúrek, op. cit., p. 48.

¹³ J. Nowak-Dłużewski, *Okolicznościowa poezja polityczna w Polsce. Pierwsi królowie elekcyjni* (Occasional political poetry in Poland. The first elected kings). Warszawa 1969, p. 26.

¹⁴ J. Czubek, *Pisma polityczne z czasów pierwszego bezkrólewia* (Political writings in the time of the first interregnum). Kraków 1906, pp. XXXIV–XXXV.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. XV–XVII.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. XVII–XIX; S. Kot, Ciesielski Andrzej, *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (Polish Dictionary of Biography), (further shortening PSB), vol. IX Kraków 1938, pp. 58–59.

¹⁷ J. Czubek, op. cit., pp. XIX–XXII.

usually circulating their pamphlets anonymously. Onerous research by historians and historians of literature have brought to light some of the names. One of the best known political writers favouring the candidatures of Archduke Ernest and Emperor Maximilian II for the Polish throne was Sbardellat Dudith. In Poland he was known as Dudycz, an eminent humanist once bishop of Pécs, a diplomat — “pół Węgier, pół Polak, a na prawdę były Niemiec” (Half Hungarian, half Polish and in fact all German).¹⁸ After leaving Hungary he settled in Śmigiel, Great Poland and married Regina Straszówna. His representation in Poland of Habsburg interests was later rewarded with the title of confidential counsellor to the Emperor.¹⁹

Some publicists motivated their hatred of the Habsburg candidature by reference to examples taken from early as well as the most recent history and the current situation of Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Hungary and other countries. Others limited themselves to items of information very short and concise, but often very much to the point. Although differences appear as between the various pamphlets in the emphasis placed on a variety of more or less detailed arguments, they do exhibit all the reasons for the unpopularity with the mass of the gentry of the efforts made to secure the Polish throne for Ernest and Maximilian II. They adequately reflect the mood, prevalent among the gentry as never before in Polish history, of germanophobia, hatred of Germans and everything German.²⁰

Let us consider some details. Jan Raduński, proclaiming himself in 1572 an opponent of enthroning Habsburg in Poland, warned the gentry that their fate would be as was actually happening in the countries ruled by the Austrian royal House — both the senior Spanish and by the junior German lines. He wrote: “Ta (familia austriacka — J.L.), nas straszy, iż gdziekolwiek posiada (tron — J. L.), tam wszędy rozlanie krwi, w Hiszpanii okrucieństwo, w Czechach prześladowanie, w Niderlandzie morderstwo, w Węgrzech ludzi zatracenie, w Niemczech podatków obciążenie, wszędy zła obrona, praw i wolności złamanie praktykami wszędy nakładają, biesiadami się bawią...”²¹ Although that was a gross overstatement, particularly as regards Bohemia, Hungary and the German Reich, it did reflect

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. XXII.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. XXII–XXIV; A. Fajęcki; Dudith... Sbardellat Andrzej (1533–1589), PSB, vol. V, Kraków 1939–1946, pp. 445–449.

²⁰ S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, pp. 113–114.

²¹ Biblioteka Jagiellońska w Krakowie (The Jagiellon Library, Kraków), ms 59 L. 105.

Ta (familia austriacka — J. L.) nas straszy, iż gdziekolwiek posiada (tron — J. L.), tam wszędy rozlanie krwi, w Hiszpanii okrucieństwo, w Czechach prześladowanie, w Niderlandzie morderstwo, w Węgrzech ludzi zatracenie, w Niemczech podatków obciążenie, wszędy zła obrona, praw i wolności złamanie, praktykami wszędy nakładają, biesiadami się bawią...” (They — the Habsburgs — J. L. — terrify us, because wherever they have possessions — thrones — J. L. —, there blood flows — in Spain, cruelty, in Bohemia persecution, in the Netherlands murder, in Hungary destruction of the people, in Germany the stress of taxes, everywhere inadequate defend of the law and abrogation of freedoms, everywhere they pass their time in revelry).

This text is quoted also by S. Gruszecki, *op. cit.*, p. 117, but it seems that in some places he deciphered it erroneously.

the deep conviction of the majority of the gentry that under Austrian rule they would have no freedom. Raduński added that a Habsburg on the Polish throne would mean certain war with Turkey and the Tartars, since the House of Austria would undoubtedly use Poland in defending their own interests in Hungary.²²

The arguments presented by Raduński were considerably developed by Jan Głuchowski in a lyrical verse composition, "Interregnum," of poor literary quality but the first in Polish literature to oppose the Habsburg candidate to the Polish throne. He cited in particular those occasions in former Polish-German relations which showed Habsburg as well as German policy in relation to Poland in a bad light. He recalled Ryksa, wife of Mieszko II (1025–1034) and an enemy to Poland together with the murder of Przemysław II by the Brandenburg Margraves (1296). The greater part of his space he devoted to the lot under the Habsburgs of the countries of St. Wenceslaus Crown and Hungary. He relied on his own observations from 3 years he is supposed to have spent in Bohemia, though we do not know when and in what character. Głuchowski's principal argument refers to the loss of freedom by the Czechs and Hungarians, the prevalence of foreigners, the downfall of St. Stephen's Crown, and the fact that the Habsburgs failed to secure Hungary against Turkish aggression. Głuchowski wrote:

*Spytajcie Czechów bratów, co się z nimi dzieje,
Albo ich starodawna jako wolność mdleje.
Spytajcie Węgrów, co dziś za obronę znają,
Chocia nad sobą orla o dwu głowach mają.
Czechowie, jako gęsi obskubane, siedzą
A jak się im to zstało, ani sami wiedzą:
Wolności polamane, ojczyzny pobrane,
Miasta na znak niewolej plugiem poorane! . . .
Trzy lata byłem przy nich płacząc ich ciężkości,
Bo się sami napłakać nie mogą wolności,
Której marnie pozbyli, Czechowie ubodzy,
A obcy się w niej szeszą, jako wilcy srodzy . . ."*

Further, according to Głuchowski, the Czech were relying on Poles to rescue them from Habsburg domination. Similarly, Silesians would gladly accept Polish rule provided that the throne should be occupied by a strong monarch able to defend them against the Habsburgs

*"I słyszałem to częste, rzewne narzekanie:
Przywróć nam jeszcze czasy takie, miły Panie,
By nas z niewoli takiej bracia wybawili,
Byśmy pospołu panu jednemu służyli.
Ja nie wiem, kogo oni braty nazywali,
Lecz podobno Polaki, bo więc przydawali
Bratrzy naszy, Polacy. Najrzewniej Słężacy*

²² Ibid.

*Dzień po dzień narzekają, chudzi nieboracy,
A, by tu o potężnym panu usłyszeli,
Prędkobyście je pewnie u siebie widzieli.*"²³

Gluchowski is here guilty of several exaggerations. The literature on this subject has nothing to say as regards the allegation, nor is any evidence offered to prove that during the first interregnum the Czech and Silesians aspired to a union with Poland under a single sovereign, not a Habsburg. Also Polish political writers did not reflect unification tendencies, they merely suggested during the first interregnum the possibility of Poland's recovering Silesia. Piotr Mycielski, for example, saw such a possibility in the election of the Russian candidate.²⁴ The view of this matter adopted by the supporters of the Austrian candidature will be shown later.

Gluchowski concluded his argument as concerning our theme with an emphatic question:

*"A więc wy sami, będąc tak wolnymi,
mielibyście się mieszać ludźmi niewolnymi?"*²⁵

That is to say that in the event of the throne being granted to Archduke Ernest, the Polish gentry with their privileges and liberties, would become intermingled with Czechs, Silesians, Hungarians, oppressed by the Habsburgs, and in due course that would mean oppression for Poles.

Sharper — and in the opinion of J. Nowak-Dłużewski²⁶ more effective — than Gluchowski was the attack on the Habsburgs by an anonymous author²⁷ of an eclogue: "Tymatas skotopas do wszystkiego rycerstwa na kolskim zjeździe"²⁸ (Tymatas skotopas to all the gentry at the Kolan

²³ J. Czubek, op. cit., pp. 18—19:

(Ask your brothers the Czechs what is happening to them, how their ancient freedoms are fading. Ask the Hungarians how they are defended, although a two-headed eagle watches over them. The Czechs lie like plucked geese, not knowing what is happening to them. Freedoms abrogated, the motherland annexed, towns ploughed up as a mark of slavery... Three years I have been with them and wept with them, for they cannot cry their lost freedom; poor Czechs — while others great and powerful boast of it...)

(...) And often I heard that mournful plaint: Grand us, o Lord, times in which our brothers may save us so that together we may serve You. I do not know whom they meant by brothers, but I suppose Poles, since they added — our brothers the Poles. Loudest in complaint are the Silesians poor and haggard. If they should hear of a strong master, you would soon have them with you.)

²⁴ W. Czaplński, *Ziemie zachodnie w polityce Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej 1572—1764*. (The western territories in the policy of the gentry state 1572—1764). *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, Year LXVIII, 1961, no. 1, p. 6.

²⁵ J. Czubek, op. cit. p. 19:

*A więcbyście wy sami, będąc tak wolnymi,
niechbyście się mieszać z ludźmi niewolnymi
(Would you who are so free mix with the enslaved?)*

²⁶ J. Nowak-Dłużewski, op. cit., p. 16.

²⁷ J. Czubek, op. cit., pp. XVI—XVII — ascribes the authorship of this work to Gluchowski, and A. Brückner to Stanisław Porebski in a review, published in the periodical, *Pamiętnik Literacki*, of Czubek's collected works. Year VI, 1907, pp. 405—406. Whereas Nowak-Dłużewski, op. cit. p. 16 leaves the work as anonymous.

²⁸ The Convention of Koło took place on 15th October 1572.

Convention). This writer did not draw on the past but sought by contemporary examples to arouse feelings of aversion in the Polish gentry, to inspire hatred and prejudice against the Germans, referring to propaganda prints in which archduke Ernest prematurely proclaimed himself, even before the election of Poland's new king.

*"Którego za pana wam już wymalowali,
Chociaście go wy sobie jeszcze nie obrali?
Czyli Niemcy obyczaj tak szalony mają,
Nim co poczną, za pewną rzecz malować dają?"*

He tried to sting the self-love of the gentry with the words:

*"Jako jeden radny pan z cesarskiego dworu,
Pisząc jednemu panu, z głupstwa a z uporu
Mianował one Polaki sprosnemi barbarzy..."*

Nor did he overlook the example of Czechs and Hungarians as victims of Habsburg absolutism. He maintained that the seating of a member of the House of Austria on the Polish throne would cause the gentry to lose their liberties, as happened with the Czechs whom Ferdinand I "zniewolił, a prawie je, jak pasterz owce swe, pogolił" ("penned, and like a shepherd his fleeced sheep), and denied to our brother Czechs their privileges. Indigenous customs would change, masses of foreigners would pour in, there would be difficulties in obtaining justice from authorities not familiar with the Polish language.²⁹

The anonymous author of the verse "Przestroga o obieraniu króla", (Precautions in choosing a King) was also hostile to the Austrian candidature. Because a German:

*"Prawa wyrwaca,
Zacność wytraca
Wolności skraca,
Praktyki,
Prawniki."³⁰*

The anonymous author "Wyprawa do sąsiadów w Niebyłkowie" (An Excursion to neighbours in Niebyłkowo) accused the House of Austria of

²⁹ J. Czubek op. cit., pp. 27-29

(They have painted him as your master, though you have not yet chosen him. Is it a German a habit to paint what is not yet begun? ...)

One of the aristocrats of the Emperor's court, being stupid or obstinate, has written that the worthy Poles are barbarians ...)

³⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

[Overturns the laws, destroys decency, alternates and annihilates freedom (those) practical men (those) lawyers?]

“tyraństwo płodzi” (begetting tyrants) and justified himself by quoting the result of Habsburg rule in Bohemia, Hungary and the German Reich.

“Czechy zubożył,
Węgry potrwóżył,
Rzeszy też pożył,
Sam się rozmnożył,
By był srog.”³¹

Bohemia was also quoted as an example by a supporter of the Russian candidature, the anonymous author of “Sententia de eligendo novo rege ex duce Moschorum”. He maintained that after the election to the Polish throne the Habsburg would abrogate privileges “jako uczyniono Czechom, braciej naszej, okrom Ślązaków” . . .³² (As our brother Czechs, though not the Silesians, have been treated). His awareness that the repressions of 1547—1548 had not touched the province of Silesia was characteristic.

Piotr Mycielski, a vigorous supporter of the Moscow candidate, produced in his polemical pamphlets several interesting anti-Habsburg arguments. In his prose work “Sentencya cuiusdam de electione regis Polonorum cum comonstracione commodi et incommodi inde emergentis”, he warned the gentry that the western monarchs “więcej u siebie uważają privata commoda, a niż publica iuramenta, które przy przyjmowaniu państw publice czynić zwykli”³³ (Prefer privata commoda to publica iuramenta, and when enthroned commonly give effect to it). In the event of one of them being elected to the Polish throne, the gentry would suffer the same fate as did the Czechs following the election of Ferdinand I. Before his accession he had taken a solemn oath to maintain the privileges, laws and liberties of the Czechs, but “wnet prawa ich łamać, przywileje palić, iuga nieznośne na nie kłaść, nowe prawa pro suo libito dawać, radę koronną ścinać począł, tak, iż niebożątka z onej nieprzepłaconej wolności w wieczną niewolą przez tak okrutnego fidefragum przyjść musieli, iż się ledwo w swej skórze ostali, a majątności swej wszytkiej nieznośnymi trybuty na każdy rok ledwie nie odkupują”³⁴ (he soon began to abrogate their laws and set aside their privileges; he subjected them to unbearable iuga, instituted new laws pro suo libito, executed the King’s Council; thus the poor Czechs, as a result of such cruel fidefragum, subsided from their not overprosperous freedom into indefinite enslavement only barely retained their skins, and as to their property had to repurchase it annually by way of exorbitant tribute). Mycielski believed that Habsburg rule would ruin Poland as it had ruined Hungary. Like the anonymous author of the eclogue “Tymatas skotopas”, Mycielski aroused the gentry to understanding of contempt in which western nations, particularly Germans, held the Poles. They called them “barbara gens Polonorum” and spoke

³¹ Ibid. p. 35:

(Impoverished the Czechs, terrorized the Hungarians,
used the Reich itself multiplied in ruthlessness.)

³² Ibid., p. 357.

³³ Ibid., p. 370.

