

## STEPHEN CARDINAL TROCHTA

An Educator, a Churchman and an Ecumenist

By *Ludvik N e m e c*

The New York Times (April 7, 1974) brought sad news about the sudden death of the only Czechoslovak Cardinal Trochta (1905—1974) and the world press reacted very favorably on his life as a hero who never sacrificed principle for any kind of expediency. This circumstance singled him out as a man respected by his enemies, admired by his friends, idolized by the faithful, and loved by priests and the Pope himself. It was due to this circumstance that Pope Paul VI announced in a secret consistory, held on March 5, 1973, that two bishops were nominated into the Council of Cardinals in a previous consistory held on April 28, 1969, but their names could not have been announced publicly before and, therefore, were kept in the mind of the pope alone, i. e. „in pectore“ or in an Italian term „in petto“<sup>1</sup>. These two were Msgr. Julius Hossu<sup>2</sup>, the last bishop of Kluže and Gerl in Rumania, who died on May 28, 1970, and Msgr. Štěpán (Stephen) Trochta, bishop of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) in Czechoslovakia.

These both were victims of a cruel persecution by the communists, and both are heroic confessors of the Faith. In the light of these facts, both are exemplary heroes worthy of being included among the immortals. Msgr. Julius Hossu died in renown of sanctity, and was certainly received among the heavenly celebrities, and he enjoys an abundance of God's favors. The public and posthumous announcement of his Cardinalate was only a confirmation of his great merits in the Church for which he actually died.

The case of Bishop Trochta, humanly speaking, is too interesting and, therefore, it is fitting to meditate about him as a great educator of youth, heroic Churchman and dedicated ecumenist. He experienced the whole Calvary under the worst possible circumstances and went through the Communist hell, and suffered so much that he certainly merited the reward of beatitudes given to those „suffering for God's justice's sake“<sup>3</sup>. Most interesting, in this case, is the

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<sup>1</sup> Biskup Trochta Kardinálem. *Nový Život* 25, No. 4 (March, 1973), pp. 75—76; cf. *Rudé Právo* of March 6 (1973) 2; cf. *L'Osservatore Romano* of March 6 (1973).

<sup>2</sup> *Národ* (Chicago, Nov. 3, 1973) 7: In 1948 the Greek Catholic Church was liquidated and their 5 bishops including professor of Major Seminary were jailed. The last bishop, Julius Hossu, died in 1970. In 1948 the papal nuncio, Archbishop O'Hara, secretly consecrated 5 other bishops, but these were again jailed and later released but prohibited to function as bishops.

<sup>3</sup> Blessed are the persecuted for the sake of „God's justice“. Mt. 5, 6—8.

circumstance, that he, perhaps the most persecuted Churchman in Czechoslovakia, achieved the highest ecclesiastical rank under circumstances which were most unfavorable to him.

Even the Czechoslovak Communists, famous for their radical fanaticism and cruelty all over the world, did not dare, at the end, to block his way toward this recent recognition of his work and successes. It is the victory of a hero who had to pay everything through his sufferings and sacrifices before he was allowed to experience little human recognition. Hereby is more of a reason why we should get acquainted with his life, work, sufferings and the achievements of this bishop who has brought so many sacrifices on the altar of his nation, his Church and his peoples.

There is also another historical reason why we should get acquainted with the life of this new Czech Cardinal. It is an unique event for the Czech land which, in the past, had only a few Cardinals. History tells us that Archbishop Jan Očko of Vlašim (1378) had been the first Czech Cardinal. The Czechoslovak Republic, since 1918, had only two Cardinals: in the year 1935 the Archbishop of Prague, Karel Kašpar<sup>4</sup>, and in the year 1965, Archbishop of Prague, Josef Beran<sup>5</sup>. Still more interesting is an historical circumstance and peculiarity in that Bishop Trochta is the first bishop of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) to become a cardinal.

In the light of one's attempt to detail his life as much as possible, it is regrettable that detailed events of his youth are rather fragmentary ones for the simple reason that these were not accessible to us since practically nothing was written about him.

He was born on March 26, 1905, of a poor farmer's family in the village of Francová Lhota in Wallachia near the city of Vsetín (Wsetin)<sup>6</sup>. His brother and sister are still alive. His father died in 1912 when the oldest son, Štěpán (Stephen), was seven years old. His mother was left with the care of three small children, and Stephen had to give a helping hand. Instead of having fun as other children generally have, he was in charge of all the work necessary about the house. He had a difficult childhood, especially in the last years of World War I (1914—1918), when, even in the countryside, it was difficult to make a living.

The young Stephen attended the grade school in his native village during the years 1911—1918, and then, on the recommendation of the local pastor, he was accepted in a minor seminary, i. e. in archiepiscopal gymnasium in the city of Kroměříž (Kremsier) in Moravia. This institution had a reputation for both discipline and learning as well.

In 1920 Stephen's mother became gravely ill with tuberculosis, and thus a young student had to interrupt his studies to return home to take care of the

<sup>4</sup> AAS 22 (1935) 340.

<sup>5</sup> O'Grady, Desmond: A meeting with Archbishop Beran. U. S. Catholic (December, 1965) 34—36; cf. Cardinal Beran's 15 Year Ordeal. Herder Correspondence II. n 8 (August, 1965) 260—261.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Štěpán Kardinál Trochta. Katolické Noviny No. 11 (March 18, 1973) 1.

household and his brother and sister. One has to wonder how such a youngster was able to discharge the responsibilities as head of a family as he did. This experience certainly helped him to mature quickly.

Gradually his mother recovered so that she was able to resume responsibilities, and his brother and sister were a bit older. Stephen could now return to the minor seminary in Kroměříž (Kremsier), but he did not because a financial crisis made it difficult.

In the meantime, Divine Providence prepared another possibility for him. At that time there was a colony of Italian prisoners temporarily located in his and neighboring villages. It was the first time that young Stephen heard the news about a new and promising apostolate of a new religious Society of Salesians, founded by St. John Bosco. Inspired, especially with the great educational activity of the youth by the Salesians, he decided to inquire more about them, and wrote to their headquarters in the city of Turin in Italy, and asked to be accepted into their religious society. What motivated his decision most was a special educational apostolate for late vocations, training for youth for a variety of trades and care for neglected youth, for which the young Trochta had a special natural understanding. Perhaps his own experience during his difficult childhood contributed to it somehow.

His application was answered favorably and he was accepted for study in the Salesian Institute in Turin, Italy. With the help of his relatives who promised to be of assistance to his mother in his absence, he was on his way to Italy in the year 1922. In Vienna an unexpected accident happened to him<sup>7</sup>; namely, an unknown thief took all his money. Stephen had his train ticket paid only to Venice in Italy, and he had no idea how he would get from there to Turin. Again Divine Providence helped him. When he arrived in Venice and stayed in the train station with all his packages, not knowing what to do, an Italian tollman approached him and asked him where he was traveling. This tollman was, perhaps, moved by the naivety of the boy and invited him to the table. During their conversation young Trochta explained what happened to him in Vienna. The tollman bought him a new train ticket from Venice to Turin, and thus all the worries of young Trochta were solved<sup>8</sup>. Trochta liked to repeat this story now and again as an example of how God always provides when there is extreme need.

While in Turin young Trochta encountered many difficulties, one of them being a language barrier. He had to master the Italian language as soon as possible to be able to begin his studies at the Lyceum. With the help of some Italian boys he was able to make some progress, so that before Christmas of 1922 he was accepted as a normal student at the ecclesiastical *Lyceum* where he spent four years, until 1926. Then he advanced to the school of Philosophy where he was for the two years from 1926 to 1928, which was preparation

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<sup>7</sup> *Národ* (April 28, 1973).

<sup>8</sup> New Cardinal recalls stranger who helped him toward Priesthood. *Národ-Supplement* of April 28, 1973.

for the school of Sacred Theology, where he spent the four years from 1928 to 1932. After finishing theology he was ordained a priest on June 29, 1932, by His Eminence Cardinal Fosseti. He celebrated his first Mass at the chapel of the Salesian Institute with his Salesian friends.

Shortly after his priestly ordination, because of having always been a good student, he was sent to further his studies, and he achieved his doctorate in Sacred Theology (S. T. D.). He excelled, especially, in Pastoral Theology and in education, which was helpful to his future educational work. As he was always practical minded, he developed a special skill in what is now called „psychological counseling“, and in practical psychology in general. This reveals how Trochta was always open to modern ways of thought and methods which could be used for the better education of youth. In this, one might say, Trochta was a true Salesian in the spirit of St. John Bosco. This all determined his future work, the apostolate in the education of youth in which he found his dedication and excellence as well.

Great opportunity was at hand. Salesians were just engaged in educational work among the youth in Czechoslovakia, mainly due to the zeal of the first and, perhaps, the oldest Czech pioneer, Reverend Father Ignatius Stuchlý, who was the first Czechoslovak Salesian Superior in the first mission at the small Moravian city Fryšták (Freistadt) near Zlín in Moravia. Here he began, with great difficulties and with only a few boys who were mostly from poor and neglected families, a private ecclesiastical gymnasium which was not accredited by the State. Students of this Salesian Institute were taught at home, and at the end of every school year they had to take examination at the gymnasium at Kroměříž (Kremsier) for credits.

#### *Father Trochta as an Educator*

In view of these pioneering efforts of the Salesians in Czechoslovakia, it is understood that the newly ordained young Czech priest-Salesian Trochta was destined for the educational apostolate in his native land, Czechoslovakia. Since he was among the first Czech Salesians, he was expected to prepare himself for this apostolate. He, in fact, had to become a pioneer also, especially in the introduction of new Salesian educational ways which included both a spiritual maturity and physical fitness.

During the summer of 1932, Father Stephen Trochta, S. T. D., was sent to his first post, which the Salesians had in Czechoslovakia, namely the small city of Fryšták (Freistadt) near Zlín, famous for its *Bat'a works*, in Moravia. In contrast to Father-Superior Ignatius Stuchlý, Trochta was rather well educated and, as a result, he became actual director of this institution.

