6 Rebellion and Catastrophe

The Thirty Years' War was the last great religious war in Europe, and the first Europe-wide conflict of balance-of-power politics. Beginning with the Bohemian rebellion in 1618, the war grew into a confrontation between the German Protestant princes and the Holy Roman Emperor, and finally became a contest between France and the Habsburgs' two dynastic monarchies, involving practically all other powers. The war may be divided into four phases: the Bohemian-Palatinate War (1618–23), the Danish War (1625–29), the Swedish War (1630–35), and the Franco-Swedish War (1635–48). When the war finally ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the treaties set the groundwork for the system of international relations still in effect today. The outcome of the war integrated the Bohemian crownlands more fully with the other Habsburg possessions in a family empire that aspired to maintain its position as one of the powers in the international state system. This aspiration involved recurrent conflicts, on one side with the Turks, and on the other with Louis XIV's France.

VAE VICTIS!: THE BOHEMIAN CROWNLANDS IN THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

After the Battle of the White Mountain and Frederick's flight from Prague (his brief reign earned him the epithet "The Winter King"), the last garrisons loyal to the Estates in southern and western Bohemia surrendered in May 1622. Even before these victories Ferdinand II began to settle accounts with his Bohemian opponents. On June 21, 1621, twenty-seven leaders of the Estates' rebellion were ceremonially (and in some cases exceedingly cruelly) executed in Prague's Old Town Square.[1] Ferdinand issued edicts confiscating the properties of a host of others, and many who had fled were sentenced to death in absentia. The Prague university was handed to the Jesuits, who also organized schools and missions to spread Catholicism in the countryside. In 1624 all Protestant clergy were banished, and three years later all non-Catholic burghers and nobles had to follow.

As the war continued and Denmark under King Christian IV entered the fray, the role of one of Ferdinand's military commanders, Albrecht of Wallenstein (Valdštejn), increased. Wallenstein parlayed conversion from the Brethren to Catholicism into a rapid rise to power and wealth. Granted the duchy of Frýdlant (Friedland) in northern Bohemia in 1624, Wallenstein also collected over fifty confiscated estates. Using this economic base, he raised an army of 70,000 in 1625, became generalissimo of the imperial forces, and won a great victory at Dessau in 1626. In 1628, Wallenstein received the duchy of Mecklenberg, and in May 1629, the Danes signed a treaty at Lübeck, ending the second phase of the Thirty Years' War.

Ferdinand's next move was the Edict of Restitution of March 29, 1629. All property seized from the Catholic church since before the Peace of Augsburg (1555) was to be returned. The Edict of Restitution provoked a revival of anti-Habsburg efforts among the Protestants, and even Catholic rulers in the empire had reservations. An imperial diet at Regensburg in 1630 shelved the edict, and recalled Wallenstein from his position.

In Bohemia in 1627 and Moravia the following year, Ferdinand issued the Renewed Land Ordinance, which superseded all previous con-

stitutional laws. The ordinance proclaimed all the lands of the Bohemian crown hereditary dynastic possessions of the House of Habsburg, and stripped the Estates of their legislative, judicial, and executive authority. Catholicism was the sole legal religion—Ferdinand destroyed Rudolph's Letter of Majesty with his own hands—and the clergy regained its position as the first estate. German enjoyed equal rights in public life with Czech. Unlike the Edict of Restitution, the Renewed Land Ordinance remained in effect.[2]

In the summer of 1630 the war entered its third phase, when the Swedish king Gustavus II Adolphus entered the conflict. Brandenburg and Saxony soon joined the Swedes, who as Lutherans proclaimed themselves the protectors of Protestant rights. In September 1631, following a Swedish victory, the Saxons invaded Bohemia and occupied Prague. Many Czech exiles returned with the Saxons, but only for a time. Ferdinand reinstated Wallenstein, who pushed the Saxon army out of Bohemia. In November 1632, Wallenstein fought the Swedes to a standstill at Lützen, where Gustavus Adolphus was killed.