³⁴ Ibid.

of Poland as "barbariem".³⁵ Such arguments, concerning in particular Hungary's having fallen under Habsburg rule were repeated by Mycielski in verse form the literary point of view of little value: "Przestroga, to jest, pokazanie upadków inszych ziem, także i Korony polskiej z obierania pana z pojsrzodka siebie"³⁷(Warning — or the transplanting of other countries' downfall to the Kingdom of Poland by electing from among them "master"). Mycielski also wrote a prose work almost identically titled "Przestroga z pokazaniem niepożytków z wzięcia pana v pośrzodku siebie"³⁸ (Warning — and an indication of the folly of taking a master not from among ourselves).

A determined and at times, almost pathological Germanophobe was Andrzej Ciesielski. Even in his first polemical pamphlet³⁹ "De rege novo de sua gente deligendo oratio (ad senatum)", he presented himself as a sworn and uncompromising antagonist of Habsburg candidates, insisting that, as representatives of a nation with which for centuries Poland's relations had been of the worst, they could not be entrusted with the Polish throne. Against the Habsburgs was for him the fact that they wanted to gain possession of the throne of Poland "pactis et non electione libera". On the throne he wanted to see only and exclusively a Pole. He cited the examples of Bohemia and Hungary, where Maciej Korwin and George of Podiebrad ruled following free election, and to Jan Žižka of Trocnov, who although "vir plebeius" was appointed by Czechs to the office of "ad depellendam Germanorum potentiam et dominatum". Then Ciesielski posed to his kinsmen the question "An Mathiae Corvina defuit apud suos Ungaros auctoritas? An Pozdebradio, caesareae et papalis maiestatis contemptori et libertatis Bohemiae vindici magnanimo, suos apud Boiemos non erat honor?",⁴⁰ to which he gave a rhetorical, affirmative answer.

In his next work, "De rege novo ex sua gente deligendo oratio (ad equites)" Ciesielski's aversion to the Habsburgs was still more marked. Agitating for a compatriot King — the voivod of Sieradz — Olbracht Łaski, a known political rebel who "imponował szlachcie formatem swej indywidualności i rozmachem przedsięwzięć politycznych"⁴¹ (impressed the gentry by this individuality and the vigour of his political activity) — he again cited precedents created by the Czechs and Hungarians in electing Mathias Korwin and George of Podiebrad. Moreover, he declared the Habsburgs to be enemies of free election as was best demonstrated by the fate under their rule of the countries of the crown of St Wenceslaus and St Stephen. Similar, too, was the fate of other privileges, laws and liberties. Ciesielski objected to subjects being unable to communicate with their king in their native language, pursuant to custom, to foreigners pouring into those countries and playing an increasingly important role, to taxes being voted not for the

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 367—368.

³⁶ J. Nowak-Dłużewski, op. cit., p. 21.

³⁷ Czubek, op. cit., pp. 703—724.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 381—397.

³⁹ T. Ulewicz, op. cit., p. 108, ascribes the authorship of this work to Albrecht Łaski.

⁴⁰ J. Czubek, op. cit., pp. 335—338.

⁴¹ J. Nowak-Dłużewski, op. cit., p. 18.

defence of the country but for the use of the King.⁴² Even in the several final and correctly constructed hexameters, he attempted to arouse in the gentry disgust at the Germans and their candidate for the Polish crown.⁴³

The author of the pamphlet "Jakiego króla Polakom nie trzeba?" (What Kind of King do Poles not need?) also found the most serious threat to free election to lie in choosing a Habsburg as King of Poland because: "widziem to, że u tych narodów, gdzie wolne obieranie było, ociec za żywota i zdrowia dobrego synowi stolicę abo bratu spuszcza, aby wolne obieranie zagasło... Tak po dziś dzień w Czechach i Węgrzech się dzieje"⁴⁴ (I observed that in the countries which once enjoyed free election, the father while still alive and active handed the capital over to his son or brother, thus condemning free election to death... That has happened in our times in Hungary and Bohemia). Again taking those countries as examples, he declared that their wars and internal turmoil were the fault of their alien rulers. Though Poles thus far had not had kings "ab austro" the examples of the Czechs and Hungarians would suffice for whenever they accepted such a ruler "zawsze abo rozruch wielki, abo szkoda Rzeczypospolitej pewna"⁴⁵ (the result was always great disturbances and inevitable loss to the state). The anonymous author of a pamphlet "Ślacheica polskiego do rycerskiego koła, braciej swej miłej, o obieraniu króla krótka przemowa" (a short address by a member of the Polish gentry to the concourse of knights, my dear brothers, with a view to choosing a king) drew the attention of the gentry to the bondage experienced by the Czechs and Hungarians under Habsburg rule. He warned the gentry that if they were to elect a Habsburg they might lose their most treasured right — easy access to and communication with the monarch "bez prokuratora abo tłumacza"⁴⁶ (without prosecutor or translator). The anonymous author of

⁴² „Germanus vero confusus et satis domi ad agendum habens supersedisset, ubi non successissent conatus, quo inde a maioribus suis hactenus nulos intermisit in tot recuperandis (utinam retinendis) regnis, quae ille sublata ac erepta illis omni libertate, non in haereditatem tantum propriam et successionem posteritati suae contulit, sed et in servitutum sempiternam delusus traduxit. Hoc testantur regna nobis vicina, Boemia, Ungaria, Silesia, Moravia... Exempla nos Boemorum, Siesitarum et Ungarorum praedicta... admoneant, quis suis libertatibus amissis neque sua lingua aut moribus nec habitu aut ritu patrio regem appellant aut salutant. sed per interpretes alloquuntur manusque veste obiectas suorum principum deosculantur... Unde tanta mutatio, tanta metamorphosis iam facta in gente illa, ut vix Boemum a Germano vel Hispano, illos vero a Boemis sercernere queas: sic omnia apud illos inversa... Sed et, quod etiam magis dolendum est, quia tantum, quantum iubetur, de tributis pendunt idque non ad necessitatem aut defensionem regni sui, sed ad Caesaris voluntatem satietatemque, hanc mercedem, hanc gratiam, hoc praemium ex promissis illis magnis pro repentina illa voluntatum in se inclinatione retulerunt..." cf. J. Czubeck, op. cit. pp. 343-345.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 274-275.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Don't let us seek to lose it easily, and if examples can move us, let us regard our neighbours: how the Hungarians complain now that they have betrayed their own nation, and allowed themselves to be ruled by a foreigners; and how in slavery they have become so submissive as much as they want to they cannot shake off their heavy yoke. Let who will ask our brothers the Czechs regarding the taste of alien rule: he will learn what it means to have a master from a foreign land. *Ibid.* p. 281.

“Elekcyja króla krześcijańskiego” (The Election of the Christian King) also drew attention to language difficulties.⁴⁷

An anonymous political pamphlet dating from the first interregnum “Z rakuskiego domu dla tych przyczyn nie chcą mieć Polacy króla . . .” (The reasons why Poles do not want a king from the House of Austria), merits closer attention since he attempts, in evident alarm, to make the gentry more sensitive to the dangers to the state inherent in the election of a Habsburg and gives a great variety of reasons why such a candidate should be rejected by the electors. He maintained that Habsburg rule in Poland would constitute a grave threat to gentry laws, privileges and political freedom, with special reference to the principle of free election, since “od tego domu rakuskiego wolności wszystkim czeskim miastom poposowano i do wielkiej niewoli przywiedziono” (this House of Austria had plundered the liberties of Czech towns and condemned them to severe bondage). He warned “abyśmy potym nie mowili: Fuimus liberi Poloni, nunc sumus ubique oppressi servitute perpetua” (Poles not to put themselves in a position in which they would have to bemoan later: Fuimus liberi Poloni, nunc sumus ubique oppressi servitute perpetua), and added that “regni Bohemiae, regni Hungariae ex domo Austriaca perpetui haereditas, cavendum est Polonis, ne de libero regno esset haereditarium, liberamque iam electionem omitterent ac in sempiternam servitutem praecipitent”. The Hungarian and Bohemian gentry in particular were held up as a warning against Habsburg activities. Because in Bohemia “ktokolwiek możny et amator suae libertatis okaż się, że się chce oppophere o wolność swą . . . ni vincula includitur, a tam sine ulla misericordia do śmierci swojej wieczne cierpieć musi, co w Wiedniu i w inszych zamkach znalazłoby się . . .” (Whoever is wealthy and proves to be et amator suae libertatis, wants to oppophere for his freedom . . . in vincula includitur, there sine ulla misericordia he must suffer endlessly still death, as can be seen in Vienna and other strongholds). “Anon” also complained of such fiscal pressure in the Habsburg countries “że i pod poganinem tego nie znajdzie, tantam praessuram gentium” (that even under a pagan is not to be found such tantam praessuram gentium). He emphasized the prevalent national discrimination, for “w Węgrzech na zamkach, w mieściech jedno Niemcy są urzędnikami nullumque indigenam illius regni patiuntur” (in Hungarian towns and strongholds only Germans are officials nullumque indigenam illius regni patiuntur). Furthermore he reproached the Habsburgs, for not honouring the oaths taken by their predecessors, and did not believe that Germans would ever forgive the blood shed by Poles in the past. However, the most profound indignation was aroused by the alleged fact that in Bohemia “nullus . . . respectus personarum, w jedny tam cenie poddany i ślachcic”,⁴⁸ (nullus . . . respectus personarum holds a peasant in the same esteem as a gentleman). To be treated on the same footing as a peasant as something the Polish gentry could not accept; they were accustomed to a situation in which a peasant had no rights and was

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 305–306.

⁴⁸ Biblioteka Jagiellońska w Krakowie (The Jagiellon Library Kraków), Ms. 59, L. 116–118.

entirely at the mercy of his masters. Not everything in the situation in Bohemia was exactly as the anonymous writer suggested but the peasants did at least have the rights to look to the state for justice.

Many of the statements included in the political pamphlets discussed above were repeated, supplemented and developed by new ideas in a paper called "Gdyby panowie Polacy cesarza albo Niemca obrali, toby na nie przyjść musiało" (If the Poles were to choose the Emperor or a German, what would be their fate?). J. Czubek⁴⁹ has suggested that this pamphlet was written by Solikowski but other scholars have questioned the fact.⁵⁰ Reference was made in it to German arrogance in Hungary and the Germanization of Bohemia "gdzie pierwaj Niemca nie slychano, tak się ich nawszelo, że w królestwie trzecie miasto czeskie, a dwa niemieckie, w miastach cesarskich dwa mieszczenie Niemcy, trzeci Czech" (where at first nobody had heard of the Germans, now there are so many of them that in the Kingdom of every three towns one is Czech and two German, while in the Emperor's towns of every three burghers two Germans and one Czech). The author did not cover up the fact that "barzoby ich Czechowie radzi zbeli, gdyby mogli" (the Czechs would gladly get rid of them if they could). Moreover, he warned the gentry that should a German be chosen there would be an influx of foreigners who would buy land, export money and whatever was more valuable "zaczemby ziemię zniszczeli, zubożeli, a swoje ubogacieli" (thus ruining and impoverishing this country to enrich their own). The German whose hatred of Poles is known would, it was emphasized, in the event of a Habsburg being elected, seek revenge "pamiętajac na one wielkie krwie rozlanie przodków swoich od Polaków" (For their blood shed by Poles). The Polish gentry and clergy would be threatened by fiscal pressure as great as that in Bohemia. The author cannot bear to contemplate what Habsburg policy might devise. The Habsburgs would show favour to the members of the House of Austria, and foreigners in general, discriminate against indigenous families. The author offers a gloomy perspective of the State being transformed into a conglomeration of duchies under hereditary rule, as in the case of the Empire, of representatives and friends of the Habsburgs. He urged that "Niechaj pamiętają Polacy na ono, co ojciec tego cesarza uczynił Prażanom i wszystkiej czeskiej szlachcie. że jem zbroje pobrał, a do innego królestwa wyniósł; gdzie mieli główne prawa swoje w Prażde, zapalił im je, aby tym wolniej statuta swoje wydał, a innych miast mury połamał, potargal i wszystkie prawa, przywileje od innych królów nadane połamał, potargal i wszystkie im wolności odjął, tak, że już są u niego jako w niewoli".⁵¹ At the first opportunity the Habsburgs would do the same in Poland: just as Ferdinand I failed to keep his word to the Czechs and Hungarians, so the Habsburgs would fail after the election to keep their

⁴⁹ J. Czubek, op. cit., p. XXXIV.

⁵⁰ J. Nowak-Dłużewski, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

⁵¹ J. Czubek, op. cit., pp. 358-359. Poles should remember what the father of the present Emperor did to the inhabitants of Prague, and to all the Czech gentry; he took their defence and removed it to another kingdom; the (written) laws they had in Prague he burned so that he could freely pass his own; he demolished the walls of other towns. eliminated their political freedom so that now they are his captives.

solemn promises — that is to maintain the laws, privileges and liberties. Habsburg might model himself on the Czechs and create a camera “tedy wszystka Polska nie dostarczałaby na jego komorę i na pisarzy i na pisarczyki etc. . .” (in that case, not all of Poland would be able to provide for his chamber and for his scribes and scriblers etc.). In the opinion of the author of the pamphlet, the election of a Habsburg to the throne of Poland would involve the state in armed conflict with the Ottoman Empire and the Tartars, in which she would be left to rely entirely on her own strength, for as the example of Hungary had shown, Germans were “ad proelium ultimati”.⁵²

“Z rakuskiego domu . . .” (Why Poles do not want . . .) and “Gdyby panowie Polacy . . .” (If the Poles were to choose . . .) are in many respects so similar that it seems possible to suppose that they are the products of a single pen. Solikowski’s? Only further profound research — in particular historians of old Polish literature — can answer that question. Even so, this much is certain — that in the period of the first interregnum Solikowski was the leading controversialist, taking up the cudgels against the Habsburg candidature in several works, clearly the products of his pen. Examples used are taken from the neighbouring countries, principally Bohemia, Hungary and Silesia, ruled by Habsburgs.