He became the professor of philosophy, pedagogics and religion and, as such, he reformed the whole curriculum of the school. Beginnings were difficult in all directions, both financially and organization wise. Salesians had here in Fryšták (Freistadt) their private gymnasium for boys, together with the Dept of Philosophy, as a preparatory school for the members of their religious Society. For

the purpose of effectiveness, Father Trochta separated these two schools and reorganized them according to the needs and to school regulations. He taught in both schools, and besides this he was very active in an outside apostolate, and also helped in the spiritual administration in parishes when he was called.

In the year 1935 the Salesians began their apostolate for the youths in the big industrial city of Moravská Ostrava (Mährisch-Ostrau). There was a need for an energetic organizer and administrator for this new project, which has to be created from nothing. Young Father Trochta, who, in the meantime, became the right hand of the General Superior of the Salesians in Czechoslovakia, Father Ignatius, was selected for this new post for the purpose of a build up of a Home and Vocational school for boys to learn trades, and a new Church to be dedicated to St. John Bosco, founder of the Salesians.

To the surprise of all, in a very short time and with the speed of a skilled organizer, Father Trochta built up both home and school and then the church in two years. By 1937 the city of Moravská Ostrava (Mährisch-Ostrau) had a great center for youth. The most interesting feature of this center was the introduction of all kinds of sport, namely: basketball, football, soccer, tennis, etc. and included all kinds of gymnastics. Here Father Trochta was free to utilize his rich experiences of the Salesians' educational resources, and to adapt them to the Czechoslovak situation. It can be said that it was due to his efforts that the apostolate of the Salesians was not only fruitful here, but that it grew into great dimensions. Here, in a great industrial center, Trochta was able to utilize his organizational abilities for which he became well known.

It is no wonder that when Karel Cardinal Kašpar, Archbishop of Prague, was looking for someone skilled in the education of youth in the industrial suburban part of the national capital, Prague, that young Father Stephen Trochta was asked to take charge of it. As before, he had to start from the beginning, but with the help of the archbishop, he succeeded in building the huge educational institution with all the facilities for diversified sports in suburban Kobyly (Kobil), which he began in 1937, a month after his arrival. By now he had some experience as a builder from his previous post, so he could supervise this project more successfully.

It is, perhaps, of interest to note that Msgr. Josef Beran, then director of a major Theological Seminary in Prague, used to come here regularly to help out in the pastoral care in Kobyly (Kobil), and Trochta continued in this apostolate after him. Here Trochta built an institution of such great dimensions that it became a well-known center for youth. The well organized sports events which were held here became a great attraction for the youth of Prague and attendance at these events was very great. It must also be said that a music band and entertainment were an integral part of the sports program and this, of course, increased attendance more.

According to the unanimous consensus of numerous people who knew Trochta well, he was a leader by nature. He was impressive with his vibrant personality, and had a stoic calmness and unusual intelligence. Although he was not a scholarly type he exemplified deep understanding and common sense. He

knew how to talk with people in their own language, and he penetrated, without much difficulty, to the bottom of the problem. He never let anyone know his own spiritual superiority. He had a great gift for kidding around, joking and laughter. This he exercised even in the most difficult times of his life<sup>9</sup>. It was no wonder that he, especially impressed youth which he attracted with his sincerity and openness. He was a favored speaker at frequent conventions of youth, and became its spokesman, either in role as director of the Catholic youth or as a spiritual moderator of an athletic organization, *Junák*, or of Catholic Scouts.

As an example of Trochta's preoccupation with the apostolate of youth, it would seem proper to introduce one of his numerous speeches. It reads as follows:

„It is needless that a nation should live in the luxury and in the triumph of a glory in order that it have foundations for the supreme and the most sacred values. On the contrary, the history of all mankind teaches us quite differently. It stresses that the true civil virtues are acquired in sufferings, and the muscles grow stronger in battle. This we all, young and old, must take into consideration, that there is, in our sad national situation, only one way for us, namely, the way of our common discipline and it is the long and painful way.

But the great things call for great sacrifices and self denials. These can be acquired only through sacrifices, while by the lack of sacrifice, unity and discipline can be lost in their very beginnings. I hope that this cannot and must not happen, that there is not one among us who would be afraid of these sacrifices, or who would escape these in such a serious time. This would mean that such an individual does not love his nation, and that he did not understand the seriousness of the situation.

Never before has our nation felt so bitterly the horror of isolation and the betrayal of false and make-believe love. In a time of anxiety, a nation was looking in vain, on all sides, and then betrayed and it fell heartbroken in order that it drinks its own chalice to the bottom. We were not spared any pains. It is good that we are aware of it and we should not forget it. It is beneficial that we also remember this to our children. We should not be motivated either by malice of vengeance, and that the genius of our nation should not select this path, but our way must be that of sacrifice, discipline and unity if our nation should benefit from our sufferings, and our sacrifices shall not be in vain.

In the supernatural order neither individual or nation suffers in vain. In the light of faith every and each sacrifice has a great value in the eyes of God. And when this happens, there are other factors and causes in the play, which Divine Providence knows to economize. Historical rotation of the destiny of nations will fulfill its course and He, who saw the sacrifices bought in faith,

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<sup>9</sup> Kardinál Štěpán Trochta. *Nový Život* 25/4 (April, 1973) 79—80.

will also provide that those, who were the next in line, will also find their place in the sun.

It is not shameful to live in calumny. It is a shame to submit oneself internally to their calumny. There are misfortunes which destroy forever, but there are also others which awaken to life.

We have before us our noble national goal. Because of the avalanche of contemporary calamities, we cannot see quite clearly now, but in these difficult days of uncertainty we will benefit by our faith. This tells us that God created our nation, that He wants to preserve it, that it was He who directed its destinies in an historical community, and that He placed this nation on this beautiful earth where it still lives. He, himself, gave enough space where a nation can live. It was He who watched over this nation for a millennium and gave it saint intercessors and patrons. Let us not be afraid, the historical mission of our nation had not yet ended. Let us have faith<sup>10</sup>.

This speech was given in January 1939 during a most difficult time for the Czech nation, and it clearly reveals Trochta's confidence in youth, in which he saw the hope of a nation. It reveals the dynamic influence he had on youth, and his sentiments of patriotism which were always present in his educational efforts.

He was a patriot of grand style and design. His patriotism and national consciousness was felt in all his speeches and sermons. Nevertheless, he was also very prudent and made special efforts to be moderate so that he did not irritate the Germans too much.

Trochta had to be especially careful during the *Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia* (1939—1945), when the Germans were the real masters of the country. More so because he was a recognized and well-known leader of Czech youth and, as such, he was under constant police surveillance. The time under the reign of *Reichsprotector* Reinhard Heydrich (from Sept. 1941 to May 27, 1942) and of his successor, Kurt Daluege (from May 1942 to April 1945) was the worst, of course. The terror increased all the more when the Americans and the Russians pressed the German army on all fronts. At this time the organization of *Sokol* was dissolved (Oct. 12, 1941), the Catholic organization of *Orel* and other athletic and cultural organizations and societies followed. Several hundreds and thousands of teachers, professors and officers were jailed and with them hundreds of Catholic priests and prelates, monks and nuns. Even the Prime Minister of the *Protectorate's* government, General Eliáš, was executed in June, 1942. Soon after this, on June 10, 1942, all the inhabitants of the village of *Lidice*<sup>11</sup> were massacred, and general massacres were committed in great numbers, so that from May 28 to July 3, 1942, about 1,230 persons<sup>12</sup> were executed. When *Reichsprotector* Heydrich was killed on May 27,

<sup>10</sup> Author's English translation from Czech text: Kardinál Trochta k mládeži [Kardinal Trochta an die Jugend]. *Nový Život* 25/4 (April, 1973) 75—76.

<sup>11</sup> Lidice (A document of the Ministry of Interior). Prague, 1945.

<sup>12</sup> Czechoslovakia fights back. A document of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign

1942, the Nazis revenged his death on the Czech nation a hundredfold. About ten thousand Czechs and Moravians were killed on account of Heydrich's death.

Following the murder of Heydrich, the *Gestapo* (i. e. Secret Nazi Police) arrived on June 1, 1942, and took Father Trochta into custody. Herewith began his Calvary. After endless investigations and cruel treatment in the *Petchek villa* in Prague-Bubeneč (Prag-Bubentsch), and in the jail in *Pančrác*, he was transferred to a concentration camp in *Terezín* (Theresienstadt), famous for its fortress, where he worked in various assignments of forced labor. He was kept here for about one year, and then he was transferred into the infamous concentration camp *Mauthausen* in Germany in 1943. Here he was frequently beaten until he bled, and on one occasion he was shot and thrown on a vehicle with dead bodies and carried away to a crematorium. In an unguarded moment Trochta slipped out of the vehicle and by special Divine Providence was successful in disappearing from the camp and in reaching the place of his work. Trochta frequently mentioned this episode to illustrate how Divine Providence intervenes sometimes in a very mysterious way.

It is worthy to note that Trochta was here with many Czech politically prominent persons like Antonín Novotný, later the President of Czechoslovakia (1960—1967), University professor Dr. Vratislav Bušek and others to name a few. Trochta was greatly respected by his co-prisoners because of his fearless behavior, and because of his clever ability to provide various things from the German kitchen which he then distributed to the Czech prisoners. He was called a „good thief“ doing good deeds for others.

Finally in December 1943, Father Trochta was transferred into a still more infamous concentration camp in *Dachau* near Munich, where the Nazis concentrated a major number of priests-prisoners. Here again he continued in the charitable apostolate to his co-prisoners, to whom he distributed things which he obtained, mainly through his skill, from the storage room or from the kitchen where he worked. It is interesting to note that Trochta was always practical minded and tried to get a job near the camp supplies. The French Jesuit Father Michel Riquet<sup>13</sup> remembers how Trochta gave him a sweater which was instrumental in helping him to bear a harsh winter. On another occasion Trochta was successful in getting a small piece of duck fat which was generally recognized as medicine against various kinds of infection, mainly because of a great lack of needed vitamins.