While negotiating with the Saxons, Wallenstein also secretly began discussions with French and Swedish diplomats and representatives of the Czech exiles. Throughout his career, Wallenstein displayed great ambition, and it may be he was playing for the Bohemian crown itself. His hesitation to declare himself openly, however, led all parties to suspect him. In January 1634, the emperor dismissed him again, most of his subordinates abandoned him, and on February 25, 1634, Wallenstein was assassinated by imperial officers at the fortress of Cheb.

That same year, a major Imperial victory over the Swedes and German Protestants at Nördlingen led to a separate peace with the German Protestants at Prague (1635). The Edict of Restitution was rescinded, the princely armies were placed under imperial command, and Saxony was confirmed in its possession of Upper and Lower Lusatia, former possessions of the Crown of St. Václav. The Swedes temporarily lost their allies, but the apparent stabilization reawakened French efforts to undermine the Habsburgs. Urged on by Cardinal Richelieu, the French concluded an alliance with Sweden and the Netherlands and declared war on Habsburg Spain.

In this final, Swedish-French phase of the war, the Swedes invaded Bohemia between 1639 and 1642, but this time the arrival of Protestant forces did not arouse enthusiasm. Swedish forces also operated in Moravia in 1643, when the hopes of taking Vienna once more surfaced as the

Transylvanian prince joined the anti-Habsburg cause. In 1645, Ferdinand's son and successor, Ferdinand III (1637–1657), suffered a crushing defeat. A separate peace with Transylvania rescued the Habsburgs, and the Swedes withdrew their field army from Moravia. In 1648 they returned to lay siege to Prague, but this time the population actively resisted them. A voluntary legion with the university students in the vanguard held the stone bridge after the Swedes had taken Hradčany and the Lesser Quarter. Their resistance became another symbol (one with Catholic and pro-Habsburg overtones), and a Marian column was erected on Old Town Square in memory of their victory (destroyed in 1918). The Swedes, burdened with booty from Rudolph II's art collections in the Prague castle, had to withdraw.

That same year finally produced the Peace of Westphalia, which confirmed a new balance of power. France and Sweden emerged with territorial gains and new status as dominant powers; the Holy Roman Empire and Spain declined correspondingly. The United Provinces of the Netherlands were recognized as an independent state, and Switzerland's ties with the empire were ended. The Peace of Westphalia strengthened the territorial princes against the emperor, but the Habsburg ruler's position within his Central European possessions was also strengthened.

In religious matters, the Peace of Westphalia followed the principle *cuius regio, eius religio* (whose the rule, his the religion) as in the Treaty of Augsburg in 1555. The base year was 1634, which ended the Czech exiles' hopes of returning to their country. The ruler determined the legal religion, free citizens of other faiths had to convert or leave, while the subject peasantry had no choice. In the Bohemian crownlands the Peace of Westphalia presaged the triumph of the Counter-Reformation. Lutherans retained religious rights in Silesia, thanks to Saxon pressure.

Religious conviction (or fanaticism) was not the only reason Ferdinand II and Ferdinand III insisted on restoring Catholicism. Contemporary opinion saw religious divisions as a source of political instability, a view confirmed by the Estates' rebellion. Thus for both political and religious reasons many nobles and burghers had to choose exile. Up to one quarter of the free population—exact figures are impossible to arrive at—fled their native land. In their new homes, in the neighboring Protestant states, in Upper Hungary (Slovakia), or in Poland, they assimilated into their surroundings. Many peasants also fled the country, motivated equally strongly by the desire to escape the desperate economic conditions at home.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

The Thirty Years' War left lasting traces on the economy, society, politics, and culture of the Bohemian crownlands.[3] The population dropped drastically: an estimated 1,700,000 people lived in Bohemia before 1618, in the mid-seventeenth century there were only around 950,000. In Moravia out of approximately 900,000 there were only 600,000 people left. Overall losses are estimated at one-third of the population. Cadastral surveys from 1682 suggest that in that year over 20 percent of the peasant land still lay fallow. Agricultural output did not recover to prewar levels until the end of the seventeenth century.[4]

The victorious Habsburg rulers rewarded their supporters with the estates of nobles who had emigrated or been proscribed. Thus the original old Czech and German noble families were joined, and often overshadowed by, newcomers from all the Catholic regions of Europe. The internal structure of the noble estate also shifted significantly. The clergy regained its status as the first estate, while of the more than 1,000 knightly families in the Bohemian Estates before the Battle of the White Mountain, by the end of the seventeenth century there were only 238.[5] The lower nobility played a major role in neighboring Poland and Hungary in preserving the political privileges of the traditional estates, and their disappearance in the Bohemian crownlands correspondingly weakened the Bohemian Estates.