Already in “Kompetytorów do Korony polskiej commoda” (The commoda of the competitors for the Polish crown), he warned the gentry that in the event of Ernest being elected “co się innym dzieje, to jest, Węgrom, Ślązacom, Czechom, stałoby się to i Lechom” (what happened to the others — Hungarians, Silesians and Czechs — would happen to Poles, too). To begin with, the gentry would lose the privilege of free election, since the Habsburg would introduce the hereditary throne.⁵³ In “Sententia cuiusdam de eligendo rege” Solikowski hold up the discouraging example of Bohemia and Hungary, writing “. . . mie przedsię aliena vestigia terrent: Czechowie, Ślązacy, Węgrzy; co się z nimi dzieje, dobrze wiemy”⁵⁴ (I have before me aliena vestigia terrent: we well know what is happening to Czechs, Silesians and Hungarians). When Dudith produced a polemical pamphlet, Solikowski at once answered with “Responsum ad praecedentem epistolam pro duce Andium” in which he said openly “a Czechowie piszcza” (the Czechs are whining). He outlined the repressions they suffered, the emigration of many rich Czech families to neighbouring countries, the fiscal pressure practiced by the Habsburgs, the appointment of foreigners to offices, the double-dealing of the Habsburgs as regards aid in the event of conflict with Turkey, of which the best illustration was the history of Hungary.⁵⁵ Though in his best work, of real political value,⁵⁶ dating to the first interregnum — “Rozmowa Kruszwicka de nobi-

⁵² Ibid., p. 360.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 492. „Jużby się Polakom więcej nie nadziewać elekcyje, bo by oni (Habsburgowie — J. L.) z nas sobie dziedzictwo uczynili . . .”.

[Poles would no longer enjoy free election because they (Habsburgs — J. L.) would make an hereditary throne.]

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 449.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 456.

⁵⁶ J. Nowak-Dłużewski, op. cit., p. 27.

lissimo septentrionis regno tempore interregni post mortem Sigismundi Augusti regis X Februari w Kruszwicy” (The Kruszwica conversation de nobilissimi septentrionis regno tempore interregni post mortem Sigismundi Augustii regis X Februarii in Kruszwica) Solikowski scarcely refers to the example of Bohemia and Hungary, from the context it can be deduced that not only was he familiar with them, but was delicately reminding readers of them, desirous no to repeat what he had already presented extensively in other works. His Germanophobia found full expression in this work. The Germans, he wrote, “naród nędzny, chciwy i łakomy” (are despicable, greedy and gluttonous nation). His sympathies went out to nations governed by Germans.⁵⁷

During the interregnum, after the escape from Poland of Henry Valois (in the night from 18th to the 19th June, 1574) Solikowski at first tried by means of his works to prevent the holding of a new election, he wanted to wait for Henry's return. However, when that became unrealistic he tended to back the Habsburg candidature, although probably in the end he did not support them.⁵⁸ In his work “Komornik a burmistrz” (The tenant and the Mayor) written in October 1575, shortly before the election fixed for November 7, he discredited the efforts of Maximilian II to obtain the Polish throne as being no longer timely. He took note of the advantages of the Habsburg candidature, but found them overshadowed by drawbacks. The fate of Czechs and Hungarians under Habsburg rule was paramount of that opinion. When in the discussion the mayor began to belaud the virtues of the Habsburg candidate. The tenant did not challenge him, but added... “Jest to wszystko; ale jakoś się ludzie zdrygają, wspominając sprawy czeskie i węgierskie za panowania cesarza Ferdynanda a snać i terazniejsze: prawa i wolności popolite wszęch stanów nawątlone, ślachta śpieszała, imiona konfiskowane, rady ziemskie na stronę odsadzone, rada komorna — kilka osob cudzoziemskich a z nizkich stanów, z temi pan wszystki radzi i sprawy konkluduje. Niemcy wszędy górę mają, tych w ślacheckie a pańskie statki, tych na urzędy i na dostojęństwa sadzają; a wiemy jako to jest naród hardy, inemi gardzący, a zwłaszcza polskiemu niesprzyjaźny, chocia my tcimy i ważymy”. He was indignant at the fiscal pressure which was a burden not only to peasants and the burghers but also to gentry and clergy. Moreover, he could not accept “bona ecclesiastica sunt bona camerae”. He drew attention to the poverty and distress of society, the spread of usury, and the widespread falling into debt by citizens. On the other hand, when the mayor mentioned “srogości się najwięcej ludzie naszy wolni obawiają” (our people most fear austerity), the tenant begun to defend the Habsburgs saying “Wszak cesarz Maksymilian srogości żadnej przeciwko poddanym swym nie używa, acz bez karności żadna rzeczpospolita stać nie może” (The Emperor Maximilian is not austere with his subjects, no state will stand without discipline). He also justified the repressions imposed by Ferdinand I “nieposłuszeństwem, niewiernością i zruszeniem poddanych swych przeciwko sobie”⁵⁹ (confronted by lack of obedience or loyalty, and faced

⁵⁷ J. Czubek, op. cit., pp. 466–491.

⁵⁸ J. Nowak-Dłużeński, op. cit., p. 57.

⁵⁹ J. Czubek, op. cit., pp. 650–654. It is all there somehow people shudder

by rebellious subjects). The tenant-mayor discussion, interrupted by sitting down to the table, was not to be renewed nor had it reached any conclusions. Neither the one nor the other — or indirectly Solikowski — declared himself for or against the Habsburgs. An eminent historian of literature was driven to declare such an ending to be “a lamentable example of an ideologically bankrupt publicist, silenced by events”.⁶⁰

Solikowski doubts were not shared by Jakub Laskowski⁶¹ — a publicist of the second interregnum. In his work “Wotum w interregnum po Henrykowym z Polskie odjeździe” (The vote during the interregnum after Henry Valois left Poland) he argued passionately against the Habsburg candidature. He was in no doubt that the Czechs were right during the Schmalkald war to disobey Ferdinand's orders which would have made them break the treaty they had negotiated with the Elector of Saxony. Moreover, here was no rebellion and therefore what was not necessary was “siła potracono znacznych ludzi, siła domów poniszczono” (the loss of many eminent people and ruin of many houses). That fictitious rebellion was a pretext for “Nasadzono tam niemieckiego narodu, familiej wielkich zniżono tak, iż i język i naród niemiecki wyciska czeski” (bringing in a lot of Germans, humbling great families, so that the German people and language forced out the Czech). According to Laskowski, in Bohemia and in Hungary the convening of Parliament was a pure formality, since the actual decisions were taken at the King's Council consisting by his wish of “homines plebei”. Great indignation was aroused by the fact that “nawet chłopcy z jurysdykcyj tak panom wyjęto, że do urzędu chłop własnego pana pozywa” (even the peasant was removed from the landlords jurisdiction and might summon his own master to court). To Laskowski it was painful that despite their solemn oaths, the Habsburgs had changed the political structure of Bohemia and Hungary. He condemned the social policy in Hungary — removing from offices their indigenous holders and replacing them by Germans. In the same way as Hungarians and Czechs, so he warned, may Poles lose under Habsburg rule the privilege of free election “źródło wolności naszych” (the source of our liberties). He was convinced that in the event of a Habsburg being elected he would drag Poland into war with Turkey. That would make it “Węgrom lżej” (easier for Hungarians) but, he added promptly, “nam ciężej. A źle padnie — nam bieda, wygramy co — im wygramy — nie sobie” (harder on us. If we lose, we suffer, and if we win, we win for them not for ourselves). The example of Hungarian hopes that under Habsburg rule they would be secure against the Turkish thread was for Laskowski symptomatic, “miasto ratunku ich

when they call to mind the situation of the Czechs and Hungarians situation during the reign of Ferdinand, as well as the present time. The laws and liberties of all the estates attenuated, the gentry torpid, the property confiscated, the national Council dismissed, in the Council Chamber numbers of foreigners of low estate but it is with them that the monarch holds council and determines all. The Germans everywhere take the lead; they grab posts of the gentry and the high offices; we know that they are a tough nation, contemptuous of others and especially hostile to Poles although we are of importance and consequence.

⁶⁰ J. Nowak-Dłużeński, op. cit., p. 58.

⁶¹ Some information about him is given by J. Czubek, op. cit., pp XXXV–XXXVI.

(Habsburgów — L.J.) sprawą zginęli”.⁶² (Since instead of receiving [Habsburg — J.L.] help they were sacrificed).

It was only to be expected that the supporters of the Habsburg candidature should polemize with their opponents. Among them was the anonymous author of: “*Rationes et cautelae in novi regis electione observandae*,” who sought intelligently to undermine their case. He did make no bones about the Czechs being oppressed, but he emphasized justification. The Czechs have been punished “ale to perfidyą swą zasłużeli, bo przeciw przysięgłemu swemu panu wojnę podnieśli i państwa go pozbawić chcieli, zapomniawszy wiary swojej, któremu beli trzymać przysięgli. Takowe crimen laesae maiestatis ciężko wszędy karzą...” (but they deserved it for their perfidy, having made war against their rightful sovereign and forgetful of their oath of loyalty to him, have sought to deprive him of his state. Such crimen laesae maiestatis is universally punished). He agreed that the Habsburgs had imposed heavy taxes but answered to that that in Poland taxes were not unknown — indeed there might be more of them. Moreover, “wiem też to, że w domu rakuskim, chocia są podatki niemałe, przecię sprawiedliwość prędką. Dawszy panu, cum powinien, jestem pewien ostatka...” (although taxes are not light under the House of Austria — equity is prompt. When I concede to my lord his due I can be sure that everything will be alright) which is not always the case in Poland. He sought to seduce the gentry by dangling hopes for the recovery of Silesia.⁶³

A similar manner of defence of the Habsburgs was employed by Dudith, already referred to. In two of his works “*Dialogi de regis Poloniae electione*”, composed in the form of a conversation between a Pole (Polonus) and a Traveller (Peregrinus), the latter being Dudith himself, he challenges the Pole to produce his charges, and then demolishes them. Thus, when the Pole declares “*Aiunt domus Austriacae tyranide perfectum esse, ut Bohemia, quae libera antehac fuit, et Moravia et Silesia, postremo etiam Hungaria in servitutem sit redacta, privilegiis et libertate omni amissa, imperare eos, cum volunt, milites, tributa et quae volunt onera suorum subditorum humeris imponere, quae ita sint gravia, ut iam ne ferri quidem possint; postremo pontifici Romano ita addictos esse, ut conscientiis quoque imperent iam non minus graviter, quam corporibus ipsis*”, Peregrinus declares that such are not true, or they arise from a lack of knowledge of relations in the House of Habsburg. He describes the religious toleration at the royal court, the adherence in the countries belonging to the Crown of St. Wenceslaus and in Hungary to the laws of the estates, their principles and liberties. The Emperor does not himself either impose the taxes or command the army. Taxes are voted by Parliament, which also mobilizes the army, when needed for defence against the Turks.⁶⁴ And if the liberties have been abrogated, that is because rebellion has been organized against Ferdinand II and had to be punished. Moreover, public opinion was on the side of the sovereign whom the rebels wanted to deprive of his throne.⁶⁵ Dudith defended through the mouth of Peregrinus the idea

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 630—643.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 439—441.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 697.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 698—699.

of war with Turkey, emphasizing that the object is not only the defence of Hungary or other Habsburg dominions but of the entire Christian world.⁶⁶ Arguing with Solikowski in the work "Epistola C.S. ad F.S. contra sententiam cuiusdam de eligendo rege" he insisted that the business of a monarch is to maintain order in the country and that that in Poland as in Bohemia, Silesia and Hungary was considered an attempt on liberty.⁶⁷ He found no harm in taxation "byłe z nich stateczna obrona była"⁶⁸ (provided the result is sound defence). Almost identical arguments in defence of the Habsburgs were used by the anonymous author of a verse: "Rozmowa Lecha z Piastem, napominająca swych obywatelów, jakiego pana mają sobie i królestwu temu obrać"⁶⁹ (Conversation between Lech and Piast to remind our citizens what kind of monarch they are expected to choose for themselves and their kingdom).

On the basis of this work it can be stated that the character of the government in the countries under the Crown of St. Wenceslaus, and in Hungary, was vital during the first interregnum in the struggle against the Habsburgs candidature. Publicists from among the gentry disinclined or hostile to the Habsburgs emphasized in their works the abrogation by the monarchs of laws and liberties and the privileges of the estates, in particular, the principal privilege — free election as regards which the Polish gentry were so sensitive; the influx of foreigners, mainly Germans, Italians, and Spaniards, who were favoured by being given offices, domains of indigenous landlords confiscated during repressions; Habsburgs disregard of Parliament taking decisions for the entire of the kingdom; fiscal pressure, which did not exclude the gentry and the clergy; lack of religious toleration, in particular in Bohemia; erroneous social policy as indicated by the appointment to the King's Council of people of low origin and giving peasants the protection of the law. Such innovations were by the Polish gentry viewed with disapproval Publicists emphasized that the election of a Habsburg would drag Poland into war with the Ottoman Empire and the Tartars. In such a war, Poland would have to rely on her own forces alone, since Germans were forward with their promises but not when it came to fighting. In support of this thesis was cited the example of Hungary, which although before the election of

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 702.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 452. „Iż Czechowie, Słężacy, Węgrzy skwierczą a łamaniem praw allegują, widzimy, co niekara i licencya (która u nas zowiemy libertatem) dobrego u nas sprawiła.“

[That the Czechs, Silesians, Hungarians protest and lament over the abrogation of laws, and we see what beneficial lack of chastening, what freedom (which we call libertatem) has achieved in our country.]

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Czesi „potracili wolności i są dziś manowie“, „króla... wzgardzili, królową zelżyli“, a poddani wołają dać podatki, „aniż okrutną cierpieć turecką niewolą“. Dalej nasz anonim pisze:

„Bo wiercie mi, tyraństwa nie masz żadnego,

Wcale tam religia, majetność każdego.“

(The Czechs "lost their freedom and are now helpless" for they have "despised their king, abused their queen," while the subjects prefer to pay taxes rather "than suffer cruel Turkish slavery". Further our anonymous author writes: "For believe me, there is no tyranny there, and religion belongs to all".) Ibid., pp. 64–65.

Ferdinand I it had been assured that the Habsburgs would provide them with effective defence against the Turkish aggression, lost to Turkey a large part of its territory. Therefore, it was not surprising that Solikowski should advise "...dobrze Polakom chować z Turkiem pokój jako najmocniej, dokąd się chować da..."⁷⁰ (it is to Poles' advantage to remain at peace with Turkey for as long as possible), since the outcome of war with the Crescent is uncertain and eventual victory would not be credited to the Poles but to the House of Austria. It is characteristic that the anti-Habsburg publicists of the first and second interregnums laid on the Habsburg all the blame for whatever was thought is bad in the countries of the crown of St. Wenceslaus and of Hungary. Only the anonymous author of the pamphlet "Sententia de eligendo novo rege ex duce Moschorum" mentioned that what had happened in Bohemia gave "za małym przyczyną daniem, bo niedawno rzezono: Nulla fides in Bohemo"⁷¹ (with little cause for complaint, since not for nothing was it said Nulla fides in Bohemo), but even he considered that the fault lay mostly with the Habsburgs. Sympathizers with and supporters of the Habsburg candidature of course adopted a different line, laying on the Bohemian estates all the blame for rebellion against and plans for the dethronement of their rightful rulers.