Still, in another aspect, Trochta excelled. He knew how to say the right words at the right time, and by this he was always inspiring people to have courage and hope. Always full of faith and confidence, and equipped with for-

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Affairs. Washington D. C.: American Council on Public Affairs, 1943. p. 137 and passim.

<sup>13</sup> Riquet, Michel: Vězeň nacistů a komunistů, kterým se stal kardinálem [Gefangener der Nazis und der Kommunisten. Wie er Kardinal wurde]. Denní Hlásatel (Chicago) of July 17, 1973. This is Czech version of French article in Figaro (July 5, 1973).

titude through which he resisted any kind of oppression and injustice, Father Trochta captivated other co-prisoners with his natural goodness, for he knew how, with just a few words, to calm down the fearful ones, to give the courage for living and to share his internal strength with others. Due to the fact that Father Trochta spoke several languages, French, Italian, German, Russian, Polish and Czech, he was able to spread among the prisoners a spirit of understanding, collegiality and unity in the Faith, in a mutual service, and in a resistance against any injustice. In this he was helped by Msgr. Beran and Msgr. Švec of Prague who were all a great help to the other co-prisoners. It should be said that there were several blocks of barracks reserved for the priests of various nationalities: Czech, Polish, French, and even some Germans. Trochta tried to make their stay more bearable in the camp. In addition to material care he was also instrumental, together with several other priests, in secretly organizing a celebration of a Holy Mass<sup>14</sup> which was strictly forbidden by the Gestapo. In fact, any kind of religious services were not permitted to be held in the camp, and the priests could not have any kind of religious literature, rosaries or other religious articles.

The great concern and compassion that Trochta had for his fellow prisoners explains the following event. Father Trochta was the first to spread the information about a telegram which the powerful Himmler sent to the commander of the concentration camp in Dachau, ordering that the enemy must not find any prisoners alive there. The camp should be quickly vacated, and the infirmary i. e. the hospital in the camp, should be liquidated, i. e. in German: „alles liquidieren“.

Father Trochta quickly spread this information and communicated to the French Jesuit that he should deliver this information to the Headquarters of the Western Powers concerning this diabolical plan of Hitler's so that at least the French prisoners could be repatriated in time by the Red Cross<sup>15</sup>. However, events developed quite differently and unexpectedly. On April 29, 1945, the American army unexpectedly, and to the great surprise of the Nazis, appeared before the camp and the Nazis did not have time to liquidate either the camp or the hospital. It was one of those surprises for which General Patton became so famous.

After the liberation of the camp by the American army, Father Trochta was busy helping to organize and to write the by-laws of the newly founded *International League of Catholic Priests*, organized for the purpose of congregating all war priests-prisoners in one powerful institution which could have a strong voice and influence on the public post-war affairs. This indicates how Father Trochta was not only a good organizer, but also a good observer of a situation

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<sup>14</sup> Home made vestments, chalice and other liturgical articles are preserved in the Museum located now in the Convent of Dircalced Carmelite nuns, built after II World War (1939—45) in place of the camp. This convent is dedicated for expiation of the crimes committed in this camp by the Nazis.

<sup>15</sup> R i q u e t.

and a practical manipulator, to utilize the merits of the suffering priests for the creation of a, so to speak, „public credit“ which would have to be taken into consideration when public officials would call them to an accounting for their national loyalties. Another reason for this organization was to preserve the friendship of the priests which had developed among them in the camp and to utilize it for the benefit of the Church in the respective countries of the individual priests. It must be said here that it was the atmosphere of the concentration camps with the common suffering of Catholic priests, Protestant ministers and Jewish rabbis which inspired, very decisively, an ecumenical understanding. Father Trochta was among the first to take this call toward the reunion of Churches seriously, and the one who felt an urgent need for it. Again he attempted its practical realization rather than getting involved in a formulation of an „ecumenical theology“ as exemplified by Karl Barth<sup>16</sup> or Dietrich Bonhoeffer<sup>17</sup>, who both capitalized on the ecumenical stimulus after coming from the concentration camps and conditioned by the atmosphere of Nazi oppression.

Furthermore, under the influence of this idea of organizing the clergy, all priests who were jailed or persecuted by the Nazis organized themselves in special organizations, and their members then became the spokesmen for national affairs, and later they served as mediators between the Church and the Communist government. These represented an organized strength and power which was, at least at the beginning, respected by the Communists. Some priests and prelates were decorated with war crosses and distinguished by various public honors as a sign of a public recognition for their merits in the cause of the nation. Father Trochta was among these prominent honored celebrities.

#### *Father Stephen Trochta as a Churchman*

The post war period was rather tragic for the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. A majority of episcopal thrones were vacant, many parishes were without priests. This was mainly due to the fact that about 400 priests died in the concentration camps, and a special epidemic of apathy on the part of the faithful was due to the moral decline and chaotic political confusion resulting from both, and the uncertainty from the oncoming Communist dominated future, and the frustration from the despair of the past war.

The first problem which had to be resolved was the nomination of new bishops. Pope Pius XII had a full understanding of the Czechoslovak situation. Thus on March 10, 1946, he nominated Msgr. Josef Beran<sup>18</sup>, as the Archbishop

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<sup>16</sup> Barth, Karl: Church Dogmatics. Edinburgh, 1957; cf. *idem*: The Concept of the Church. In: Christianity Divided. Ed. by Daniel J. Callahan and others. New York, 1961, pp. 153—171. cf. also Barth, K. / Hamel, Joh.: How to serve God in a Marxist Land. New York, 1959.

<sup>17</sup> Bonhoeffer, Dietrich: Letters and Papers from Prison. New York, 1972.

<sup>18</sup> AAS 38 (1946) 400.

of Prague, Msgr. Josef Hlouch, was named bishop in České Budějovice (Budweis)<sup>19</sup>, and Msgr. Karel Skoupý was named bishop in the Moravian capital of Brno (Brünn)<sup>20</sup>. The question of a German bishop in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz), Msgr. Anthony Weber, who was always loyal to the Czechoslovak Republic, was solved in the following manner. In March 1947, Pope Pius XII nominated Bishop Weber as a titular Bishop of Samien<sup>21</sup>, and the Czechoslovak government consented to pay his salary. By this the bishopric in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) became vacant and Father Stephen Trochta, who was then director of the *Salesian Institute Cardinal Kašpar* in Prague, was appointed Bishop of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) on Sept. 27, 1947<sup>22</sup>. Thus it happened that, after a long period, the first Czech bishop occupied the throne in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz). Since this diocese was located in the *Sudetenland*, i. e. with a German majority, both the Germans and the Czechs had to live together, side by side, and share proportionally the offices and responsibilities, frequently alternating with each other. After the war the problem was simplified because the Germans were expelled from the *Sudetenland* and transferred to Germany as part of a post-war accommodation between the great Powers and Czechoslovakia<sup>23</sup>. In view of this fact, this change in episcopal occupancy was needed and necessary to fit into a new situation. The newly nominated Bishop Trochta was also a very suitable person since he acquired a great tolerance toward the Germans during his stay in the camps. He had mastered the German language, and thus was prepared for any possible eventuality. At the same time, he had the complete confidence of the Czechoslovak authorities because his patriotism was well-known. When he was consecrated by his former co-prisoner from Dachau, Msgr. Josef Beran, Archbishop of Prague, on November 16, 1947, he was enthusiastically received by both the Czechs and the remaining Germans when he arrived in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz), as a great leader with greater expectations.

It is interesting that as a slogan for his episcopal emblem he selected the words „Work-Sacrifice-Charity“ and all three of these were in great need and demand in this huge diocese. He spent all his energy toward saving the many spiritual values and cultural treasures in the Catholic Churches and shrines, many of which were already in decay or in danger of it. Especially the borderline part of the diocese — *the Sudetenland* — was greatly deserted and vandalized after the forced transfer of the Germans, and needed a special effort to

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<sup>19</sup> AAS 38 (1946) 315

<sup>20</sup> AAS 38 (1946) 209, 240.

<sup>21</sup> AAS 39 (1947) 112.

<sup>22</sup> AAS 39 (1947) 420.

<sup>23</sup> N e m e c, Ludvik: Solution of the Minorities problem. In: *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1918—1948*. Ed. Victor S. M a m m a t e y, pp. 416—427; cf. L u z a, R.: *The transfer of the Sudeten Germans*. New York, 1964, passim; cf. S c h e c h t m a n, Joseph B.: *Resettlement of transferred Volksdeutsche in Germany*. JCEA 7 (1947) 262—284; cf. B r ü g e l, Johann W.: *Die Sudetendeutsche Frage auf der Potsdamer Konferenz*. VfZ 10 (1962) 56—61.

be restored again. The situation was aggravated by the circumstances that everything was in a transition subject to frequent change of people, owners, newcomers, properties, business, trade, speculations and all cultural patterns. Perhaps only the Catholic Church represented a certain feeling of stability, and Bishop Trochta was determined to materialize it.

In spite of all his efforts and energy, many of his plans and projects remained unfulfilled. There were too many difficulties. Half of the German priests were transferred to Germany and a majority of the Catholic parishes was vacant. Churches were closed, some were completely ruined and vandalized. Church property was mostly taken by the so-called „national administrators“, monasteries and convents were deserted.

Bishop Trochta did not give in but was persistent in his determination. Here he exemplified his great organizational talents, his charisma with people, and his firm convictions and high ideals. In a short time he was successful in securing a proper function in all the parishes. The new religious communities of monks and sisters began to fill the deserted monasteries and convents, minor seminaries were again brought to life, and a Major Seminary in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) was open to secure the education of priestly candidates. It should be said here that Trochta, being himself a religious, was more successful in bringing some new religious into his diocese. Especially, some members of the Salesian religious society were very helpful to Bishop Trochta in some aspects of his apostolate.