Their liberties curtailed already after 1547, the royal free towns also saw their participation in the Estates restricted to a symbolic level. In the Bohemian diet, only six towns had representation after 1627, a number that by 1709 had been reduced to the three towns of Prague. In Moravia all seven royal towns were still represented, though until 1711 they had to stand during diet sessions as a mark of subordination. In both Bohemia and Moravia the towns had a single collective vote, whereas members of the prelates' or nobles' estates each had a vote. Under these conditions, what political power remained to the Estates was controlled by the upper nobility.[6]

Habsburg victory over the Bohemian rebellion changed forever the balance between crown and Estates. In all branches of public affairs,

royal power dominated. Yet, in the absence of a professional, salaried bureaucracy, the Habsburg kings still had to rely on the nobility to staff the administration. In a reversal of the fifteenth-century process, the major offices in the Bohemian kingdom were now appointed by the king and swore allegiance to him. Though officials within the crownlands still had to hold citizenship, it was the king who now granted it.[7]

The existence of the Bohemian Court Chancellery maintained the memory of the unity and autonomy of the lands of the Crown of St. Václav, but it was an instrument of centralized royal control, transferred to Vienna in 1624. The main financial organ, the Bohemian Chamber, functioned directly under the Viennese Court Chamber rather than through the Bohemian Court Chancellery. The Viennese chamber also maintained direct relations with similar offices in Moravia and Silesia. The Bohemian Court Chancellery could now hear appeals from the old Estates-dominated judicial organ, the Land Court.

Still, although they had lost their religious freedom and their political power had declined, the nobles maintained their social and economic position. Well into the eighteenth century, the local lords remained the main contact between the subject peasantry and the crown. These subjects, making up probably 90 percent of the population, lived on land belonging to nobles or church institutions, and these landed properties made up the fundamental administrative units of the country. The lord or his administrator was responsible for the application of royal decrees and regulations, for collecting state taxes and military recruits, and for dispensing justice among his subjects in civil and criminal cases.

The so-called "second serfdom" in the Bohemian crownlands differed from lands farther east (Poland, eastern Prussia, Russia). Though some landlords did concentrate on large-scale production for export, the extensive cultivation of grain for the market was not so firmly established. Side-by-side with such estates existed farms worked by peasants producing for the local market, and often competing effectively with the lord's estates. Noble producers thus preferred to concentrate in areas such as logging, fish-farming, or export-oriented crops. In addition, the landlords still enjoyed monopolies of various kinds, especially in brewing and distilling, so peasants provided consumers for the lord's products during a time of collapsing markets.[8]

Nobles depended more and more on *robota* labor. Generally, peasants had to provide labor, including draft animals, for three days a week. At harvest, this requirement could go up to six days a week, with days

off only on Sundays or church holidays. The economic depression following the Thirty Years' War led the landlords to rely more on their subjects' labor, but the peasants had no incentive to work well for the lord. Evidence suggests that productivity on dominical land was from eight to ten times lower than on rustical land, where the peasant worked for himself. Low productivity led landlords to increase their demands for *robota*, while at the same time the state raised taxes, almost exclusively levied on rustical land. The landlords' self-interest partly limited peasant exploitation, since they represented both the lord's labor and his consumers. Nevertheless, their life was hard, and resentments led to open rebellion.[9]