The relevant arguments of the anti-Habsburg publicists contain considerable over-simplification, inaccuracy, and even obvious evasions of truth, in that several instances they painted as regards the situation under the Habsburgs of the lands of the crown of St. Wenceslaus — particularly Bohemia — and Hungary, a biased, unfavourable picture in which nevertheless achieved their main objective — to discredit the Habsburg candidature among the rank and file of the gentry. From the first and second interregnums, the House of Austria became the symbol of absolutism, of ruthless abrogation of the privileges of the estates, of Germanization, favouring foreigners at the expense of indigenous families. To the Polish gentry it seemed that the first victims of this Habsburg policy were the Czech, Silesian, in part Moravian estates and the Hungarian. Sympathy with their fate led to Germanophobia so common among the Polish gentry. That sympathy was not, of course, the only cause of this phenomenon, but certainly one of the more important.

This phenomenon, deeply rooted in the mentality of the gentry was noticeable during the third interregnum, following the death of Stephen Batory (1586), when together with several other candidates, notably the Swedish prince, Sigismund Vasa, the archduke Maximilian sought to obtain the throne of Poland.⁷² Opposed to the Habsburg candidature once more stood the medium gentry led by Chancellor and Grand Hetman Jan Zamoyski, who saw in that candidature a threat of absolutum dominium.

⁷⁰ The Kruszwica Conversation... *Ibid.*, p. 470.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

⁷² There is an example and varied literature on the subject of the third interregnum and the history of the Habsburg candidature at that time. It is cited by K. Lepszky, *Walka stronnictw w pierwszych latach Zygmunta III* (The factional struggle in the first years of the reign of Sigismund III). Kraków, 1929, p. 2 ff, and J. Macúrek, *op. cit.* p. 137 ff.

lack of religious toleration, and Poland's becoming involved in war with the Crescent.⁷³ Once more began to move an avalanche of pamphlets,⁷⁴ although an eminent expert J. Nowak-Dłużewski considered that "plon właściwej poezji elekcyjnej jest niewielki, zwłaszcza jeśli go zestawić z bogatą literaturą pierwszego bezkrólewia. Nie ma tu żywszej wymiany opinii politycznych, jakie się wtedy obserwowało"⁷⁵ (the fruit of the current election poetry is small, not to be compared with the opulent literature of the first interregnum, nor is there any of the lively exchange of political opinion). Since in the countries belonging to the Crown of St. Wenceslaus, and in Hungary there had, apart from the renewal of fighting between the Habsburgs and Turks, and the developing struggle of the estates to maintain their political and religious liberties, been no radical changes since the first two interregnums, writers taking a stand against the Habsburg candidature had no arguments additional to those used during the previous interregnums. They could only repeat former accusations and poke fun at the principal supporters of the Habsburgs. An example of such pamphlets is "Corpus Austriacum".⁷⁶ While referring to the great financial outlay of the Habsburgs on the Polish election, an anonymous collection of verses "Candidati Regni Poloniae et de iisdem iudicium" discredited them in the eyes of the gentry: "Domus Austriaca dudum ambit, multa expendit, exigeret plura, quia est paupercula; qualis esset defensio, daretur Turcae pension".⁷⁷ In "Rozmowa Żołnierza, Ziemiańszczyzny i Marnotrawcy tempore interregni około obierania króla" (A conversation between a Soldier, a Landlord and a Spendthrift tempore interregni concerning the choice of a king), originating from Zamojski's circle, use is made of Bohemian-Hungarian arguments typical of previous interregnums. Declaring opposition to the Habsburgs the Soldier says "Bóg uchwaj, bo widzimy, że to kosztem naszym wojna z Turkiem zaraz i niewola jako v Czechach" (God forbid, for clearly we should at once be at war with the Turk and suffer the same coercion as the Czechs) Landlord, after quoting several examples from the past concerning the mutual hatred of Poles and Germans expressed a fear that the Habsburgs would effect the destruction of the gentry "a jeśli by nie zgubił, to by zniewolił jako Czechy, Węgry" (and if not destroy, he will coerce us as he has the Czechs and Hungarians). And when Spendthrift suggested that they might protect themselves by making the Habsburg-elect swear to maintain the Polish laws, privileges and liberties, Landlord scouted this possibility with: "a zasię Czechom nie przysiągł jego dziad Ferdinand, a przedsię jako im

⁷³ K. Lepszy, op. cit., p. 8.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 36.

⁷⁵ J. Nowak-Dłużewski, Okolicznościowa poezja polityczna w Polsce. Zygmund III (Occasional political poetry in Poland. Sigismund III). Warszawa 1971, p. 9.

⁷⁶ Ibid., and Biblioteka Czartoryskich w Krakowie (Czartoryski Library Kraków), ms 328, p. 38.

⁷⁷ Wiersze polityczne, przepowiednie, satyry i paskwile z XVI wieku, wydał T. Wierzbowski, Biblioteka Zapomnianych Poetów i Prozaików Polskich XVI-XVIII w. (Political poetry, predication, satire, lampoons from the XVI c., T. Wierzbowski ed., The Library of Forgotten Polish Poets and Prose Writers of the XVI-XVIII c.) no. XXIV, Warszawa 1907, p. 62. The Polish and Latin texts are in the Polish Academy of Sciences Library, Kraków. ms. 638 L. 110.

to dierży i jako wedle wolej swej, a nie według praw rozkazuje, każdy i namiejszy wie, albowiem to słodka rzecz absolute rozkazować" (did not his grandfather Ferdinand give his word to the Czechs, and yet he rules as he will not as the law commands and everybody knows that it is pleasant to be an absolutistic ruler). Finally, Landlord feared that the Germans would take over the economy of the country and to their own advantage.⁷⁸ Publicists also reverted to familiar social argument, emphasizing in alarm that under Habsburg rule "pod równym prawem chłop, mieszczanin i ślachcic" (there is equality before the law for peasants, burghers and gentry). To them it was unthinkable that a peasant should lodge before the Emperor to the princes, bishops and starostas complaints against their landlords.⁷⁹

At the Parliament during the third interregnum in 1587, in particular, the election Parliament, arguments familiar from political writings were often used. The example of Bohemia and Hungary, was given and there was talk of the Habsburgs restricting the liberties of the gentry — in particular, free election, the burden of taxes and the danger of war with Turkey. This was the spirit of the speech made by the voivode of Inowrocław Jan Spławski, the castellan of Sochaczew — Stanisław Gostomski and the representative of the Cracow voivodship — Mikołaj Kazimierski.⁸⁰ A supporter of a King-compatriot Pękoślowski of Sandomierz voivodship declared "A ci drudzy kandydaci wszytscy (obcy — J.L.) . . . absolute manują, haereditaria regna mają, zkad trzeba się obawiać niewolej, jakoż ratio docet . . ."⁸¹ (All the other candidates [foreigners — J.L.] . . . rule in the absolute manner, they stand on haereditaria regna, and coercion by them is to be feared so ratio docet . . .)

Deputy Gorajski, of Lublin voivodship, went further in writing that in the event of Maximilian's election "każdy niech uważy, albowiem ztąd bellum civile, potem wojna z Turkiem, będą nami robić do Węgier, do Czech jako niewolnikami. Nadto dom Rakuski jest rozrodczy, przyjadą bracia, synowcy w nawiedziny, nie zechcą zaś wyjechać, aż im księstwa, dierżawy porozdają, stąd siły nasze umniejszone będą, i dla tegoż nie możemy za Pana wziąć nikogo z Rakuskiego domu, boby sprawy nasze tuteczne omierzłyby braci naszej, nomen to Niemiec jest u wszystkich exosum"⁸² (all should beware since from this would result bellum civile, next war with the Turk and our treatment as in Hungary and in Bohemia, like slaves. Moreover no master for us from the House of Austria, numerous family who will bring brothers and sons of brothers, to remain

⁷⁸ Biblioteka PAN w Krakowie (PAS Library) ms 638 L. 130–133.

⁷⁹ W. Urban, Skład społeczny i ideologia sejmiku krakowskiego w latach 1572–1606. (The social structure and the ideology of the Cracow provincial diet in the years 1572–1606.) *Przegląd Historyczny*, vol. XLIV, 1953, no 3, p. 329. The author states that similar ideas appeared in a print dating to the end of the XVI c. "Observationes de familia Austriaca". Intensive search on my part has not yet brought this to light.

⁸⁰ *Dyjariusze sejmowe r. 1587. Sejm konwokacyjny i elekcyjny (Minutes of Parliamentary Proceedings, 1587. The election and convocation Parliaments). Scriptores rerum Polonicarum (further shortening SSrPol.)*, ed. A. Sokołowski, Kraków 1887, vol. XI, p. 99–101, 137, 153.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 150.

until duchies and properties have been divided among them, and our power diminished and our cause would become loathsome to our brothers; nomen the German is everywhere exosum). Finally, Konin writer, Jan Luboński reminded of the futility of Habsburg help in a war with Turkey, as was evident in the fall of Sziget, and expressed the opinion that the event of the election of a Habsburg the gentry might lose their privilege of free election.⁸³ On the other hand the supporters of the Habsburg candidature held out splendid prospects for the development of the state if such should be elected on the Polish throne. Stanisław Czarnkowski even went so far as to say that to elect a compatriot-King would have consequences similarly unfortunate to those following the election of Mathias Korwin and Jan Zapolya in Hungary and George from Podiebrad in Bohemia.⁸⁴

After the double election in August 1587, numerous writings appeared defending those elected. Joachim Bielski, a warm supporter of Sigismund Vasa in the VI ode insisted that the oppression suffered by Czechs and Hungarians ruled by Habsburgs would be shared by Poland if Maximilian should ascent the throne.

*"Teuto Pannoniae at Lachiae commune periculum,
Teuto Bohemiae..."*⁸⁵

After the Jan Zamojski's victory at Byczyna (24. I. 1588), Bielski wrote further odes. in cn of which "Pieśń nowa o szczęśliwej potrzebie pod Byczyną z arcyksięciem Maksymilianem"⁸⁶ (a new song on the happy result of the confrontation with Maximilian at Byczyna), he expressed marked dislike for Germans and supported it with examples of the fate of Czechs and Hungarians.⁸⁷ A zealous partisan of the Habsburgs, Bartosz Paprocki, living in exile, promptly replied with "Na harde a wszeteczne śpiewanie Joachima Bielskiego o byczyńskiej przygodzie — Odpowiedź"⁸⁸ (An answer to the arrogant and meretricious song of Joachim Bielski on the Byczyna adventure). Defending the rights of Habsburgs in Poland, he declared that the real enemy of Polish liberties was not the House of Austria but Zamojski. In his opinion, it was fatuous to rejoice over the Byczyna victory, the effects of which might prove fatal to the freedom-loving gentry; moreover the excesses perpetrated in a part of Silesia by Zamojski's army were no credit to Poland. In a political pamphlet "Pamięć nierządu w Polsce" (Recalling disorder in Poland), published in 1588, the same author described the benefits which Habsburgs would confer on Poland, and disposed of all the arguments of his opponents by writing:

*"Za ich (Habsburgów — J. L.) rządu dopiero Czechowie powstałi,
Ozdoby i pokoju pewnego dostali,*

⁸³ Ibid., p. 215.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 214, cf. the declaration by Spytek Jordan castellan of Sącz (ibid., p. 140) and Kowalowski, deputy starosta of Radom (ibid., p. 146).

⁸⁵ Quotation after J. Nowak-Dłużewski, op. cit., p. 19.

⁸⁶ Joachim Bielski Pieśń nowa o szczęśliwej potrzebie pod Byczyną (A new song on the happy result of the confrontation with Maximilian at Byczyna). J. Czubek ed., Biblioteka Pisarzy Polskich (Polish Writer's Library), no 57, Kraków 1910, pp. 13-20.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 21-34.

*Dostali obyczajów i sprawiedliwości,
Używają swobodnie swych dawnych wolności.
A kto ten dom przed wami inaczej cukruje,
Tam się cnoty i prawdy w uściech nie najduje”*

He invoked the example and testimony of the inhabitants of Silesia:

*“Wszak Słężacy ci, którzy tuż podle nas siedzą,
Dostatecznie każdemu swą wolność powiedzą,”*

and added finally that it was a happy fate which had linked us with the House of Austria so that:

*“Byśmy się z nimi poganom śmieie przeciwieli,
A pogróżki i przyjaźń ich zdradną wzgardzieli”⁸⁹*

Similar praise for the Habsburgs was expressed in “Lechitae et Bohemi colloquium”⁹⁰ by Krzysztof Warszawicki, another exile, well versed in diplomatic intrigue, inspirer of Paprocki’s pronouncement. As late as the beginning of 1591, the bishop of Kujawy — Hieronim Rozrażewski, declaring himself in favour of giving the throne of Poland to the Habsburgs, made play with the development of Bohemia and Hungary under their government.⁹¹ And although he overstated the case since, for example, towns belonging to the King and the lesser gentry were suffering regression,⁹² nevertheless there was a good deal of truth in his claims.

In the period of the third interregnum and in the years immediately following it, the Bohemian-Hungarian argument was used not only against but also in support and propagation of the Habsburg candidature. When Habsburg opponents, seeking support for their thesis as to the absolutist and counter-reform aspirations of the House of Austria, called examples from the part of the countries of the Crown of St. Wenceslaus and Habsburg advocates based their case on present times: to the Habsburgs’ apparent adherence to the law and to economic development. That argument was also used to defeat the view that the gentry had been broken up into two contending factions. In January 1587, Grand Chancellor Andrzej Opałński wrote to the land diet of Sieradz “Przypatrzmy się co się u Węgrów sąsiadów, u Czechów braci naszej działo... Postronny nieprzyjaciel nic im uczynić nie mógł, a privata et intestina odia zgubili ich...”⁹³ (Let us

⁸⁹ Bartosza Paprockiego dwie broszury polityczne z lat 1587 i 1588. [Two political pamphlets by Bartosz Paprocki dating to 1587 and 1588], ed. by J. Czubek, Biblioteka Pisarzy Polskich [Polish Writers’ Library], no 38, p. 94. The Czechs rose only against their [the Habsburgs — J. L.] reign, they were adorned and received a certain degree of peace, customs and justice. They freely make use of their ancient liberties. In the speech of whoever presents this House otherwise, you will find neither virtue nor truth.