In order to increase the effectiveness of his apostolate he also created an *Institute for Late Vocations* and the *Centre for the education of laywomen catechetists*. Besides this he reactivated some organizations for women, men, youth and restored *Catholic Action* in an attempt to save as many souls for the Church as he could. Furthermore, because Trochta was social-action minded, he reorganized Diocesan and parish councils of Catholic Charity, and introduced informative and practical courses for social questions and problems. It should be said that he was among the first of the Czechoslovak bishops to place great emphasis on a social justice, and was a great advocate of „distributive justice“ for everyone. Bishop Trochta was so socially minded that he was anxious and ready for all possible social reforms in the sense of papal encyclicals<sup>24</sup>, but he rejected all political implications of radical socialism and communism. The social question for him was a moral question and not a political one, and it was for this crucial point that Trochta was soon in conflict with the political authorities. „To be social does not mean to be socialistic“ was his saying as he was a friend and follower of the social thinker Prof. Vašek<sup>25</sup> of the Theological Faculty in Olomouc (Olmütz) who was a great promoter of the social doctrine of the Popes. Trochta also firmly believed in the humani-

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<sup>24</sup> Eberdt, Mary Lois / Schnepf, Gerald J.: *Industrialism and the Popes*. New York, 1952.

<sup>25</sup> J. Vašek published numerous books on Papal encyclicals and summarized their doctrine in *Social Cathedism*.

stic democratic ideals of T. G. Masaryk<sup>26</sup> in a sense of modern social and religious synthesis with the emphasis on religious practice and with the exclusion of its liberal lore.

With the arrival of 1948, the confrontation of his views with those of the Communists became inevitable, especially after the February Communist putsch<sup>27</sup>, when the Communists took over all power in the Republic. By the issue of a new *Constitution*<sup>28</sup> on May 9, 1948, the situation became polarized and the way toward total socialization was open. The pressure of the Communist State on the Catholic Church was increased, namely by the introduction of two laws, against which the Archbishop of Prague expressed his protest. The first law introduced civil marriage<sup>29</sup> as obligatory. This was a violation of the *modus vivendi* agreement between Czechoslovakia and the Holy See by which the *ecclesiastical marriage* enjoyed public recognition by the State<sup>30</sup>. The second law concerned the prohibition of the reading of episcopal letters and papal encyclicals from the *pulpit*<sup>31</sup> under the pretension of „protection of the peoples' democratic regime“. One can clearly see that by this provision the jurisdiction of bishops was restricted and in danger of being obstructed.

The Vatican called the Czechoslovak bishops for consultations on the occasion of their official *ad limina* visits. Thus, by the end of September 1948, Archbishop Josef Beran<sup>32</sup> was in Rome and at the beginning of October Bishop Maurice Pícha of Hradec Kralové (Königsgrätz), Slovak Bishop Josef Čarský of Košice (Koschitz), and Bishop of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) Stephen Trochta arrived there<sup>33</sup>. The purpose and the result of these consultations was a clarification of a stand and the reaffirmation of the position of Czechoslovak bishops

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<sup>26</sup> Masaryk, T. G.: *Moderní člověk a náboženství* [Der moderne Mensch und die Religion]. Prague, 1934; cf. Vrchovický, Josef: *T. G. Masaryk a náboženství* [Masaryk and religion]. Prague, 1937.

<sup>27</sup> Chudoba, Bohdan: *A study of Disintegration*. Thought 25/No. 26 (March, 1949); cf. Ducháček, Ivo: *The February Coup in Czechoslovakia*. World Politics 2/No. 3 (1950).

<sup>28</sup> This Constitution was promulgated as a constitutional act on June 9, 1948 in the official code issue 42 No. 150; cf. *Ústava zedne 9, května 1948*. Prague, 1948.

<sup>29</sup> This bill was introduced by the Minister Čepička in 1948 and was approved by the National Assembly on Nov. 12, 1949. The Minister of the Interior Václav Nosek announced the legal provisions of obligatory civil marriage.

<sup>30</sup> Ottaviani, A.: *Institutiones Juris Publici Ecclesiastici* II, 346: „Viget ex lege 22 Maii 1919, matrimonium civile facultationem, hinc parochi habentur ut officiales status in re matrimoniali, sicut etiam pro nonnullis aliis actibus (nativitatum funerum etc.). Eadem lege sanctum est divortium.“

<sup>31</sup> The „pulpit act“ was put into effect during the First Czechoslovak Republic (Law of Feb. 1919) but it was abused by the Communists. Using the slogan „Protect the people's democratic regime!“ the interpretation of this law was so that it forbade the reading of pastoral letters and papal encyclicals. Thus, in Czechoslovakia, the ordinary, universal jurisdiction of the Pope was tacitly denied and jurisdiction of the bishops was in danger. The „ratio status“ and the old „placetum regium“ as they were known in times past, were again put into operation.

<sup>32</sup> *L'Osservatore Romano*, Oct. 30, 1948, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, Nov. 25, 1948, 1.

in the critical defense of the Church against the attacks of the Communist regime. Pope Pius XII was an adamant defender of the rights of the Church, and he inspired the Czechoslovak bishops toward firmer opposition against the Communist State's intrusion into the fundamental rights of the Church. The author recalls how Cardinal Beran once said to him, in 1966, when the Cardinal was already in exile, that his uncompromising stand was inspired by the Pope himself who knew that any kind of compromises with such a deadly enemy as the Communists would not bring any desired result, but would become embarrassing to the Church. The only way, the Pope stressed, was a firm stand even at the cost of taking up a Cross, if the Communists should — as they did — recklessly violate the Church's rights.

In 1949 the confrontation entered a critical point. At the eleventh hour an attempt toward a reasonable negotiation with the Czechoslovak Government was made. On January 17 and 18, 1949, all the Catholic Czechoslovak archbishops and bishops convened in Prague and sent a delegation to President Klement Gottwald, lead by the Archbishop of Olomouc (Olmütz), Josef Matocha. Archbishop Beran did not participate in this delegation because the press was carrying on a vociferous campaign against him. Bishop Trochta was a strong member of this delegation. They gave a *memorandum*<sup>34</sup> to the President and on its basis negotiations between the Church and the State began.

At this point, Bishop Trochta proceeded in the role of the Church leader. The Conference of Czechoslovak bishops appointed Bishop Trochta to lead a delegation of nine members in official negotiations with the Czechoslovak Government<sup>35</sup>, which was represented by seven members of the *Central Action Committee of the National Front*. The Government requested, from the Catholic bishops, an unconditional proclamation of the promise of loyalty to the State to be made a special act on the occasion of the first anniversary of the February Communist putsch. Although there is no record of these negotiations available, it is known that the negotiations failed<sup>36</sup> in a great fiasco because of the great stubbornness of the Communists. The Catholic bishops insisted on the minimal requirements of the defense of the religious freedom of the Church and could not give in to this *minimum*. Bishop Trochta especially advocated, rather, a conciliatory line. He was more conciliatory than Archbishop Josef Beran, perhaps, because he wanted to reach some understanding with the Communist Government even at the cost of possible concessions, but not at any price. If politics means to make the impossible possible, then Trochta attempted just that. Perhaps the echo of this thought might be found in Trochta's interview by the French Jesuit, Riquet, in 1948, when he said:

„We cannot desire, that the New World War should restore our freedom which we are losing again. This would be criminal. We can, however, hope that the Christians in the West will learn and accept the social doctrine of the

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<sup>34</sup> America of Jan. 29, 1949, p. 450.

<sup>35</sup> Lidová demokracie (May 11, 1948), p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> La Documentation Catholique 26 (1949) 1048, col. 999 (abbreviated as La DC).

Popes concerning social justice, and will demonstrate to those of the East that, in a democracy, it is desirable and possible to achieve a fulfillment of the ideals of justice and brotherhood which the Communists insist is their goal<sup>37</sup>.

Here we can feel how Trochta was strongly motivated toward positive negotiations in anticipation of good will on the part of the government. To his great regret, he did not find it there. One can say that at this point Bishop Trochta was a victim of his great and natural optimism, which was not good enough for the Communists' ruthless disregard for anything of a religious nature. One may further say that Bishop Trochta was a frontrunner of all those advocates of the Marxist-Christian dialogue which, at the present, was an altogether frustrating effort leaving much to be desired on the part of the Communists.

It is no wonder that a conflict and catastrophe came sooner than was expected and that the Czechoslovak Communist Government recklessly pressed the Catholic Church to her knees. In a cruel and reckless manner the Communist regime knocked down the Church. So seriously did the Communist Regime take its fight against the Church that the program was well thought out and well prepared by the *Cominform*. On the 11 and 12 of February 1949, the international *Cominform* convened in the Grand Hotel *Pupp* in Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad) and „a religious program“<sup>38</sup> was detailed here, according to which the Communist (Bogus) *Catholic Action* was created. In its second conference, held on October 4, 1949, under the presidency of the delegate from the Kremlin in the person of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrei Vishinsky, this infamous organization was approved<sup>39</sup>. Furthermore, a document known as the *Protokol Karlovarský* (Protocol of Carlsbad)<sup>40</sup> was approved in a secret conference of the *Cominform* on Oct. 10, 1949, the total liquidation of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia was definitively decided and finalized. This plan was accompanied by wild propaganda, as one can see from the publication, *Zrada Vatikánu a biskupů* (The Treason of the Vatican and the Bishops)<sup>41</sup> where all the bishops were called traitors and were under strong attack.

Subsequently, in June 1949, the Communist police occupied the episcopal consistories and later the bishops residences<sup>42</sup>. Finally, after a dramatic rupture

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<sup>37</sup> Riquet.

<sup>38</sup> L'Osservatore Romano, July 2, 1949, p. 1: L'azione Cattolica vittima designata del Cominform; cf. Cavalli, F.: Governo Comunista e Chiesa Cattolica in Cecoslovacchia. Rome, 1950, p. 112 and passim.