During the Thirty Years' War, peasant disturbances were usually reactions to re-Catholicization. Economic grievances, however, touched off the greatest peasant rebellion of the century in 1680.[10] The imperial court moved to Prague to escape the plague in Vienna, but there the peasants flooded it with petitions against the *robota*. When Leopold I (1657–1705) reaffirmed the lords' rights, the peasants seized whatever weapons they could find and gathered to march on Prague. The rebellion was crushed by the army and its leaders executed or sentenced to hard labor, but it forced the emperor to intervene in landlord-peasant relations. In a patent issued in June 1680, Leopold confirmed the traditional three-day labor requirement, higher during harvest time, but demanded that the lords not mistreat their peasants. Similar *robota* patents were enacted under Charles VI, in 1713, 1717, and 1738. The state also began to intervene in landlords' judicial powers. Royal patents of 1717 established a hierarchy of appeals, beginning with the circuit captain and ending with the Bohemian chancellery. Peasant resistance to the *robota* remained a constant factor throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century.

The Chod rebellion in western Bohemia from 1692 to 1695 reflected these continuing social tensions. In return for special privileges, the Chods were charged with patrolling the kingdom's western boundaries. By the mid-seventeenth century their privileges had eroded, and their new lords demanded *robota* for large-scale economic enterprises. The Chods, appealing to traditional liberties, refused and sent delegations to Vienna to plead their case. They were crushed by force, and their leader, Jan Sladký Kozina, executed at Plzeň in 1695. Nineteenth-century authors created a powerful myth-image of the Czech Chods resisting social and national exploitation by their German lords. In its causes and form,

the Chod rebellion in fact typifies contemporary peasant resistance: against rising economic pressure, especially demands for *robota*, the peasants appealed to traditional privileges and rights, trusting in the just ruler, who would correct the abuses of the unjust landlord. The existing social and economic system was not questioned, the national motive was absent, and the peasants demanded only justice.[11]

CULTURE IN THE AGE OF THE BAROQUE

The years between the Battle of the White Mountain and reforms of Maria Theresa and Joseph II were long known in Czech nationalist historiography as the "time of darkness." In this depiction the White Mountain signaled both the loss of Bohemian independence and the destruction of Czech culture.[12] Even today the White Mountain and its consequences remain an important issue in Czech historiography and national consciousness, though the nationalist picture of cultural destruction has gradually been modified. Nevertheless, the White Mountain represents at least a partial caesura in the cultural history of the Bohemian crownlands.[13]

When the victorious Habsburg authorities executed the ringleaders of the "odious rebellion," many of them were significant cultural figures. Many other leading intellectuals went into exile. The loss of the emigrants was certainly a heavy blow, especially in literary disciplines. On the other hand, the reintegration of the Bohemian crownlands into Catholic Europe brought more direct exposure to other artistic styles and approaches. If initially these impulses were alien, they were eventually absorbed and transformed, giving rise to the Czech version of the next dominant cultural style, the Baroque. The greatest Czech exile was the last bishop of the Unity of Brethren, Jan Amos Komenský. Comenius, as he was known abroad, published in many fields, especially pedagogy, where he enjoyed an international reputation. He also published significant works in Czech, including a moving lament expressing his despair after the Peace of Westphalia sealed the fate of the exiles.[14]

Émigré works had little direct influence in the Bohemian crownlands, where the Jesuits controlled censorship and the Catholic faith was reestablished.[15] Both secular and religious authorities concentrated on missionary work, reorganizing the Catholic church administration, and

developing Catholic-controlled schooling at all levels. The state issued laws and administrative decrees, and set up a Reformation Commission, backed by military force, in each circuit. The practical work, however, fell to the church. Two new bishoprics were created, Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) in 1655 and Hradec Králové in 1664. Parish priests kept a register of confessants, which after 1656 was sent to the governor's chancellery. Only in the isolated frontier regions such as the foothills of the Krušné Hory and around Aš (Asch), and in the mountains of Moravia and eastern Bohemia, did secret non-Catholics remain (mostly German-speaking Lutherans in the former areas and Czech-speaking Brethren in the latter). By approximately 1680 the first wave of Catholicization was complete, but the government still feared secret Protestantism, issuing renewed patents against heresy in 1717.