... The Silesians ruled by us can tell enough about their liberties. (...) So that we may stand up boldly against the pagans and treat their threats and treacherous with scorn.

⁹⁰ J. Nowak-Dłużewski, op. cit. pp. 41–48. Češi a Poláci v minulosti (Czechs and Poles in the Past), vol. I, ed. by J. Macurek, Praha 1964, pp. 234–237.

⁹¹ K. Lepszy, Rzeczypospolita w dobie sejmu inkwizycyjnego (1589–1592) (The State in the period of the inquisitorial Parliament). Kraków 1939, p. 273, footnote 5.

⁹² J. Válka, Česká společnost v 15.–18. století (Úvod do problematiky sociálních dějin pozdního feudalismu). I. Předbělohorská doba (Czech society, 15th–18th century — An Introduction to the social problems of late feudalism in the period before the White Mountain) Praha 1972, p. 62.

⁹³ Akta sejmikowe województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego (Acts of the provincial

see what happened to our fraternal neighbours the Hungarians and Czechs . . . The foreign enemy proved powerless, and *privata et intestina odia* was their downfall . . .).

In the meantime, realities provide new arguments for the antagonists and protagonists of the House of Austria. Introduced stage by stage was a new trend in the foreign policy of the Polish state. Following Sigismund III. failure of attempts to give the throne of Poland, under certain conditions, to the candidate of the first interregnum — archduke Ernest — unsuccessful of the intrigues of the chagrined Maximilian and the astuteness of Jan Zamojski leader of the medium gentry party, there followed friendly relations between the Polish and Austrian courts. Such relations were a consequence of the marriage — despite protests by all the Polish antagonists of the Habsburgs — of Sigismund III with the Archduchess Ann. First the obtainment and then the loss of the hereditary throne of Sweden confirmed these relations, since the Polish king hoped for Habsburg help to recover the crown of Sweden. Many changes were made in internal policy. The influence of the once powerful Hetman was gradually eliminated. The king began to create a party consisting mainly of the new nobility — ecclesiastical and lay. With the assistance of Sigismund III, Catholic reaction begun to eradicate the influence of Reformation. The counter-reformation grew in strength.⁹⁴

Important changes were made in the German Habsburgs' hereditary countries, particularly Hungary. Following signature by the Habsburgs of a peace treaty with Persia (1590), a struggle with the Turks began on the territory of Hungary, gradually reducing the fief states of Turkey — Transylvania, Moldavia and Walachia — were all the powers of this part of Europe — Habsburgs, Turkey and Poland — competed for influence. The princes changed constantly, depending on who had the upper hand for the time being. In Hungary and Transylvania, there was a considerable dissatisfaction with Habsburg policy, the restriction of the prerogatives of Parliament, the activity of counter-Reformation, and the excesses perpetrated by the Emperor's licentious soldiery. Such produced an anti-Habsburg movement in Hungary and Transylvania which developed in 1604 into a war for national independence under the leadership of a Hungarian Calvinist nobleman — Stephen Bocskay. The war ended in May 1606 with the signing of a treaty in Vienna between the Habsburgs and the gentry of Hungary and Transylvania, ancient liberties of the latter being granted and the freedom of the principal nonconformist⁹⁵ religions secured. Those events provided arguments in Poland alike for the anta-

diets in Poznań and Kalisz voivodships) vol. I (1572–1632), part 1 (1572–1616) ed. by W. D w o r z a c z e k, Poznań 1957, p. 41.

⁹⁴ There exists a vast literature concerning this problem. It does not seem purposeful to direct the reader to even a section of it. A useful summary of the problem is given by K o n o p c z y ń s k i, *op. cit.*, p. 185. ff.

⁹⁵ Cf. comment to the previous note. A good introduction to the problem is given in *A magyar nemzet története* (A History of the Hungarian Nation), ed. by S. Szilágyi, vol. V. Budapest 1893, in particular Part I *Acsády Magyarország oszlásának története 1526–1608* (History of Hungary into three parts 1526–1608), and also K. B e n d a, *A Bocskai szabadságharc* (Bocskai struggle for independence). Budapest 1955.

gonists and the protagonists of the Habsburgs. The object now was not whether to support or oppose the Habsburg candidature to the throne of Poland, but whether to sanction or resent close relations between Poland and the Habsburgs. In Poland, the rift between the gentry and the throne was becoming increasingly evident, so that frequently cited was the example of Hungary where internal discord had led to disaster (*bellum civile*). In an instruction to the land diets prior to the 1597 Parliament, Sigismund III appealed to the gentry to "Kładźcie WMć sobie przed oczy żalność do królestwo Węgierskie, przywodźcie na pamięć, co ich nachyliło do zguby, domowe pewnie rozterki i nieswora: cudzym przykładem chciejcie sił WMć strzedz tego, co sąsiady zgubiło w podobnym niebezpieczeństwie, pilniej ogień niż iskrę gasić..."⁹⁶ (observe the dismal Kingdom of Hungary, recall the cause of their undoing — internal perplexity and insubordination; the example of what your neighbours have sacrificed should be your defense against a similar danger — it is easier to extinguish a spark than a flame). The King obviously aimed at consolidating the gentry around himself and silencing the opposition.

The new arguments, in partly mingled with old, were often repeated during the Rebellion of the Sandomierz voivode — Mikołaj Zebrzydowski — known also as the Rebellion of Sandomierz (1606—1607). One of the reasons for the outbreak of the rebellion was the policy of Sigismund III — pro-Habsburg, counter-Reformation and seeking to strengthen the central administration.⁹⁷ This "bunt zdrazieckich poddanych" (uprising of treacherous subjects) produced the most mountainous wave of polemical writings. Both the antagonists and the protagonists of the court resorted to the pen. In the flood of writings concerning the Rebellion, there appeared also sharp attacks on the King's connections with the Habsburgs best evidenced by his recent marriage to Constance (1605) sister of the dead queen Ann, and his attacks on the liberties of the gentry. They recalled persuasively the fate of Czechs and Hungarians under Habsburg rule.

The anonymous author of a verse "Elegia posłów splondrowanych od pogan" (An elegy of deputies plundered by pagans) — according to J. Nowak-Dłużewski⁹⁸ probably a deputy to the spring 1606 Parliament — opposing the court warned his countrymen that if they would not react on time to the absolutic aspirations of the King supported by the House of Austria they would lose their golden freedom, as the Hungarians and Czechs had lost theirs under Habsburg rule.

⁹⁶ The instruction for the general diet in Malbork convened for 7th January to the noble Andrzej Rębowski, secretary and our deputy for this land diet given in Warsaw the XVII day of the month December... *Dyariusze sejmowe z roku 1594* (Minutes of Parliamentary Proceedings, 1594). ed. by E. Barwiński, SSrPol. vol. XX, Kraków 1907, p. 335.

⁹⁷ Concerning the Zebrzydowski Rebellion cf., for instance H. Schmitt, *Rokosz Zebrzydowskiego* (Zebrzydowski's Rebellion). Lwów 1858; J. Maciszewski, *Wojna domowa w Polsce (1606—1609)*. Studium z dziejów walki przeciw kontr-reformacji cz. II — od Stężycy do Janowca (The Civil War in Poland (1606—1609)). A study of the history of struggle against counter-Reformation, part I. From Stężycza to Janowiec. Wrocław 1960; W. Sobieski, *Pamiętny sejm* (A memorable Parliament). Warszawa 1913.

⁹⁸ J. Nowak-Dłużewski, op. cit., pp. 118—119.

*“O aurea libertas, marnie cię utraciem,
Tak się prędko z Inflanty, z Rakuszany zbraciem;
Kupilby cię dziś drogo brat Czech abo Węgrzyn,
Którym wolność w niewolę zmieniał Rakuszanin”*⁹⁹

(O aurea libertas, grimly shall we lose you, and soon find ourselves with Inflanty and Austria. The Czech and Hungarian would pay high today for their freedom the Austrians changed into slavery.) Gentry publicists accused the Habsbourgs of being, with their policy of absolutism and counter-Reformation, the main cause of disturbances in Hungary. They complained above all of the Jesuits, promoters of religious prosecution in Hungary and Transylvania. The Hungarians, they maintained, patiently accepted all the Habsburg humiliations but found the Catholic reaction too much, and against it they rebelled.¹⁰⁰ They emphasized the oppression of nationhood in Hungary, the arrogance of foreigners, above all Germans.¹⁰¹ Therefore they called on their associates to be at peace among themselves, since it was precisely disagreement which had condemned Hungarians to slavery. This was particularly insisted on in the work of Marcin Błażewski “Tłumacz rokoszowy powiatu ruskiego”¹⁰² (A rebellious

⁹⁹ „O aurea libertas, we will lose You if, we will reconcile with Livonia and the Rakuz. Czech and Hungarian brothers would pay a high price, as their freedom has been changed into captivity by the Rakuz“. J. C z u b e k, *Pisma polityczne z czasów rokoshu Zebrzydowskiego* (Political pamphlets dating to the Zebrzydowski Rebellion). vol. I — *Poezya rokoshowa* (Poetry of the Rebellion). Kraków 1916, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. for instance, „Zgoda i żalosa przestroga (An agreement and a dolorous warning), *Ibid.* p. 200, *Wawrzyniec Chlebo wski, Lament żalosny Korony Polskiej* (A dolorous Lament of Corona Regni Poloniae), *ibid.* p. 264; „Przestroga i sposób na czasy przyszłe naprawy Rzpltej“ (A warning and advice as to future reform of the State). J. C z u b e k, *op. cit.*, vol. II — *Prose*, Kraków 1918, pp. 468–469; „Votum katolika jednego o Jezuitach (An address by a catholic concerning the Jesuits), *ibid.* p. 457; „Votum Filopatesa Prawdzickiego...“ (An address by Filopates Prawdzicki), J. C z u b e k, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 291. In the last-named work we read:

*„Dobrze się przy cesarzu Węgrzy opierali,
Póki jem wiary trzymał, mocno przy nim stali...
Lecz skoro im kościoły zaczął odejmować,
Skoro na ich sumienia począł następować,
Czego byli przyczyną ci Jezuitowie
Szkodliwą swoją radą, chytrzy Hiszpanowie,
Węgrzy aby takiego ciężaru nie mieli,
Cesarza za swojego pana mieć nie chcieli;
Nieodwłocznie mu zaraz rebelizowali,
Pana sobie natychmiast inszego obrali“ ...*

(The Hungarians upheld the Emperor as long as he kept faith with them... But when he began to deny them their church and interfere with their consciences — that was the work of those Jesuits, with their ruinous advice, cunning Spaniards — the Hungarians, unable to hear such a burden ceased to want the Emperor for their lord and master and at once they raised a rebellion against him and chose for themselves another ruler.

¹⁰¹ Jan D a n i e c k i, *Żalosa narzekanie Korony Polskiej* (Dolorous complaints of Corona Regni Poloniae), *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 142.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 161. cf. also „Rzeczy naprawy potrzebujące albo sejmikiem albo rokoshem w Rzpltej“ (Renovations needed in the State by way of a land diet or a Rebel-

translator in the Ruthenian district). The anonymous author of the "Votum katolika jednego o Jezuitach" (A Catholic's view of Jesuits) warned how the example of Hungary showed that lack of unity led to civil war, in which the participants generally "uciekają się do postronnych o pomoc, którzy potym miasto ratunku państwa ich osiadają"¹⁰³ (call for help to neighbours who in their turn instead of helping take over the state).

It is understandable that at such a crisis of the Polish state as was the Rebellion of Zebrzydowski the lack of unity among the gentry which developed into civil war should have led to a marked condemnation of fanatical royalists. That was the attitude adopted by an eminent preacher and adviser of the King, the Jesuit Piotr Skarga, who in a work "Otóż tobie rokosz" (Such a Rebellion) written at the time of the Sandomierz assembly in August 1606,¹⁰⁴ urged the gentry to mobilize round the throne, and insisted that it was just because of civil war that "sąsiedzi naszy Węgrowie i Czechowie zginęli"¹⁰⁵ (our neighbours the Czechs and Hungarians are lost). This theme was treated similarly by the anonymous author of "Lament na sektę rokoszańską"¹⁰⁶ (A lament for a Rebellious sect), and another in a work "Cenzura" (The Censorship) warned that bellum civile always provides a good excuse for introducing absolutum dominium, citing as example the Czechs who by opposition to Ferdinand lost their independence.¹⁰⁷ Jan Jurkowski,¹⁰⁸ a burgher royalist poet, school master at Pilzno in Little Poland, emphasized in his work, "Chorągiew Wandalinowa"¹⁰⁹ (The Vandal's banner), the unhappy results of the lack of unity among the Hungarians. As a typical representative of the counter-Reformation period, he also condemned the lack of religious unity in Hungarian society and the apostasy of many of them from the true Catholic faith:

*"Nasiał Węgrzyn niezgody w wierze roztargniony,
A ziemia zgubę krzewi w upad nieścigniony.
Więcej trupow niż snopow zagony mu rodzą,
Głowy liczbą swą grona w winnicach przechodzą".¹¹⁰*

(The Hungarian sowed discord in the faith and the earth is preparing downfall unrecognized. In the fields there will be more corpses than sheaves, and more heads than grapes in the vineyards. The same notion was repeated by Jurkowski in his work "Poselstwo z Dzikich Pol od Sowiźrzała do małocnotliwej drużyyny"¹¹¹ (The Wild Plains Deputation from

lion), *ibid.* vol. II, p. 30, and „Zgoda i żaloszna przestroga“ (An agreement and a dolorous warning), *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 200.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 459.

¹⁰⁴ M. J. A. Rychcicki (M. Dzieduszycki), *Piotr Skarga i jego wiek* (Piotr Skarga and his times), vol. I, Kraków 1851, vol. II, Kraków 1869.

¹⁰⁵ J. Czubek, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 38.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* vol. I, p. 216.

¹⁰⁷ „Cenzura na progres rokoszu anni 1606 et sequenti anno i defekty jego“ ... (An opinion on the progress of the Rebellion anni 1606 et sequenti anno and its defects). J. Czubek, *op. cit.*, vol. III — Prose, Kraków 1918, p. 422.

¹⁰⁸ C. Hernas, *Barok* (Baroque). Warszawa 1973, pp. 95–102.