<sup>39</sup> The Clergy Review (June, 1951) 5.

<sup>40</sup> The whole text of the Protocol of Karlovy Vary appeared in: Veritas, April 31, 1951, p. 23 and i: Katholik of Jan. 27, 1953, p. 3 and its English translation may be found in Nemeč, L.: Church and State in Czechoslovakia. New York, 1955, pp. 273—277.

<sup>41</sup> Zrada Vatikánu a biskupů [The Treason of the Vatican and the Bishops]. Ed. by the Central Action of the National Front. July, 1949. It is a 48 page booklet that repeats the arguments in the addresses of government spokesmen. Criticism of this booklet may be found in: L'Osservatore Romano, Oct. 29, 1950; cf. La DC 48 (1951) 1088 col. 165—68.

<sup>42</sup> Dvorník, Francis: Church and State in Central Europe. In: The Soviet Union: A

of the Corpus Christi services at the Cathedral of St. Vitus on Sunday, June 19, 1949, it silenced the Catholic bishops.

The Vatican quickly and resolutely condemned the Schismatic Communist „Catholic Action“<sup>43</sup> and the theologian, Mariano Cordovani, ironically called the Czechoslovak Regime „a democracy surpassing the knavery of every tyrannical absolutism of the past“<sup>44</sup>. Soon after, on July 1, 1949, the Vatican excommunicated the Communists, including their helpers, propagators and voters<sup>45</sup>, and on August 11, it prohibited the Catholics from contracting marriage with the Communists<sup>46</sup>.

The Czechoslovak regime retaliated: it took under „protection“ the so-called „patriotic priests“ led by the famous Rev. Josef Plojhar who was a renegade and a collaborator of the Communists, it restricted the movement of all Catholic bishops and made difficult the work of a *chargé d'affaires* of Prague's internunciature, Msgr. Gennaro Verolino, who eventually returned to Rome at the end of July, 1949<sup>47</sup>. The Ministerium of Schools sent an official notice to all episcopal offices in Bohemia, i. e. Prague, Hradec Kralové (Königgrätz), České Budějovice (Budweis) and Litoměřice (Leitmeritz)<sup>48</sup> and took over these offices with their Commissars. The protests of the bishops were disregarded and the situation became chaotic and critical.

In the face of this situation, it was Bishop Trochta who advised toward a conciliatory course and method in the conference of bishops held on August 14, 1949, in the city of Trnava (Tyrnau) in Slovakia. On his proposal the Czechoslovak bishops formulated their *minimum* demands. They expressed it officially in a short *memorandum* sent to the Czechoslovak regime stressing that 1.) the Christian view must be publicly recognized, 2.) the pope as supreme head of the Church must be recognized as an authority, 3.) before the initiation of new negotiations, all official governmental provisions limiting religious freedom must be revoked<sup>49</sup>. Simultaneously, the Vatican stressed that „the Church is a society divinely founded by Christ under the jurisdiction of the Roman Pope, the successor to St. Peter, and, as such, she is independent“<sup>50</sup>.

All this did not help. The Czechoslovak Regime did not respect this *mini-*

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Symposium, p. 208: „The Czechoslovak Communist Regime, invoked law No. 50 of May 7, 1874, to enter the Palace of the Archbishop of Prague.

<sup>43</sup> This decree is in AAS 41 (1949) 333.

<sup>44</sup> L'Osservatore Romano, June 30, 1949, 1.

<sup>45</sup> AAS 41 (1949) 334; for its English translation: The Tablet, July 23, 1949, p. 53; cf. La DC 46 (1949) 1048 col. 961—962.

<sup>46</sup> AAS 41 (1949) 427—428; cf. L'Osservatore Romano, August 16—17, 1949, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> L'Osservatore Romano, July 27, 1949, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> The text of this official notice, sent to Episcopal Consistory office in Litoměřice may be found in L. N e m e c : Church and State 319—320.

<sup>49</sup> The text of this minimum is to be found in: The Red and the Black. The Church in the Communist State. New York, 1953; cf. N e m e c , Ludvik: Episcopal and Vatican Reaction to the persecution of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. Washington, 1953, passim.

<sup>50</sup> AAS 42 (1950) 601.

mum, and in spite of this it enslaved the Church under the complete influence and power of the State.

On October 14, 1949, the Czechoslovak Regime created the *Government Bureau for Church Affairs*<sup>51</sup> and introduced new laws to which the Church was subjected under the State's jurisdiction. In protest to the bishops, the Government published a booklet: *Spiknutí proti Republice* (Conspiracy against the Republic)<sup>52</sup>, in which the bishops were called traitors. And to force them into a more complete submission, the Government issued, in 1950, a new *Penal Code of 1950*<sup>53</sup> assigning high penalties for even minor violations of priestly resistance, and in addition to this, the Government also issued an *Administrative Penal Code*<sup>54</sup> enforcing all these penalties.

As a result of these provisions, the Catholic bishops were gradually liquidated. First their consistories were taken over by the commissars, and then the bishops themselves were put under police surveillance and detained in their residences. Thus, on September 22, 1951, Bishop Trochta was also put under police control in his residence, and by this his movements and activities were curtailed and limited.

In this time there were court trials in Prague and Bratislava (Preßburg) in which some Slovak and Czech bishops and prelates were indicted. Other bishops were completely isolated. They did not have, for example, an opportunity to make their confession. When, nevertheless, permission was once given to Bishop Trochta to go to confession, he was ordered to speak aloud in the presence of two agent of the State police, who never left him for a moment. Bishop Trochta outsmarted them because he confessed aloud but he spoke in Latin<sup>55</sup> so that the policemen could not understand.

On February 15, 1951, the Government installed vicar generals and the chapters vicars of all the dioceses held their conference at the National House in Prague under the presidency of the Minister, Zdeněk Fierlinger, and representatives of the *Government Bureau for Church Affairs* in Prague and Bratislava (Preßburg). This was the first time that the conference of bishops was substituted with the conference of „patriotic priests“. This was a direct intrusion and intervention of the State into the internal affairs of the Church. This was an ecclesiastical *coup d'état*<sup>56</sup>, where the „new hierarchy of patriotic priests“ participated in the funeral of a real hierarchy of bishops.

The Archbishop of Prague was expelled from his archdiocese on March 10,

<sup>51</sup> Gsovski, Vlad.: Digest-Index of Eastern European. Washington, 1950 contains English translation of the principal laws; cf. Čavali 159—168.

<sup>52</sup> Spiknutí proti republice [The Conspiracy against the Republic]. Ministerium of Interior in Prague 1949.

<sup>53</sup> L'Osservatore Romano, July 29, 1950: Il nuovo codice penale cecoslovacco, see English translation in: The Clergy Review 18 (Feb. 1951).

<sup>54</sup> English translation in: Digest-Index of Eastern European Law. Washington, 1951, pp. 24—25.

<sup>55</sup> The Tablet, Jan. 27, 1951, p. 76.

<sup>56</sup> Církevní puč [Ecclesiastical coup d'état]. Report on Czechoslovakia. New York, Free Europe 2/No. 3 (March, 1951) 70—76.

1951, and the Vatican published a proclamation stating that the Church had never given up her rights and, in view of this, all these governmental actions were cross violations of the rights of the Church and that all who take part in such actions are excommunicated<sup>57</sup>.

In the face of this declaration of the Holy See, strange indeed must have appeared the announcement of March 12, 1951, to the effect that the highest representatives of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, Msgr. Mořic Pícha, Bishop of Hradec Králové (Königgrätz); Msgr. Josef Čarský, Bishop and apostolic administrator of Košice (Koschitz); Msgr. Stephen Trochta, Bishop of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz); Msgr. Ambroze Lazík, Bishop and apostolic administrator of Trnava (Tyrnau); Msgr. Francis Onderek, Apostolic Administrator in Český Těšín (Teschen), and Rev. Antonín Stehlík, the new „capitular vicar“ in Prague had made an oath of allegiance to the people's democratic Republic. The Slovak bishop, Most Rev. Josef Čarský, in the name of the dignitaries just mentioned is reported to have declared among other things:

„We know our responsibility which we have as ecclesiastical dignitaries, before God and the nation. Allow us to declare in a solemn way that all of us recognize the validity of state laws . . . . We do not recognize ecclesiastical penalties and we will not punish our clergymen and the faithful, if these penalties are imposed for political reasons. We will endeavor to establish forever a good relationship between Church and state. We will support order, because we all see that this endeavor serves the general welfare and that it is in full harmony with the moral principles of our Holy Church. We sincerely welcome every endeavor of our people to preserve peace in the world<sup>58</sup>.“

The text itself of this declaration seems to suggest, as the Vatican later indicated, that it was not made freely, because evidently a Catholic bishop could not declare, when speaking freely, that „ecclesiastical penalties will not be recognized“ and the „efforts of the Czechoslovak people and of our people's democratic order are in full harmony with the moral principles of our Holy Church.“ The fact that this declaration seems to have been gained by force and terror should be accentuated all the more, due to the fact that Bishop Čarský and the aforesaid bishops were the most courageous in their previous stand. This declaration contradicts all the provisions of ecclesiastical law as well as the dogmatic principles of the Catholic Church, which just and upright bishops worked strenuously to teach and to enforce. It parallels the similar alleged admissions of Cardinal Mindszenty in the Budapest trial.

To understand this surprising stand of the aforesaid bishops, it is advisable to add an explanation. Communists, as it is clear from their practice, always try to cover up their most undemocratic methods, and by propaganda methods seek to create a seemingly lawful basis for their supposedly democratic liberty. To this aim they use all possible means such as trials, the whole structure of which has a tendency to justify their revolutionary and violent put-

<sup>57</sup> AAS 43 (1951) 173—174; English translation in: *The Tablet* (March 29, 1951) 236.