Teaching and other work among the people was vital to winning the Czechs back to the Catholic fold. The Jesuits returned immediately after White Mountain, and the established orders (Benedictines, Praemonstratensians, and Cistercians) were joined during the seventeenth century by others such as Piarists, Irish Franciscans, and Black Benedictines. The merger of the university with the Clementinum (definitively in 1654) formed the Charles-Ferdinand university. Other orders ran their own gymnasia, notably the older Benedictines and the newer Piarists. Basic education was provided in town and village schools, where the local parish priest was usually the teacher.[16]

Church rituals punctuated everyday life: sacraments (baptism, confirmation, marriage, extreme unction) accompanied the stages of individual life, and regular confession was enforced by the authorities. Church holidays (there were many) and other occasions meant festive celebrations, processions, and services in churches decorated with statues and highly ornate altars, to the accompaniment of music, incense, and ritual. Processions and solemn pilgrimages to shrines, usually connected to the Virgin Mary, also formed part of popular religious life. The cult of the Virgin Mary was particularly popular in the Catholic reformation, and she was joined after 1729 by a newly canonized Czech saint, John Nepomucene, whose veneration spread during the eighteenth century, even overseas.[17] Returning the Bohemian crownlands to the Catholic church was thus a more complicated matter than the phrase "forcible conversion" suggests. Post-Tridentine Catholicism was also appealing in its buildings, monuments, and rituals.

The newly introduced Baroque style, with its movement, contrast, and tension, expressed well the religious fervor of the reformed Catholic church. In the Bohemian crownlands Baroque arrived abruptly, introduced by Italian or German-Austrian masters such as Carlo Lurago, Francesco Carrati, and Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, but it reached its highest achievements in the works of local architects, notably Christoph Dientzenhofer and his son, Kilian Ignaz. Their masterpiece, the Jesuit church of St. Nicholas in Prague's Lesser Quarter, remains one of the most striking Baroque monuments in the Bohemian crownlands.

If Baroque art, architecture, and music reached world standards, the intellectual censorship stifled literature. In addition, equality between Czech and German meant that the use of German spread among the upper and middle classes. Without an educated public for Czech-language works, literature in Czech was oriented to the masses. The church recognized that Czech was essential to its activity among the people, and its writers produced many polemical and devotional works. Baroque preaching, religious theater, and verse reached respectable levels. Nevertheless, in comparison with the vernacular literature in contemporary France and England, the Bohemian crownlands remained far behind, even further than during the Renaissance.

From such aspects of cultural development after 1620 the nationalists drew their image of a cultural "time of darkness." There was a social price, too. Josef Pekař, otherwise not hostile to Baroque culture, contrasted the poverty of the peasantry with the glories of Baroque architecture in Prague and the countryside: "here the new Czechia rejoices, triumphs, and thanks heaven in joyfully agitated situation, the new Czechia of a few thousands, or rather hundreds of people, whose power and glory rests on the ruins of hundreds of thousands."[18] Some contemporaries, Czech-born servants of the church, raised in the Jesuit order, still expressed a clear sense of Czech patriotism and defended Czech culture. The Jesuit Bohuslav Balbín collected monuments of Czech learning through which he contributed to later developments in Czech historical studies. He also composed a lament on the Czech language, published posthumously in 1775. This work had a tremendous impact on the first generation of the Czech national renascence.[19]

THE HABSBURG MONARCHY IN THE BALANCE OF POWER

The myth-image of a political "time of darkness" in Bohemia after the Thirty Years' War is also one-sided. Nevertheless, the Bohemian crownlands declined in significance relative to other Habsburg concerns, and their fate was increasingly decided in Vienna. Bohemian and Moravian aristocrats made successful careers serving the emperor, but the concrete distinctness of the Bohemian crownlands (since 1635 without the two Lusatias) eroded. The gradual Habsburg reconquest of Hungary and the years of conflict with France focused royal attention on the eastern and western frontiers. The Bohemian crownlands increasingly figured as a source of money and recruits for these wars, whose outcome altered both the European balance of power and the internal dynamics of politics within the Habsburg possessions.