¹⁰⁹ Jan Jurkowski, *Utwory panegiryczne i satyryczne* (Panegyric and satirical works), ed. by C. Hernas and M. Karplukówna, Wrocław—Warszawa—Kraków 1968, pp. 264–349.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

a madcap to a retinue of little worth). There are many similar examples. During the period of Zebrzydowski's Rebellion, the opposition publicists who attacked Sigismund III for his pro-Habsburg policy, for defending absolutism and counter-Reformation, once more drew on the examples of Bohemia and Hungary. By contrast with the previous period, they made more frequent use of the example of Hungary than of Bohemia. The existing situation in Hungary and Transylvania provided them with fresh arguments and proofs of what the gentry feared most — limitations on their political and religious freedom and the policy of favouring strangers at their expense. Emphasized to a much greater degree formerly were the dangers inherent in internal discord, of which Hungary was so discouraging an example.¹¹² Neither opponents nor royalists concealed the fact that such discord frequently led to civil war and, being conducive to and assisting the realization of absolutist aspirations, was dangerous. The opposition wanted to unite all the gentry in the rebellious party so that by presenting a common front they might resist the expected attempts of the King's court, while the royalists wanted to show that the King had no absolutist aspirations and that they themselves did not favour any such form of government.

The outbreak in May 1618 of the Czech uprising, in defence of political and religious liberties, against the Habsburgs but supported by the Transylvanian prince Bethlen Gábor and the Hungarian estates, enlivened the anti-royalist opposition in Poland, since Sigismund III intended to help the Habsburgs against their "zbuntowanym poddanym" (rebellious subjects), pursuant to the provisions of the 1613 treaty between the Habsburg and Vasa families. The opposition, desirous of preventing any accretion to the royal power¹¹³ was firmly antagonistic to any Polish intervention in Bohemia and Silesia.¹¹⁴ In November and December, 1618, there appeared by an outstanding publicist, prince Jerzy Zbaraski a political work, entitled "Septuaginta graves et arduae rationes, ob quas regem Poloniae

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 266–293, in particular p. 282.

¹¹² J. Nowak-Dłużeński, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

¹¹³ Andrzej Pierzchliński, a champion of Polish liberties proudly declared at the provincial diet in Sroda — „Nie myli się na tym, że terazniejsza propozycja J. K. Mci zwierciadłem mi w oczach stanęła, która mię uczy i ukazuje to, żem ja ślacheć wolny, nie żadnym tyranstwem zhołdowany, ani absoluto dominio związany... Witajże droga wolności moja, która mi jawnie ukazujesz, żem ja ślacheć wolny... Nie dostanie się tego sąsiadom naszym Słęzakom ani Czechom, kiedy im mandat cesarski przyniosą, że: jego cesarska mość rozkazuje i to chce mieć...” (I am not mistaken in that the present proposal of His Majesty, the King is like a mirror before my eyes to show and teach me that I am a member of the free gentry, not subdued by tyrants, nor bound by absolute dominio... Welcome dear freedom, clearly you show me that I am a member of the free gentry... Our neighbours the Czechs and Silesians will not fill like that when the Emperors mandate will be brought saying that His Imperial Majesty orders and desires.” „Mowa Andrzeja Pierzchlińskiego, starosty stawiszynskiego 1618” (A Speech by Andrzej Pierzchliński the starosta of Stawiszyn, 1618). Acts of the provincial diets... vol. I, part 2 (1616 to 1632) ed. by W. Dworzaczek, Poznań 1962, p. 43.

¹¹⁴ The attitude of Poland to the Czech Rebellion is described in detail by, among others, J. Macurek, *České povstání r. 1618–1620 a Polsko* (Poland and the Czech Rebellion of 1618–1620), Brno 1937, and A. Szelański, *Śląsk i Polska wobec powstania czeskiego* (Silesia and Poland in relation to the Czech Rebellion), Lwów 1904.

nec non senatores et nobilitatem regni, defensionem in Hungaria, Bohemia et alibi locorum inevitabili necessitate susceptae, non adversari neque committere decet, ut huic negotio implicentur. Quarum nonnullae ad regem a dn. generali missae, postea vero a generoso quadam, Deo, regi et patriae fideli Polono, pacis avido, auctae et informando unicuique germanica et latina lingua publicatae sunt".¹¹⁵ Zbaraski objected to any Polish intervention on the Habsburg side as also to the King's plans concerning Silesia. The Polish and Czech nations, he assumed were linked not only by a common origin, language and culture but also by their whole past. He considered that the treaties signed between the Polish state and the Czechs in 1589 and 1613¹¹⁶ were negotiated not between monarchs but between the estates. Therefore, there was no reason to intervene against the just cause of the Czech estates which were engaged in a proper struggle in defence of the elective monarchy — transformed into hereditary by the Habsburgs — and their religious freedom. He went on: "Gdyby to, co spotkało Czechy i kraje złączone z nimi, spotkało nas ze strony króla, jestem przekonany, że nie znalazłyby się w całej Polsce nikt, kto by o takich zmianach nie myślał"¹¹⁷ (If what happened to Bohemia and the countries linked with it were to happen here by reason of our ruler, I am certain that in all Poland would be found not a soul but would be reflecting on such changes). Further, Czechs, Silesians and Hungarians have done Poland no harm and are good neighbours. Summing up, Zbaraski referred to the honourable behaviour of Czechs in the Polish-Habsburg conflict of 1587—1589, when they rejected the efforts of archduke Maximilian towards their intervention on his behalf. Thus they saved Poland from the dangers of civil war.¹¹⁸

In the name of the King's party a priest, Stanisław Łubieński, challenged Zbaraski's views in two pamphlets, "De rebus Silesiacis discursus" and "Responsio ad septuaginta rationes",¹¹⁹ in which he explained the King's intervention in Czech affairs on the grounds that the Rebellion in the countries of the crown of St Wenceslaus appeared to be a war against Catholicism. He also justified Poland's historic right to Silesia.¹²⁰

New arguments in favour of gentry democracy and the gem of freedom in Poland were provided by the Czech uprising of 1618—1620, and its results:¹²¹ bloodthirsty revenge taken on the leaders and participants;

¹¹⁵ This work is described extensively by J. Macúrek, op. cit., pp. 65—73; idem., Češi a Poláci... pp. 210—211. A. Szelagowski, op. cit., pp. 112—118; W. Czapliński, Śląsk a Polska w pierwszych latach wojny trzydziestoletniej 1618—1620, (Silesia in relation to Poland in the opening years of the Thirty Years War), Sobótka, Year II, 1947, pp. 166—170.

¹¹⁶ The fact that the treaties of 1589 and 1613 were different in character is proved by F. Hejl. Od česko-polské státní smlouvy k habsbursko-vasovskému dynastickému paktu 1589—1613 (From the Czech-Polish state treaty to the Habsburg-Vasa dynastic pact). Sborník prací filosofické fakulty brněnské univerzity, Year VIII — 1959, řada historická, C 6, pp. 39—54.

¹¹⁷ Quoted after Wł. Czapliński, op. cit., p. 169.

¹¹⁸ Cf. J. Macúrek, Čechové... pp. 210—211.

¹¹⁹ Stanisław Łubieński, Opera posthuma, Antverpiae 1645, p. 159. ff.

¹²⁰ Wł. Czapliński, op. cit., pp. 170—173; J. Macúrek, České povstání... pp. 74—77.

¹²¹ Among the vast literature on this subject cf. for instance, F. Kavka, Bilá

mass confiscation of property; a deliberate policy of counter-Reformation and concomitant persecution of nonconformists leading to their mass emigration; the Germanization of the country; the actual loss of Czech state independence; the limiting to a minimum of the prerogatives of land diets; the introduction of an hereditary throne; the arrogation by the monarch of the right to nominate state officials who were to be responsible to himself alone.¹²² Arguments were provided to a similar degree by events in Hungary and Transylvania.

The strongest and fullest use of the Czech-Hungary argument was made in the work of one of the advocates of Jan Zamojski's ideas, Paweł Piasecki, a hot-headed spokesman of the classic gentry democracy, an enemy of the Jesuits and the Habsburgs, successively Bishop of Kamieniec (1627), Chełmno (1640) and Przemyśl (1644), and Abbot of Mogiła, near Cracow.¹²³ Between the spring of 1631 and the spring of 1632 — that is, shortly before the death of Sigismund III — he produced a political writing "Responsum de absoluto dominio illustrissimi et reverendissimi Pauli Piasecki, episcopi praemislenensis, Clarae Tumbae abbatis".¹²⁴ Piasecki revealed himself as a pertinacious opponent of absolutum dominium, of a foreign king ascending the Polish throne, as also of marriages of compatriot-kings with foreign princesses. Referring to the Zebrzydowski Rebellion, he declared: "Uchowaj Boże na rokosz było mieć jakiego rezoluta abo Austriaka, wnet by nas poczynił Czechami, i tego się obawiać; jeżeli się nie obaczmy".¹²⁵ (God forbid that we should have during a rebellion a resolute or Austrian ruler, who promptly would treat us like the Czechs — which is what we fear most). This fragment refers to his opinion that in Poland events might have taken a turn similar to that in Bohemia after the battle on the White Mountain. That would have sufficed if the Polish throne had been occupied by a Habsburg or any other monarch bent on introducing absolutist government. That would have been a perfect opportunity. Piasecki did not hesitate to indicate that such a danger still existed. Warning the gentry against any rebellion or civil war, he referred to the example of Bohemia and Hungary where the Habsburgs had used such disturbances both to intensify oppressions of their subjects and to strengthen their own position in the state. Sarcastically, he declared that it seemed that the House of Austria "że im wychodzą te wojny dobrze, ale wojny niesprawiedliwe — bella civilia, w których uczciwsza być zwyciężonym niż zwycięzcą" (that wars were to their advantage, but unjust wars — bella civilia — in which the hands of the vanquished are cleaner than those of the victors), and added maliciously "Austriacy nigdy jedno bellis civilibus victores, nie ukażą zwycięstwa nad pogany"¹²⁶ (The

hora a české dějiny (The White Mountain and the History of Bohemia). Praha 1962, pp. 235–258.

¹²² The changed political structure of Bohemia and Moravia defined a new „Lan-desordnung“: Bohemia in 1627 and Moravia 1628.

¹²³ A. Szelański, Paweł Piasecki, historyk polski z XVII wieku (Paweł Piasecki, a Polish XVII c. historian), Lwow 1899.

¹²⁴ W. Czaplinski and J. Jakubowski, Nieznany traktat Pawła Piaseckiego (An unknown treatise by Paweł Piasecki). Archivum Literackie. vol. XVI, Miscellanea staropolskie no 4, pp. 237–264.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 253.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 256.

Austrians are victors only in bellis civilibus, they have no triumphs over pagans to show). This thesis he illustrated with a number of examples, not always corresponding with facts. He cannot accept the prospect of having on the throne of Poland a foreigner, which cause mutationem status — transforming the elective into an hereditary throne. Again he cited the example of Habsburgs who obtained the throne of Hungary by way of election, but soon they changed it into hereditary. Nor did he pass over the fact that the Czechs who in 1618 dared to demand their freedom were hereditary.¹²⁷ He charged the Habsburgs with having pursued an anti-Czech social policy, whereby they sought to “wykorzeniać obywatelę własne” (uproot indigenous citizens). He concluded his polemic concerning the activities of the Habsburgs with the significant and characteristic: “Jawne krzywoprzysięstwo, niewstydliva perfidia, wziąwszy in fidem suam, wolny naród niewolnikiem uczynić”¹²⁸ (Overt perjury, shameless deceit, to take a free nation in fidem suam and to enslave it). The bishop declared his opposition to marriages of Polish kings with foreigners, above all Habsburg princesses, and offered historical evidence to the claim that they usually ended badly for the affairs of the Polish nation and state.¹²⁹ Concluding this work, he succinctly declared his political credo “Złe jest jednowładztwo i bodaj pomrzeć niż go czekać”¹³⁰ (better die today that await autocracy).

The views outlined above were expressed by Piasecki also in a work of his life “Chronica gestorum in Europa singularium”.¹³¹ In this work he also proclaimed himself a determined enemy of: an hereditary throne, election of foreigners to the Polish throne, and marriages of compatriot-kings with foreigners particularly Austrians. In support of his thesis, he again used the examples of Bohemia and Hungary. He wrote with appreciation of the proposal, presented at the 1589 Sejm (Parliament), to exclude the Habsburg dynasty from the Polish throne¹³² since he feared that the Habsburgs in Poland would not “ut in Hungaria et Bohemia hereditarium usurparet dominatum”.¹³³ Similarly formulated ideas we find him expressing on various, different occasions,¹³⁴ notably royal marriages with Habsburg princesses, as in 1637 when as Władysław IV married the Archduchess Cecylia Renata.¹³⁵ Even so, not all his contemporaries shared his views concerning, for example marriages with Austrians, the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania, Albrecht Stanisław Radziwiłł, being one who greeted with acclamation the marriage of Władysław IV to Cecylia Re-

¹²⁷ Ibid., pp. 260–261.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 261.

¹²⁹ Ibid., pp. 261–262.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 264.

¹³¹ Chronica gestorum in Europa singularium a Paulo Piasecio Episcopo Praemisiensi accurate ac fideliter conscripta ad utilitatem publicum divulgata et typis expressa, Cracoviae 1645. Further editions, amplified, by the events of the years 1645–1648 were published in Cracow, 1648, and Amsterdam, 1649.

¹³² Konopczyński, op. cit., p. 182.

¹³³ Paweł Piasecki, Chronica..., Cracoviae 1645, p. 87.

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp. 269–275.

¹³⁵ Piasecki writes that Poles should always bear in mind „formidolosa exempla Ungariae et Bohemiae liberrimorum regnorum, aliarumque insignium provincialium ab Austriacis... in servitutum haereditariam compulsarum,” *ibid.*, p. 587.

nata, and used the occasion to extol former unions between Polish kings and Habsburgs.¹³⁶

On the basis of the material here presented, it may be said that in the period of the Thirty Years War Polish political literature, as hostile to the Habsburgs as to attempts to shore up royal power in Poland, gave priority to the example of Bohemia and relegated that of Hungary somewhat to second place. The principal reason for this was the dramatic nature of events in Bohemia.