<sup>58</sup> Report on Czechoslovakia. *New York, Free Europe* 2/No. 3 (March, 1951) 70—71.

shes, purges, and actions. Especially selfaccusations on the part of those who are on trial always favoring the Communists and disfavoring themselves, is a proof that the trials are intended only as a guise for Communistic justice and democracy. This phenomenon itself is psychologically unnatural and seems to indicate an unfree procedure in Communistic trials. This policy is systematically practiced not only in politics but above all in ecclesiastical matters affecting the international form. It is sad to hear of forced self-accusations and statements of some bishops or priests by which Communists pretend to display justice, although nobody believes them.

Nevertheless, it is also possible that the bishops attempted to prevent, by their proclamation, the wholesale take-over by the State. But, by this time, it was too late for anything because the fate of the Church was decided a long time before, regardless of what the bishops said or did.

The pressure by the State still increased, as is evidenced by the following event: A very special case occurred in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz). On July 12, Msgr. Stephen Trochta, Bishop of the Litoměřice diocese, carried out the solemn installation of Msgr. Edward Oliva, vicar-general of the diocese, as Provost Capitular in St. Stephen's Cathedral of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz), of which the installed was the first canon. Msgr. Oliva, a „pariotic priest“, was earlier appointed by the state as vicar-general while Bishop Trochta was under arrest. Later the same bishop promoted him to become his own „commissar“<sup>59</sup>. Furthermore, Bishop Trochta had to elevate this man against his will and install into office a man whom he did not want but whom the government imposed upon him.

Msgr. Oliva became „ordinarius,“ appointed by the government, while his Bishop Trochta was prohibited to exercise his office. In the light of these realities it is necessary to understand why Bishop Trochta attempted to moderate the conflict between the government and the Church, and why he made certain compromises in this respect. However, all this did not help him. He, as all other Czech and Slovak bishops, was eventually put before the court and indicted in 1954, with a sentence of 25 years imprisonment because of the supposed anti-government activities committed „according to orders from the Vatican“<sup>60</sup>. A long time prior to the year 1951, in house arrest and in jail since 1953 where he spent over 8 long years, having been frequently transferred from one jail to another. His auxiliary bishop, Ladislav Hlad, who was secretly nominated<sup>61</sup> and consecrated as bishop in 1950, was also arrested. He was indicted for three years<sup>62</sup> imprisonment and then later, when it became known that he was secretly consecrated, he was indicted in 1959 for nine years

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<sup>59</sup> Research and Information Center, N. C. F. E. (Czechoslovak Center) 2/No. 4 (July 25, 1951). A bishop promotes his own commissar.

<sup>60</sup> *Nový Život* 25 (April, 1973) 79.

<sup>61</sup> Czechoslovak Background Report (Radio Free Europe) of Jan. 4, 1964, p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> *Tajný biskup před sondem* [Secret Bishop faces a Trial]. *Svobodné Slovo* of March 13, 1960.

because he „secretly“ exercised the function of a bishop<sup>63</sup>. Bishop Trochta suffered greatly because he „secretly“ consecrated him.

Trochta's sufferings were great. In the first half of January 1953, the State police transferred him for observation to a horrible jail in *Ruzýň* near Prague, where he was investigated for two years<sup>64</sup>. Originally the court proposed his verdict for death, but later this verdict was changed to 25 years imprisonment because of his poor and humble „proletariat“ origin and of his stand in the years of the war and occupation, and because of the circumstance that he was educated in a Catholic family and, subsequently, was not fully aware of his criminal activity. His trial was strictly secret and the verdict was never given to him in writing. He was accused of treason and espionage. After this trial he was transferred to Prague and, subsequently, to a district jail in the city of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz), where he was investigated again although he had already been sentenced. Here he was kept until the end of February 1955. Then he was transferred to Leopoldov (Leopoldstadt) in Slovakia and again back to Ruzýň where he was sent, it was said, to be made more submissive.

After this he was sent to the infamous jail in Pankrác in Prague where he spent 6 months in a special isolated section. From here he was sent to a jail in Kartouzy (Karthaus) near the city of Jičín (Jitschin), and then again to Leopoldov (Leopoldstadt) in Slovakia. At the end of Spring 1960 he was transferred to Ruzýň again and here the administration of this jailhouse informed him: „The President of the Republic, Antonín Novotný, granted you amnesty, enrol Yourself in some kind of work to become a useful member of society<sup>65</sup>.“

Trochta attempted to follow this advice of „enrolling himself in some kind of work.“ But it was not easy for him to find a job because in many places he was not wanted as he was a prisoner while elsewhere he was rejected because he was a bishop. Eventually he asked to be a helper to a builder who needed people and did not require any kind of reference. So he was hired. He did a variety of jobs connected with building, and he was especially busy in making and carrying bricks. Later he was employed as a helper in the city Dept. of Maintenance and became a skillful repairman of keys, elevators, closets and knew the plumbing trade.

Bishop Trochta got totally acquainted with the atmosphere of the workers and got to know their views. In general, he understood the workers very well and they liked him very much. Trochta felt comfortable in the atmosphere of the workers. This came to him naturally first because he came from a poor family, and secondly because he was trained, as a Salesian, to deal with the working people. This is another testimony for his social feeling and understanding.

<sup>63</sup> Katolické Noviny. Prague, October 13, 1963. ČTK Press release (Prague): Decision of the President of the Republic.

<sup>64</sup> Kaš tá n e k, Jan: Srdce plné odvahy i pokory. [Heart full of will and humility]. Life events and struggles of Štěpán Trochta, bishop of Litoměřice. Lidová Demokracie No. 103 of April 13, 1968.

<sup>65</sup> I b i d e m.

In 1962 he was invited by Pope John XXIII to the Vatican Council<sup>66</sup>. The *Government Bureau for Church Affairs* did not grant him permission to travel to Rome. On one occasion Jaroslav Hruža, the secretary for Church Affairs, proposed that Trochta should ask for retirement as soon as possible. Although he was not yet old enough, the fact that he had once suffered a heart attack helped him somehow in this situation. By special decree his monthly income in the amount of 1040 Czechoslovak crowns was fixed. Bishop Trochta was content with this although it was barely enough for the necessities of life.

At this time, when the Second Vatican Council was held, Trochta thought that the time was opportune, that somehow the relationship of the State with the Vatican would be corrected. In this sense he wrote a letter to the President of the Republic, Antonín Novotný, who was his fellow prisoner in the concentration camp in Mauthausen, and proposed to him that the State-Church relationship should be better. But he never received an answer, not even an acknowledgement of his letter. The President, as Bishop Trochta learned later, sent his letter to Mr. Hruža, the secretary of the Government Bureau for Church Affairs in Prague for his recommendation. He, however, put the letter in his box and never answered it. This was a rather strange manner of acting and it recalls the past when the slave was at the mercy of his lord.

After his amnesty, granted by the President, Bishop Trochta received permission to live in the house of the Charity located in the village of *Radvanov* near the city of Tabor, where he stayed until he again received the government's permission to function as a bishop.

Events were slowly maturing under the influence of the sincerity and openness of Pope John XXIII, and later some changes began to be felt as they were needed under Pope Paul VI who broke the ice and initiated negotiations with the Czechoslovak Republic. In 1964 the papal diplomat Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, visited Prague several times but always in vain. Suddenly, in January 1965, the Archbishop of Prague, Josef Beran, received a letter from Pope Paul VI informing him that he would be named a cardinal in the next consistory. The Czechoslovak Government was surprised by this unexpected papal action because it was the Vatican's official confirmation that it was ready to defend the rights of the Church, for whose defense Archbishop Beran became an obvious symbol. Since Archbishop Beran was *persona non grata* for the government in Prague, Beran's departure was speeded up and his return obstructed<sup>67</sup> and that against the will of Archbishop Beran but with the approval of the Vatican. Papal diplomat Casaroli was supposed to have informed Archbishop Beran about this when they were in the airplane for Rome.

With the departure of Archbishop Beran, the tense atmosphere in Prague became relaxed. The majority of Czech and Slovak bishops were placed in hou-

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<sup>66</sup> Interview mit Bischof Trochta. *Die Furche* of June 8, 1968.

<sup>67</sup> N e m e c, Ludvik: *The Communist Ecclesiology during the Church-State Relationship in Czechoslovak, 1945—1967*. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 112/No. 4 (August, 1968) 245—276.

ses of Catholic Charities and some of them received Government permission, i. e. official consent (*souhlas*) to exercise their episcopal offices. In June 1966, when in Yugoslavia a *modus vivendi* was made with the Vatican<sup>68</sup>, the Czechoslovak Government once again initiated new negotiations which, however, again failed with a great fiasco in June 1967, only because Prague insisted on the demand that all future bishops must be elected only from the ranks of „patriotic priests“<sup>69</sup>. Evidently Prague was persistent about imposing its will upon the Vatican, but it did not succeed.

The ecumenical atmosphere<sup>70</sup> of the Vatican Council II had an impact also on the Marxist-Christian dialogue which, in fact, was held in Marienbad (Marianské Lázně)<sup>71</sup>. This obviously indicated that the Communists were ready to listen to what the Christians had to say, especially in regard to „Christian humanism“<sup>72</sup> which, in Prague, some philosophers like Milan Machovec<sup>73</sup> and others learned to take seriously, so that at the end some Communists began to dream about communism with a „human face“<sup>74</sup>.

This all had great influence on the relaxation of the chains on the Catholic Church, and the bishops began to breath more freely. Bishop Trochta was first among those who took part in a transformation of the atmosphere. In 1968 the so-called „Prague Spring“ during the Dubček era<sup>75</sup> also opened a

<sup>68</sup> Pr pič, George J.: *New Era in Yugoslavia*. *America* 116/No. 4 (April 8, 1967) 528—530.

<sup>69</sup> The *New York Times* (October 18, 1967) has commentary in it.