The Turks had generally refrained from entering directly into the Thirty Years' War, but conflict with the Habsburgs broke out anew in 1663. As Habsburg military successes raised the prospect of a reconquest of Hungary, Leopold faced conspiratorial resistance from some great Hungarian aristocrats. The second Turkish siege of Vienna failed in 1683, marking the beginning of the end of Turkish control in Hungary. Conflict continued for many years, but the Habsburgs gradually advanced. From these campaigns against the Turks the French prince Eugene of Savoy emerged as one of Austria's finest military leaders. Under his command the liberation of Hungary was finally completed (Treaty of Karlowitz, 1699), the Banat of Temesvár conquered, and for a time even parts of Serbia (including Belgrade) and western Wallachia occupied (Treaty of Passarowitz, 1718).

The Habsburgs' frequent involvement in wars with France culminated after 1700, when the Spanish Habsburg line finally died out. Leopold I claimed the throne for his second son Charles, and the ensuing War of the Spanish Succession continued through the reign of Leopold's elder son, Joseph I (1705–1711). With his death the international situation changed, since Joseph's successor was his brother, Charles VI (1711–1740). Europe's fear of a French-dominated Spain was now replaced by the threat of a reunited Habsburg dominion.

The Bohemian nobles did not mount serious resistance to the government's demands for contributions and recruits for the wars. Never-

theless, during Joseph I's reign there were some changes in how the central authorities approached the Estates, including the creation in 1710 of a commission to revise the Renewed Land Ordinance for Bohemia. In addition, members of the old Czech nobility such as Václav Vratislav of Mitrovice (ambassador to London and chancellor) and Václav Norbert Kinský held high imperial offices. After Charles came to the throne, however, the Bohemian aristocrats in Vienna were eclipsed by the Spanish advisers with whom he had surrounded himself as pretender to the Spanish crown.

Shortly after Charles VI's accession to the imperial title, Britain opened peace negotiations with France. The resulting treaties of Utrecht (1713) and Rastatt (1714) ended the War of the Spanish Succession and confirmed the Habsburg loss of Spain. The war had demonstrated dramatically the fate that might overtake powerful empires faced with a crisis of succession. Increasingly Charles VI devoted his attention and efforts, domestically and internationally, to ensuring a unified order of succession for his realms.

When Charles announced his plans in 1713, his goal was to ensure that his descendants, not Joseph's, succeeded him. The male line was granted precedence, but the female line was also included, if all male descendants died out.[20] Charles presented the new order of succession, the Pragmatic Sanction, to the Estates of his realm for approval. The Austrian, Bohemian, Moravian, and Silesian Estates accepted it in 1720, the Croatian in 1721, and the Hungarian and Transylvanian Estates in 1722–23. Lombardy and the Austrian Netherlands followed in 1724 and 1725. Gaining the Estates' formal acceptance guaranteed (at least in theory) the cooperation of the politically privileged bodies. In the process his dominions—including the lands of the Crown of St. Václav—revived memories of their separate historical and political existence. For the Bohemian crownlands the procedure also helped further modify some of the harshest provisions of Ferdinand II's Renewed Land Ordinance, which had in any case already established the right of female succession.[21]

Charles was also determined to gain international acceptance of the Pragmatic Sanction, and he subordinated his foreign policies to that aim. Between 1726 and 1732, Spain, Britain, Prussia, the Netherlands, and Denmark formally agreed to recognize the Pragmatic Sanction. Getting France's support cost Charles VI Lorraine and most of the Habsburg Italian possessions, in the War of the Polish Succession (1733–35). Rus-

sia's agreement was bought at the price of Austrian support in another war with the Turks (1737–39), this time without Eugene of Savoy, who died in 1736. All Charles's Balkan gains were lost by the Treaty of Belgrade (1739), but Habsburg control of Hungary and Transylvania was not threatened.

The true value of Charles VI's diplomatic agreements would be revealed when he died and his daughter succeeded him. Maria Theresa, in the meantime, gained a consort in Francis Stephen of Lorraine, dispossessed by the War of the Polish Succession but compensated with the hand of Charles's heir in 1736. This diplomatic alliance turned into a true love match, and ended the threat of Habsburg extinction through its admirable fruitfulness. But the political survival of the house of Habsburg-Lorraine was to be sorely tested in the storm that erupted—in spite of the Pragmatic Sanction—when Emperor Charles VI died in 1740.[22]