The changes in the political structure, in nationality and socio-economic suffered by the countries of the crown of St Wenceslaus and St Stephens under the Habsburg government provided an important argument in the political struggle in Poland in the years 1572–1648. At first, that argument was used in opposition to and to a lesser degree in support of the Habsburg candidature to the Polish throne, and later to combat the pro-Habsburg policy of Sigismund III and in part that of his son Władysław IV. The Czech-Hungarian example had come to stay in the freedom ideology of the Polish gentry. It became an ominous warning of the fact that if the gentry would not preserve their unity, if they would not duly oppose the absolutist aspirations of their rulers, they would suffer a fate similar to that of the Czechs and Hungarians. They would lose all their liberties, primarily free election and would be exposed to religious and fiscal pressure as well as in the event of enthroning foreigner, above all a Habsburg, a nationalist as king, to the arrogance of aliens in the country who would occupy all the more important and more lucrative offices, while the Polish economy would be subordinated to foreign interests. The gentry were alarmed at the prospect of losing their hold over peasants, of their receiving the protection of the law, and of the possibility of people “podłego stanu” (of low origin) being appointed to the administration. All this stirred up in the gentry an understandable antipathy and later hatred of the Habsburgs and of Germans in general. Consequently, one of the reasons of the Germanophobia which emerged during the first interregnum and was consolidated in the subsequent decade was the behaviour of the Habsburgs in Poland’s neighbouring countries on the south.

This pro-independence and anti-German form of the Czech-Hungarian argument was frequently called upon in the following century. It was used by the political writers of the “golden freedom” period, led by Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro. He sympathized with the Czechs “braci naszej” (our brothers) and deplored the fact that at the appropriate time Poland, instead of occupying herself with Walachian affairs, did not defend the Czechs and Hungarians and take possessions of their thrones. That would have strengthened Poland and weakened the Empire, which

¹³⁶ Albrecht Stanisław Radziwiłł, *Memoriale rerum gestarum in Polonia 1632 to 1656*, vol. II 1634–1639, prepared by A. Przyboś and A. Żelewski, ed. by W. Czaplinski, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1970, pp. 236–237, cf. also J. Nowak-Dłużewski, *Okolicznościowa poezja polityczna w Polsce. Dwaj młodzi Wazowie* (Occasional political poetry in Poland. Two junior Vasas). Warszawa 1972, pp. 39–42.

was always threatening and hostile.¹³⁷ The example of Bohemia and Hungary is to be found also in the politically engaged poetry of the second half of the XVII c., for instance in the works of one of the most eminent Polish poets of the period, Waclaw Potocki, who citing that example declared that a German would be always the enemy of Poles:

*"Któż o utrzymanie kiedy przyjaźni stoi?
Każdy mija, każdy się zapowietrzyć boi.
Ten był owoc rakuskiej w onę burzą ligi,¹³⁸
Do której ze wszystkimi szliśmy na wyścigi;
Więc męsząc nasze sejmy, nasze interregna,
Czyhając rychło miła wolność nas pożegna,
Rychło nam karki osieść; mieć czartą na głowie
Koronę, z kąd spadli dwaj Maksymilianowie,
Mało im Węgry, Czechy i niewolnik śląski,
Któremu pod przysięgą, budnej zabić gąski
We własnym domu nie wolno..."¹³⁹*

The Czech-Hungarian example was used even in the Parliament and the provincial diets (sejmiki) during the most gloom-laden Saxon period. At the interrupted Parliament of 1746 the starosta of Tuszyn, Skarbek, said "Okazał Bóg cud nad węgierskim państwem,¹⁴⁰ równej wolności z naszym, o którym każdemu wiadomo, że poszło in absolutum"¹⁴¹ (God had performed a miracle in the Hungarian State, one as free as ours, but now, as everybody knows, transformed in absolutum). In a speech delivered at the 1758 provincial diet in Chełmno Lubelskie, a great popular advocate of free election and the liberum veto, Prince Udalryk Radziwiłł, referred to the fact that the Czechs and Hungarians had lost their freedom, above all free election, because they had allowed the Habsburgs to march in with their armies. That was why they had become dependent on the House of Austria. He warned that the same might be Poland's fate if on her territory should be quartered foreign armies: Saxon, Russian or Prussian.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ R. Mienicki, *Poglądy polityczne w dziejopisarstwie polskim XVII w.* (Political opinions in the Polish historiography of the XVII c.). *Przegląd Historyczny*, Year XVI, 1913, p. 261.

¹³⁸ The author referred to efforts to obtain Habsburg help after the defeat of Stanisław Żółkiewski during the war with Turkey in 1620.

¹³⁹ Waclaw Potocki, *The Chocim War*. Lwow 1850, p. 111. „Who wants to keep up friendship? All who fear infection pass by. That is the outcome of the league with Austria, to which we hastened with the rest while they entangled our Parliament and our interregnums. Soon beloved freedom will flee; they will climb on our shoulders and place on a fourth head the crown fallen from two Maximilians. Insufficient for them are Hungary, Bohemia and the Silesian slave, who under oath may not kill a resisting goose in their own house...”

¹⁴⁰ The speaker referred to the participation of Hungarians in the war of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748) and how they were rewarded by Maria Theresa.

¹⁴¹ *Diariusze sejmowe z wieku XVIII* (Minutes of Parliamentary Proceedings in the XVIII c.), ed. by W. Konopczyński, vol. II, *Diariusz sejmu z r. 1746* (Minutes of Parliamentary Proceedings in 1746), Warszawa, 1912, p. 18.

¹⁴² Address by His Eminence Prince Udalryk, Master of the Horse of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, delivered at the deputies' provincial diet in Chełmno on 21st August 1758. *Biblioteka Kórnicka PAN* (Polish Academy of Sciences Library, Kórnik). ms. 458. pp. 31–49.

VÝZNAM A ÚLOHA PŘÍKLADU ZEMÍ KORUNY ČESKÉ A UHER V IDEOLOGII ŠLECHTICKÉ SVOBODY V POLSKU V LETECH 1572 AŽ 1648

Po smrti Zikmunda Augusta (7. VII. 1572), posledního Jagelonce na polském trůně, přistoupila polská šlechtická společnost k zajištění a k dalšímu rozšíření svých výdobytků z doby tzv. exekučního hnutí, které jí zajišťovaly monopol politické moci ve státě. Usnášejíc se v r. 1573 na tzv. jindřišských člancích (artykuly henrykowskié), šlechta prosadila zásadu svobodné volby krále a volby viritim, značně omezila pravomoc polského monarchy tím, že část pravomoci, do té doby vyhrazené výlučně králi, přenesla na sněm, a do polského politického života uvedla princip de non praestanda oboedientia, který dával šlechtě právo vypovědět králi poslušnost v případě, že by překročil své právní závazky. Stojíc na strážích svých práv, privilegií a svobod, bránil je před skutečnými neb smyšlenými nepřáteli, polská šlechta se velmi často dovolávala příkladu sousedních zemí koruny sv. Václava, především Čech, Moravy a Slezska, a rovněž Uher, kde zemské stavy pod habsburskou nadvládou ztratily své bývalé postavení, jehož dosáhly v předcházejícím období, zvláště za vlády králů z jagellonské dynastie. Polská vládnoucí třída — polská šlechta — byla spojena se stavy obou sousedních zemí starými staletými svazky, Polsko spojovalo s těmito zeměmi též příbuzné státní zřízení.

Osudy zemí koruny sv. Václava a sv. Štěpána pod habsburskou nadvládou se staly významným elementem politického boje, který vzplanul v Polsku za tří bezkráloví po smrti Zykmanda Augusta. Osudy těchto zemí byly vážným argumentem v rukách šlechtických a magnátských uskupení, která bojovala proti kandidatuře Habsburků na polský trůn — nejdříve arciknížete Arnošta, nato císaře Maxmiliána II. a arcivévodý Maxmiliána. Obecně Habsburkové byli podezříváni z touhy zavést v Polsku absolutní způsob vlády a nastolit politiku náboženské netolerance. Polská šlechta se též obávala, že Habsburk na polském trůně zavleče Polsko do válečného dobrodružství proti Turecku. Ať již tyto výtky na adresu Habsburků byly jakkoli oprávněné, staly se trvalou součástí soudobé politické publicistiky, pochopitelně nejčastěji publicistiky anonymní. Z pisatelů, jejichž autorství se dosud podařilo identifikovat, nejrozhodněji proti habsburskému úsilí o získání polského trůnu vystupovali: Andrzej Ciesielski, žák a přítel nejvýznamnějšího polského politického autora období humanismu — Andrzeje Frycze Modrzewského, dále bývalý sekretář krále Zikmunda Augusta a diplomat Jan Dymitr Solikowski, disident z Kališského vojvodství Piotr Mycielski a jeho krajan Jakub Laskowski, dále Jan Raduński a kronikář Joachim Bielski. Nejednou argumentace odpůrců habsburské kandidatury na polský trůn je nejen lapidární, ale též důmyslná.

Šlechtičtí publicisté, zaujímající negativní stanovisko k habsburským pokusům o získání polské koruny, poukazovali ve svých dílech na porušování práv, svobod a stavovských privilegií habsburskými vládci v sousedních zemích, v prvé řadě principu svobodné volby panovníka, kteréžto právo polská šlechta zvláště žárlivě střežila. Připomínali, že český a uherský trůn od doby vlády Jiřího z Poděbrad a Matěje Korvína byl volitelný. Poukazovali na útlak, který dopadl na české země po válce šmalkaldské, včetně bezpráví krvavého sněmu. Tvrdili, že přísahám, které skládají Habsburci, nelze důvěřovat, neboť je tak snadno porušují, jak lehko je skládají, což dosvědčují Čechy a Uhry. Pobuřovala je imigrace cizinců, zvl. Němců do Čech a do Uher, ale s nimi rovněž Italů (Vlachů) a Španělů, a jejich protežování při obsazování úřadů, stejně jako při obdarovávání jich konfiskáty statků domácí restanované šlechty: kritizovali negativní postoj Habsburků k usnesením zemských sněmů v záležitostech celostátních, utvoření české komory z r. 1527 a fiskální útisk, který dopadal na bedra šlechty a duchovenstva, útočili na negování náboženské tolerance, zvl. v českých zemích (emigrace z r. 1548), a na nesprávnou sociální politiku, jak se projevovala v povolávání lidí nižších společenských vrstev a cizinců do královských úřadů, a konečně kritizovali poskytování královské ochrany selskému stavu. Tato politika se především setkávala se zvlášť odmítavým postojem polské šlechty. Polští kritikové Habsburků naléhavě zdůrazňovali, že volba Habsburka na polský trůn zavleče

Polsko do války s Tureckem a s Tatary. A v této válce by Polsko muselo spoléhat pouze na své vlastní síly, neboť Němci ochotně slibují, ale neochotně sliby plní. A zde uvádějí příklad Uher, které ztratily značnou část svého území ve prospěch Turků, ačkoliv Ferdinand I. před volbou uherským králem ujišťoval uherské stavy, že jim Habsburkové zajistí bezpečnou ochranu. Ale zatím opak se stal skutkem. Za všechna neštěstí, která potkala Čechy, Uhry a Slezany, odpovídali Habsburkové. Pouze jediný z anonymních spisovatelů z toho obviňoval Čechy.

Je pochopitelné, že stoupenci habsburské kandidatury na polský trůn — Andrzej Dudycz, Bartoloměj Paprocki, Kryštof Warszewicki aj. — postupovali naopak, veškerou vinu svalovali na české stavy, na jejich povstání proti právoplatnému vládcovi a na jejich detronizační záměry. Kromě toho tvrdili, že ani v zemích koruny české ani v Uhrách neexistuje politický, fiskální a náboženský útlak, že se naopak pod vládou Habsburků tyto země hospodářsky povznesly.

I když v argumentaci protihabsburských publicistů tohoto období se setkáváme s řadou zjednodušení a nepřesností, ba i se zjevným pomíjením pravdy, byť i v nejedné otázce, o nejedné skutečnosti, nastílnili jednostranně černý obraz situace v zemích české koruny a v Uhrách za vlády Habsburků, přece jen dosáhli svého zásadního cíle — zdiskreditovali habsburskou kandidaturu v očích širokých vrstev polské šlechty. Od dob prvního bezkráloví ve vědomí šlechtického společenství stali se Habsburkové symbolem absolutismu, bezohledného porušování stavovských svobod, germanizace a protežování cizinců na úkor domácích rodů. Prvními oběťmi této politiky Habsburků podle přesvědčení polské šlechty byly stavy české, slezské a do jisté míry též stavy moravské, a rovněž stavy uherské. Na základě soucitu s jejich osudem se zrodila germanofobie, tak obecná mezi tímto uskupením polské šlechty. Nebyla to zřejmě jediná příčina tohoto jevu, ale nesporně byla jednou z nejdůležitějších.

Od chvíle nástupu Zikmunda III. Vasy na polský trůn a od jeho sblížení s Habsburky, stvrzeného manželstvím s habsburskými arcivévodkyněmi Annou (1592) a Konstancí (1605), posloužil česko-uherský příklad ne již tolik boji proti habsburské kandidatuře, ale v první řadě proti rýsujiícímu se spolenectví vasovsko-habsburskému. Útočiště v prvních dvou desetiletích vlády Zikmunda III., zvl. pak za rokosze Zebrzydowského (1606—1607) proti Zikmundově absolutistické, protireformační a hasburgofilské politice, nyní opoziční publicisté na rozdíl od předcházejícího období stále častěji sahali po uherském příkladu nežli po českém, protože rozvíjející se současné události v Uhrách a v Sedmihradsku, v první řadě Bocskayovo povstání, poskytovaly jim aktuální a živé doklady k tomu, čeho se polská šlechta nejvíce obávala, totiž omezení politických a náboženských svobod a konečně protežování cizinců na úkor domácích. Zvláště silně se zděrazňovaly absolutizující pokusy Habsburků a jejich pronásledování jinověrců. Na rozdíl od dřívější doby ve značně širší míře se zděrazňovalo nebezpečí, plynoucí z vnitřních protikladů, což bylo zcela pochopitelné za podmínek občanské války v Polsku, kdy se právě odstrašujícím příkladem stávaly Uhry. Současné představitelé opozice stejně jako regalisté v čele s Petrem Skargou neskrývali názor, že nesoulad, přerůstající často v občanskou válku, je nebezpečný, protože podporuje rozvoj absolutistických tendencí a usnadňuje jejich realizaci. Jestliže opozici šlo o sjednocení veškeré šlechty v rokoszovém táboře, aby se společnými silami postavila na odpor záměrům dvora na posílení královské vlády a rozšíření pozic katolické církve, pak regalistům šlo o důkaz, že Zikmund III. vůbec neusiluje o absolutní vládu a že oni sami nejsou stoupenci takové formy vlády.