<sup>70</sup> Especially due to Pope Paul VI's: *Decree on Ecumenism* of Nov. 21, 1964, see English translation in Abbott, Walter M. (ed.): *The Documents of Vatican II* (1966) 341—366; cf. Pope Paul's *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions*, of October 28, 1965, see English translation in *ibidem* 660—668; cf. Pope Paul's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, of Dec. 7, 1965, see English translation in *ibidem* 199—308.

<sup>71</sup> Juxtaposition at Marienbad. *Herder Correspondence* 4/No. 9 (Sept. 1967) 267—271. This dialogue was sponsored by the Paulus-Gesellschaft, directed by Father Erich Keller of Germany and by the Sociological Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague, directed by Dr. Erika Kadlecová, with the approval of the Government and ecclesiastical authorities.

<sup>72</sup> R a h n e r, Karl: *Christian Humanism*. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 4/No. 3 (1967) 369—384.

<sup>73</sup> *Marxismus und Dialektische Theologie* (Zürich, 1965) is translation of Czech original (Prague, 1961).

<sup>74</sup> This term „communism with a human face“ was promoted by Czech intellectuals; cf. Dubček, Alexander: *Il nuovo corso in cecoslovacchia*. Rome, 1968; *idem*: *K otázkám obrozovacieho procesu v KSC* [On the question concerning the Regeneration Process in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia]. Bratislava, 1968; cf. E l l o, Paul (ed.): *Czechoslovakia's Blueprint for Freedom: Dubček's Statement — The official and original documents leading to the conflict of August, 1968*. Washington, 1968.

<sup>75</sup> G o l a n, Galia: *Reform Rule in Czechoslovakia. The Dubcek Era 1968—1969*. Cambridge, 1973, *passim*; cf. K u s i n, Vladimir: *The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring*. Cambridge, 1971; cf. E l l o, Paul: *Czechoslovakia's Blueprint for Freedom*. Washington, 1968; cf. T r i g r i d, Pavel: *Le printemps de Prague*. Paris, 1968; cf. Z e m a n, Z. A. B.: *Prague Spring*. London, 1969; cf. S v i t á k, Ivan: *The Czechoslovak Experiment: 1968—1969*. New York, 1971.

little window into the Catholic Church where the fresh air of religious freedom was felt. The necessity and need for this stressed Archbishop Beran with great emphasis in the Vatican Council<sup>76</sup>.

Likewise Bishop Trochta, in an interview held in April 1968, stressed with great emphasis that religious freedom is an absolute necessity and a *sine qua non* condition and a requirement for other reforms:

„A religious freedom does not mean only to have an opportunity to exercise a religious rite or to take part in it. This concept is, I believe, much wider: it is a free choice and the possibility to profess a certain World view in its full meaning, which in the case of the faithful, is radically rooted in the Absolute. An object of the care of the Church is a complete man and it concerns the needs of souls as well as those on earth. The Program of the Church is a social one, such as the social crises which usually originate in moral crises. To be more specific, I believe that the Church can also be in the realm of the material well-being of the State, a good partner and helper, and she is fully conscious of it. A good priest must be simultaneously a good citizen, although his World view may be different than that of other citizens. It is, of course, necessary that an opportunity be given to such intercourse of the State and Church, more so since it does not concern only the Catholic Church — and also an acceptable legal status and such adequate conditions of life so that the faithful would feel that they are valid and fruitful members of a great national family and, as such, they could feel as they would if they were in their homes<sup>77</sup>.“

Bishop Trochta was always a great realist. He was always convinced that any religious freedom must be reconciled with civil responsibilities and the obligations of a Christian toward his State. He firmly believed in a cooperation of the State and Church in a sense of a mutual understanding and mutual help even at the cost of a benevolent government control, as he was accustomed to from the time of the first Czechoslovak Republic, in a spirit of a *modus vivendi* of 1928<sup>78</sup>.

At the end of March 1968, in the spirit of the times, the clergy of the Diocese of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz), under that chairmanship of Msgr. Edward Oliva, then so-called ordinarius and chapter vicar, unanimously decided in their diocesan assembly to ask Bishop Trochta to resume his reign over his diocese. This request was spontaneous and dynamic on the part of the clergy. Bishop

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<sup>76</sup> Cardinal Beran on Religious Freedom. NCWC Documentary Service. Washington, Sept. 25, 1965, entire speech to be found here; cf. Anderson, Floyd (ed.): Council Daybook. Vatican II. Session 4, Sept. 4, 1965 to Dec. 8, 1965. Washington, NCWC, 1966, pp. 35—36.

<sup>77</sup> Kaštánek: Srdce.

<sup>78</sup> Beneš, Eduard: Exposé Ministra Dra Beneše o modu vivendi mezi Československem a Vatikánem [Exposée des Ministers Dr. Beneš zwischen der Tschechoslowakei und dem Vatikan über den modus vivendi]. Zahraniční Politika 7 (Feb. 1928); cf. Giannini, Amedeo: Il modus vivendi, fra la S. Sede e la Cecoslovacchia. Roma, 1928; cf. AAS 20 (1928) 65—66.

Trochta reacted to this urgent request of the priests with a letter which was to be read in all the Churches of the diocese. It reads in part as follows:

„Under today's circumstances it is clear to my conscience that it is my obligation and responsibility to answer positively your urgent call. All depends on the circumstances over which I have no influence. It will be necessary to make some provisions of a legal and administrative nature. The general normalization of ecclesiastical life in the country and the eventual modification of the relationship of the Church and the State which is a matter of the competency of the State and of the Holy See. As long as this concerns our own relations it will be my determination to simplify them and not to complicate them. In society there appears now a sincere will toward the understanding of the progressive and liberal elements of the nation toward a restoration of confidence and a concern for the public wellbeing by way of democracy and humanism. Neither I nor you are allowed to deny cooperation on behalf of the public according to one's abilities and possibilities.

I know that you have read yesterday, in our Churches, two proclamations of the Most Reverend apostolic administrator of the archdiocese of Prague, Msgr. Dr. Francis Tomášek, to the clergy and faithful. I gave my consent to this, and I fully co-identify myself with this message. Accept it literarily as though it were signed by me. Should the Church of Christ effectively contribute toward the restoration of a mutual confidence to sacrifices and the understanding of the public needs, it is necessary that all barriers and resentments must cease, especially among the clergy.

Be generous in forgiveness and have a wide Christian heart open to understanding of the whole man with his spiritual and material needs. Be instrumental so that our faithful become an example in a diligent preparation of a better tomorrow, help toward the friendship of nations and the security of peace in justice, liberty and charity<sup>79</sup>.“

This sounds like a letter of a truly spiritual father who forgets all past injustices, which he endured in a greater number than anyone else, and who looks forward to his apostolate.

He got fully engaged in work. On July 9, he took a part as a member of a delegation led by the apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Prague, Francis Tomášek, in the *Society for human rights*, to the President of the Republic, Ludvík Svoboda.

Soon after the *Presidium of the Supreme Court* in Prague, under the chairmanship of Dr. O. Boček, made the verdict of Bishop Trochta null and void on July 20, 1968. Trochta was indicted of espionage in 1945 and sentenced to jail for 25 years. On the basis of a complaint of a chairman of the Supreme Court for violations of the law, this verdict was now annulled in full, and the case of Bishop Trochta was forwarded to the Provincial Procurator in the city

<sup>79</sup> Spolupracovat podle našich sil a možností. Odpověď biskupa Dr. S. Trochty na výrvu duchovenstva litoměřické diocese [Zusammenarbeit nach unseren Kräften und Möglichkeiten]. Lidová Demokracie, April 3, 1968.

of Ústí nad Labem (Aussig) for revision and a new decision<sup>80</sup>. With this procedure Bishop Trochta was completely cleared of all charges and free to act as a full fledged citizen.

On August 6, 1968, he professed his allegiance of loyalty to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and was then installed into the bishop's office. In this ceremony Trochta expressed the hope that the Church and the State would cooperate in a spirit of mutual confidence for the benefit of the public, and that there must be some common basis on which both the Church and the State could mutually work for the benefit of the nation. This was both desirable and necessary.

Perhaps as interesting characteristics of the times, there should be singled out the circumstance, that, in spite of the fact that a profession of loyalty to the Republic was required from all Catholic priests, the Dubček government clearly and publicly proclaimed that it did not have any intention of giving back to the Church the confiscated Church properties, nationalized by the government 20 years prior. This reveals how the Communist State considered the role of the Church i. e. to keep her in submission under all circumstances. Furthermore, the Communist State failed to see „distributive justice“ be observed, especially in regard to the State's obligation toward a compensation for the confiscated Church properties. The Communist State did not recognize such an obligation.

The Vatican received the news about the installation of Bishop Trochta into his office with great satisfaction and with the assurance that this was a good sign for future good relations between the Czechoslovak Government and the Holy See<sup>81</sup>.

Perhaps, as a good initiation for better State-Church relations was the event, that six Czechoslovak bishops, namely: Skoupý of Brno (Brünn), Hlouch of Budějovice, Trochta of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz), Lazík of Trnava (Tyrnau), Pobožný of Rozňawa (Rosenau), and Tomášek of Prague were received, on August 19, 1968, by the President of the Republic, Ludvík Svoboda, and by the Minister of Culture, Dr. Miroslav Galuška<sup>82</sup>, for the purpose of discussing urgent ecclesiastical problems, the occupation of vacant episcopal thrones, the opening of seminaries, a license for religious education, permission for Religious Societies, and the granting of Government consent for 1500 priests, still detained in prisons or employed in other section of the working process. Bishop Trochta had a lion's part in these conferences and was the architect of the whole program.

After taking over his episcopal throne, Bishop Trochta convoked a Diocesan Synod of all the priests on Sept. 18, 1968, in the Cathedral of St. Stephen

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<sup>80</sup> Rozsudek nad Dr. Trochtou zrušen [Verdict upon Dr. Trochta annulled]. *Lidová Demokracie*, July 20, 1968, p. 4.