České povstání z let 1618—1620 a jeho pro český národ strašlivé důsledky mezi polskou společností znovu zaktualizovaly český příklad. V letech 1618—1620 se rozvíjela polemika mezi významným představitelům opozice knížetem Jířím Zbaraským a regalistou Stanislavem Ľubieňským. Zbaraski, který se dovolával ideje česko-polské vzájemnosti, postavil se na rozhodný odpor proti jakékoli polské intervenci v zemích české koruny ve prospěch Habsburků i proti královým záměrům vůči Slezsku. Ľubieňski naopak spatřoval opodstatněnost polského intervenčního zákroku z důvodu reálné hrozby zájmem katolické církve. Vyslovoval se též za rekuperaci Slezska. V třicátých a čtyřicátých letech XVII. století jako rozhodný nepřítel absolutní vlády — dominium absolutum — i volby cizince za krále polského a rovněž jako odpůrce manželských svazků polských králů s cizími kněžkami vystupoval jeden z pokračovatelů v politické linii Jana Zamojského — biskup Paweł Piasecki, který velmi často jako argumentu k doložení svých téz využíval českého příkladu a v menší

míře též příkladu uherského. Jako katolický duchovní pomlčel o náboženském pro-následování v Čechách a v Uhrách.

Takto v letech 1572–1648 česko-uherský příklad získal pevné místo v polské šlechtické ideologii. Stal se odstrašujícím mementem, že nezachová-li šlechta jed-notu, jestliže se včas nepostaví na odpor proti absolutistickým pokusům svých vládců, potká ji osud, který se stal údělem českých a uherských stavů. Ztratí pak všechny svobody, bude vystavena útisku náboženskému a fiskálnímu, a – v případě, stane-li se polským králem Habsburk – též útisku národnostnímu, v zemi poroste moc ci-zinců, šlechta může též ztratit svou nadvládu nad poddanými sedláky a přijít o mo-nopol vládní moci. To vše budilo mezi šlechtou pochopitelný ohlas nevole a nenávisti vůči Habsburkům a Němcům obecně a stávalo se jednou z příčin zrodu a upevnění germanofobie. V obraně zlaté šlechtické svobody a v protiněmeckém postoji příklad česko-uherský byl též velmi často připomínán politickými spisovateli, básníky a sně-movními a sněmíkovými mluvčími v následujícím století až do konce saské epochy v Polsku.

*Z polského originálu
přeložil František Hejl*

**ROLA PRZYKŁADU KRAJÓW KORONY ŚW. WACŁAWA
I WĘGIER W IDEOLOGII WOLNOŚCIOWEJ SZLACHTY
POLSKIEJ (1572–1648)**

Po śmierci Zygmunta Augusta (7 VII 1572), ostatniego Jagiellona na tronie polskim, szlachta przystąpiła do utrwalania i rozszerzania swych zdobyczy z okresu tzw. ruchu egzekucyjnego, które zapewniały jej monopol władzy politycznej w kraju. Uchwalając w 1573 r. tzw. artykuły henrykowskie, wprowadziła ona w Polsce zasadę wolnej elekcji i elekcji wiritim oraz ograniczyła znacznie władzę monarszą przez oddanie sejmowi szeregu kompetencji zastrzeżonych dotąd dla króla a także przez wprowadzenie artykułu de non praestanda oboedientia, umożliwiającego wypowiedzenie monarsze posłuszeństwa w wypadku przekroczenia przez niego obowiązujących praw. Stojąc na straży swych praw, przywilejów i wolności, broniąc ich przed rzeczywistymi lub urojonymi wrogami, bardzo często powoływała się na przykład sąsiadujących z Polską krajów Korony Św. Wacława, Wacława, w pierwszym rzędzie Czech, Śląska i Moraw, oraz Węgier, w których pod rządami habsburskimi stany utraciły swą pierwotną pozycję w państwie, zdobytą w okresie poprzednim, szczególnie za panowania tam królów z dynastii jagiellońskiej. Z obu tych państwami łączyły bowiem Polskę i jej klasę panującą — szlachtę wielowiekowe związki, w tym też daleko idące podobieństwa ustroju politycznego.

Losy krajów Korony Św. Wacława i Św. Stefana pod rządami habsburskimi stały się ważnym elementem walki politycznej, jaka rozgorzała w Polsce w okresie trzech pierwszych bezkrólewí po zgonie Zygmunta Augusta. Były one ważkim argumentem w ręku tych ugrupowań szlacheckich i możnowładczych, które zwalczały kandydaturę habsburską na tron polski, a więc kolejno arcyksięcia Ernesta, cesarza Maksymiliana II i arcyksięcia Maksymiliana. Powszechnie bowiem podejrzewano Habsburgów o chęć wprowadzenia w Polsce rządów absolutnych i o stosowanie polityki nietolerancji wyznaniowej. Obawiano się też, że Habsburg na tronie polskim wciąż nie Rzeczpospolitą do konfliktu zbrojnego z Turcją. I choć niektóre z tych zarzutów wobec domu rakuskiego nie były w pełni uzasadnione, stały się one trwałym elementem wrogiej lub niechętniej Habsburgom publicystyki tych czasów, najczęściej zresztą anonimowej. Spośród rozszyfrowanych dotąd pisarzy politycznych najzjadlej przeciwko staraniom Habsburgów o tron polski występowali: uczeń i przyjaciel najwybitniejszego polskiego pisarza politycznego epoki odrodzenia Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego — Andrzej Ciesielski, były sekretarz Zygmunta Augusta i dyplomata Jan Dymitr Solikowski, dysydent z Kaliskiego Piotr Mycielski i jego ziomek Jakub Laskowski, Jan Raduński oraz poeta Joachim Bielski. Jedni publicyści uzasadniali swą wrogość do kandydatur habsburskich szeroko, inni natomiast ograniczali się do zwieżłych i lapidarnych, lecz niejednokrotnie trafnie dobranych argumentów.

Wrodzy lub niechętni Habsburgom publicyści szlacheccy podnosili w swych pismach łamanie w krajach habsburskich przez władców praw, wolności i przywilejów stanowych, zwłaszcza zasady wolnej elekcji, na którą szlachta polska była tak bardzo uczulona. Przypominali, że od czasów Macieja Korwina i Jerzego z Podiebradów trony czeski i węgierski były elekcyjne. Wskazywali na represje, jakie spadły na Czechów po wojnie szmalkaldzkiej z „krwawym sejmem“ na czele. Twierdzili, że nie można ufać przysięgom składanym przez Habsburgów, bo łamią je równie łatwo, jak składają, czego dowodem są właśnie Czechy i Węgry. Oburzali się na napływ do Czech i Węgier obcych, głównie Niemców, ale także Włochów i Hiszpanów, i faworyzowanie ich przy obsadzaniu urzędów i obdarzaniu skonfiskowanymi w ramach represji miejscowym panom dobrami, na pomijanie przez Habsburgów sejmów krajowych przy podejmowaniu decyzji o znaczeniu ogólnokrajowym, na utworzenie w 1527 r. komory czeskiej i ucisk fiskalny, spadający także na barki szlachty i duchowieństwa, na nietolerancję religijną, szczególnie w Czechach (emigracja z 1548 r.), a także na niewłaściwą politykę społeczną, przejawiającą się w powoływaniu do rad królewskich ludzi niskiego stanu, w dodatku cudzoziemców, oraz w braniu chłopca w opiekę państwa. Ta polityka spotykała się ze szczególną dezaprobatą szlachty polskiej. Podkreślali wreszcie z całym naciskiem, że wybór Habsburga na tron polski

wciągnie Polskę do wojny z Portą Ottomańską i Tatarami. W wojnie tej polska będzie musiała liczyć wyłącznie na własne siły, bo Niemcy są pierwsi do obietnic, ale nie do walki. I tutaj przytaczali przykład Węgier, które straciły znaczną część terytorium na rzecz Turków, choć przed elekcją Ferdynand I zapewnił stany węgierskie, że Habsburgowie zapewnią im skuteczną obronę przed agresją turecką. Tymczasem stało się inaczej. Wszystkim tym nieszczęściom, które spadły na Czechów, Ślązaków i Węgrów, winni byli wyłącznie Habsburgowie. Jedyne jeden anonimowy pisarz częścią winy za to obarczył Czechów. Oczywiście sympatycy i zwolennicy kandydatury habsburskiej (Andrzej Dudycz, Bartosz Paprocki, Krzysztof Warszawicki i inni) postępowali odwrotnie, zwalając całą winę na stany czeskie, na ich bunt przeciwko prawowitemu władcy i plany detronizacyjne. Twierdzili ponadto, że ani w krajach Korony Św. Wacława, ani na Węgrzech nie ma ucisku politycznego, fiskalnego i religijnego, że pod rządami habsburskimi rozkwitły one gospodarczo.

I choć w wywodach antyhabsburskich publicystów w interesującym nas zakresie nie brak jest szeregu uproszczeń i nieściśłości, a nawet jawnego mijania się z prawdą, choć w niejednym punkcie dali oni jednostronnie czarny obraz sytuacji w krajach Korony Św. Wacława, zwłaszcza w Czechach i na Śląsku, oraz na Węgrzech pod beriem Habsburgów, osiągnęli zasadniczy swój cel, dyskredytując kandydaturę habsburską na tron polski w oczach szerokich rzesz szlachty. Od czasów pierwszego interregnum w świadomości społeczeństwa szlacheckiego dom austriacki stał się symbolem absolutyzmu, bezwzględnej łamania swobód stanowych, oraz germanizacji i faworyzowania obcych kosztem rodów rodzimych. Pierwszymi ofiarami tej polityki Habsburgów były w przekonaniu szlachty stany czeskie, śląskie, częściowo morawskie, a także węgierskie. Na gruncie współczucia dla ich losu zrodziła się tak powszechna wśród tej szlachty germanofobia. Nie była to oczywiście jedyna przyczyna tego zjawiska, lecz na pewno jedna z najważniejszych.

Od wstąpienia na tron polski Zygmunta III Wazy i jego zbliżenia do domu habsburskiego, utwierdzonego małżeństwami z arcyksiężniczkami Anną (1592) i Konstancją (1605) przykład czesko-węgierski nie służył już do zwalczania kandydatur habsburskich, lecz do utracania coraz silniej zarysowującego się sojuszu wazowsko-habsburskiego. Atakując w pierwszym dwudziestoleciu rządów Zygmunta III, zwłaszcza w dobie rokoszu Zebrzydowskiego (1606—1607), jego absolutystyczną, kontrreformacyjną i prohabsburską politykę, publicyści opozycyjni sięgali teraz częściej — w przeciwieństwie do okresu poprzedniego — do przykładu węgierskiego, niż czeskiego, ponieważ rozgrywające się świeżo na Węgrzech i w Siedmiogrodzie wypadki, szczególnie powstanie Bocskaya, dostarczały im aktualnych, żywych dowodów na to, czego się szlachta polska najbardziej bała — ograniczenia swobód politycznych i religijnych oraz polityki faworyzowania obcych kosztem indygenów. Szczególnie akcentowano absolutystyczne zakusy Habsburgów oraz ich nietolerancję wobec innowierców. W znacznie jednak większym niż poprzednio zakresie akcentowano niebezpieczeństwa związane z niezgodą wewnętrzną, co było zupełnie zrozumiałe w dobie wojny domowej w Polsce, przy czym jej odstrasającym przykładem stały się Węgry. Zarówno opozycjoniści, jak i regaliści z Piotrem Skargą na czele nie ukrywali, że ta niezgoda, przerażająca się często w wojny domowe, jest niebezpieczna, gdyż sprzyja rozwojowi tendencji absolutystycznych i ułatwia ich realizację. Jeśli jednak opozycjonistom chodziło o zjednoczenie całej szlachty w obozie rokoszańskim, by wspólnymi siłami przeciwstawić się zamiarom dworu wzmocnienia władzy królewskiej i pozycji kościoła katolickiego, to regalistom — o wykazanie, że Zygmunt III wcale nie dąży do absolutyzmu i że oni sami nie są za tą formą rządów.

Powstanie czeskie z lat 1618—1620 i jego straszliwe dla narodu czeskiego konsekwencje wysunęły ponownie na czoło przykład czeski. W latach 1618—1620 toczyła się polemika między znanym opozycjonistą księciem Jerzym Zbaraskim a regalistą księdzem Stanisławem Lubińskim, wielokrotnie omawiana już w literaturze naukowej. Zbaraski powołując się na ideę wzajemności polsko-czeskiej, przeciwstawił się zdecydowanie jakiegokolwiek polskiej interwencji w krajach korony Św. Wacława po stronie Habsburgów i królewskim zakusom na Śląsk. Natomiast Lubiński widział konieczność takiej interwencji z powodu rzekomego zagrożenia tam interesów kościoła katolickiego. Opowiedział się też za rekuperacją Śląska. W latach trzydziestych i czterdziestych XVII w. jako zaciekle wróg absolutum dominium i króla cudzoziemca na tronie polskim, a także małżeństwa królów rodzimich z obcymi

księżniczkami dał się poznać jeden z epigonów linii politycznej Jana Zamojskiego — biskup Paweł Piasecki, który bardzo często używał jako dowodu na poparcie swoich tez przykładu czeskiego oraz — choć w mniejszym stopniu — węgierskiego. Jako duchowny katolicki i wyraziciel interesów szlacheckich nie wspominał on tylko o prześladowaniach religijnych w Czechach i na Węgrzech.

Tak więc w latach 1572—1648 przykład czesko-węgierski zdobył sobie trwałe prawo obywatelstwa w ideologii wolnościowej szlachty polskiej. Stał się groźnym memento, że jeśli szlachta nie zachowa jedności, jeśli w porę nie przeciwstawi się zakusom absolutystycznym swoich władców, spotka ją los, który stał się udziałem stanów czeskich i węgierskich. Straci wszystkie wolności, narażona będzie na ucisk religijny, fiskalny i — w wypadku gdy Habsburg zasiądzie na tronie polskim — narodowościowy, na panoszenie się w kraju obcych, może też stracić swe władztwo nad chłopami i monopol sprawowania władzy. Wszystko to budziło u szlachty zrozumiałe odruch niechęci, a potem i nienawiści do Habsburgów i do Niemców w ogóle, stając się jedną z przyczyn sprawczych powstania i utrwalania się wśród niej nastrojów germanofobii. W tej złotowolnościowej i antyniemieckiej postaci przykład czesko-węgierski był też bardzo często przypomniany przez pisarzy politycznych, poetów oraz mówców sejmowych i sejmikowych w następnym stuleciu, aż do końca w Polsce epoki saskiej.