<sup>81</sup> *L'Osservatore Romano* of August 7, 1968.

<sup>82</sup> Szulc, *Tas*: Six bishops received by Czechoslovak President. *The New York Times* of August 20, 1968.

in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz), in order that he himself become acquainted with the present situation of the Church and his diocese, and to inquire of some certain urgent problems related to the priests. This was very necessary and urgent, and beneficial as well, in view of the fact that Trochta had been in prison and out of his diocese for over 20 years, and thus was separated from reality for too long a time. In addition to this Bishop Trochta used this occasion for his personal acquaintance with many priests, some of whom he saw for the first time.

Various State or public offices or organizations were too busy to make use of the authority of Bishop Trochta. Thus on Sept. 23, 1968, he became a member of the *Central Rehabilitation Commission* which was created for the purpose of registration for the investigation or explanation of all possible controversial cases coming for rehabilitation. Trochta said on this occasion that the Commission was a guarantee for the installation of order and the introduction of justice, and that he personally would do everything possible so that the people would have their confidence in the State restored. „I wish that all the faithful would stand behind the Dubček government and not behind the wall<sup>83</sup>.“ This is clear evidence and an indication that Bishop Trochta was a great promoter of all freedoms and all liberal ideas which came into the open during the „Prague Spring“ of 1968.

At the end of November, 1968, Bishop Trochta arrived *ad limina* in Rome, where he had been 20 years earlier. On November 23 he had an audience with Pope Paul VI who received him truly like a Father. Trochta presented a letter from the students of theology of the major Seminary in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz)<sup>84</sup>, which was very pleasing to him. Bishop Trochta took part in official business negotiations in various congregation and then, for a whole month, he visited his friends, especially his Salesian brothers in Turin. He returned home on December 22, 1968, on the eve of Christmas. Trochta enriched informationwise by this trip to Rome because he learned directly from the source how the religious situation in the world was, and mainly what were all the real relationships with Rome so that he could better evaluate the domestic scene of the Church.

#### *Bishop Trochta as an Ecumenist*

The Pope began to use the faithful and generous services of Trochta. At the beginning of the year 1969, on January 4, the Pope appointed him a member of the *Central Secretariat for Unbelievers*<sup>85</sup>. Trochta liked this kind of new apostolate because he was very ecumenical by nature and spirit.

Trochta endeavored to take part in national affairs whenever an opportunity

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<sup>83</sup> RFE Release, Berlin, Sept. 23, 1968: Bishop of Leitmeritz member of Rehabilitation Commission.

<sup>84</sup> Lidová Demokracie, 22 of December, 1968, p. 3. Here is a description of a whole trip of Trochta in Rome and Italy.

<sup>85</sup> RFE Release of Jan. 4, 1969: Pope names Czech to Vatican Body.

presented itself. Thus in February 1969, he again arrived in Rome with a great number of Czech pilgrims to participate in the eleven hundredth anniversary of the death of St. Cyril who died here in 869, and was buried at St. Clement's in Rome<sup>86</sup>. He was requested for an interview which he refused, but consented to answer several questions concerning the religious in Czechoslovakia, which he described in the following way:

„On both sides there are indications of good will, and, if unexpected obstacles do not appear, a good harmony can develop. There will be a need for cautious negotiations for some time. I know that the situation is not the best, and that expectations for the regular development of a priestly life in our diocese have almost vanished.

Nevertheless, we cannot give in to despair and frustration and thus become witness to a gradual deterioration of the Church, because we are responsible for this development before God. Although I see the situation realistically, I am an optimist by nature for a reason, and that is that I know that our Christians are ready to bring some sacrifices to the altar of the Church<sup>87</sup>.“

How desperate the situation really was in his diocese can be seen from his pastoral letter, which Trochta published on Easter, 1969, as a „call for sacrifice“:

„During my new short stay in the diocese, I had an opportunity of inquiring as to how many churches became victims of the demolition and destruction. I also had an opportunity to inquire as to how many Churches were officially closed to avoid accidents. Greater is the number of those, however, which are in a state of danger and of those which were gravely damaged and in ruins. We cannot pass by this situation with apathy.

Today is not this sad situation of our numerous Churches a great accusation of our faith, because we did not, in previous years, have the necessary possibilities for their rescue. However, it would become our accusation and shame before God and men, if we would continue to stand by ineffectively while so many of God's houses go to ruin. It would become our indictment and shame before God and men if we would continue to let so many of God's houses, such precious memorials of a Cyrillomethodian faith and spiritual culture and of the sacrifices of our predecessors, to become victims of ruin. We have to end the shameful situation of our Churches. Each delay and postponement increases the great losses of a religious, cultural, artistic and material kind. We cannot allow that because of our guilt and apathy, our parishes and cities should become a conglomerate of dilapidated houses with the spiritual dominance of the Church so refreshing a sight with its architectural beauty. We are people and we need more than just to work, live and eat. This is taken for granted. We also need to live joyfully in a comfortable atmosphere. But first

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<sup>86</sup> RFE Release of Feb. 14, 1969; cf. Der Vatikan verhandelt mit Prag. Süddeutsche Zeitung No 40 of Feb. 15, 1969.

<sup>87</sup> Occhetto, Valerio: Trochta optimistic on Czechoslovak Church. Avvenire, Milan, Feb. 19, 1969.

of all we need to hear God's Word in the dignified atmosphere of a Christian Church, because man does not live on bread alone, as Jesus Christ tells us through St. Matthew.

Therefore, I appeal to your conscience, dear faithful, in order that you do everything possible to save our Churches, even if this appears as an impossible task. Indeed, this does not only concern religious faith but it is important to save artistic treasures of extraordinary value for the State and for the public.

Our good name is at stake and reveals our cultural standard. It concerns the successful development of tourism. A dilapidated Church terrifies and dehumanizes instead of attracting and educating. Professional maintenance of our Churches also has considerable educational meaning for a socialism with a human face.

This does not concern only Christians and Catholics. Our cultural authorities fully appreciate it. The State and public institutions generously are helpful in healing the wounds of previous years, and are sending collections for the daily maintenance and care of the buildings of first class value which are under the protection of a bureau for conservation. This was done at great expense. We recognize and acknowledge their good will, and we are sincerely thankful for their concern. However, during the last 30 years of war and slavery, so many damages accumulated that these exceed the amount of our national treasury, and it makes it difficult to repair all the Churches. We, therefore, offer our cooperation and call on all our people of good will, as well as those of the distant corners of our fatherland, to help us in the interest of the good reputation of the whole nation. We are grateful for the very smallest help from the bottom of our hearts. For this reason, I announce that, from this day, after consultation and with the approval of the competent authorities of a public democratic administration, there will be a voluntary monetary collection for the preservation, renewal, restoration and maintenance of the Catholic Churches in the diocese of Litoměřice. Be generous and give as you can. I rely upon you and have confidence in your magnanimity. You know well that the Church of Christ in our country is poor again. The Church does not own forests, estates or foundations from which she could have the means for the repairs. I am not sorry that the Church is poor, but the Church relies in great confidence on God's help and your cooperation. Do not let yourselves be put to shame, and also show that the North of Bohemia takes seriously its responsibility to participate in the renewal and betterment of our new home<sup>88</sup>.

Bishop Trochta intervened on all sides and protected everything which his influence penetrated. He repaired the Churches, preserved and protected the parishes, and attempted to fill a majority of the priestly posts in spite of a great lack of priests. This, perhaps, was the most difficult problem.

Trochta did not forget the Czech minority in Austria. Franz Cardinal Koe-

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<sup>88</sup> Výzva k obětavosti [Invitation to the Sacrifice]. Lidová Demokracie No. 83 (April 9, 1969) here is to be found the entire text of this pastoral letter. English translation is by author.

nig of Vienna invited Trochta to Vienna for the occasion of the eleven hundredth anniversary of the death of St. Cyril, held on July 7, 1969, and organized by the Czech Catholics in Vienna. Bishop Trochta had a pontifical Mass in the Czech Church in the Third district of Vienna. Sunday, July 3, 1969, was when he was celebrant at the Solemn Pontifical Mass in the Cathedral of St. Stephen accompanied by the choir of the city of Gottwaldov in Moravia. The next day Trochta led a huge pilgrimage to the Marian Shrine *Mariazell*, where he again celebrated Mass for the Czech pilgrims. Trochta's trip to Austria had great support from the Czechoslovak Government because this event was of a national character, and the trip served to support the Czech minority in Austria<sup>89</sup>.

In 1970 the Pope announced that a *World Synod of bishops* was to be held in Rome for the purpose of solving urgent pastoral problems. The Pope appointed a preparatory Commission of bishops, called the *World Council of the Secretariat for a Synod*, and Bishop Trochta was named its counsellor and member<sup>90</sup> on March 23, 1970. On May 15 he was invited to Conferences of the *Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops*, and on this occasion he was received in private audience by Pope Paul VI.

The Synod of Bishops was convoked for the month of October, 1970, and the question on the *priesthood* was a principal subject matter of the debates. Bishop Trochta presented an official document expressing the views of the Czechoslovak bishops on the matter, and then he proposed his own commentary concerning priestly celibacy. Among other things he said:

„The practice of celibacy in the priesthood should be actualized with great responsibility. It is proper that a priest should cultivate spiritual fatherhood which, however, is impossible without the faith and love for the souls for whom the priest is responsible.

History has taught us about the numerous benefits derived from celibacy, so that we can evaluate its importance. We recognize it as a positive and most needed element in the priesthood indeed. The good shepherd gives his life for his sheep with his whole heart.

Representing the Czechoslovak episcopate, I would like to stress that it is our obligation and responsibility to inspire priests toward the celibate life, and we should do it with fatherly care<sup>91</sup>.“

Trochta's discourse about the need for celibacy discloses his mentality. He always was an advocate of strict discipline as an educator of youth, and he was convinced that the sacrifices of a celibate priest constitute his co-identification with Christ, and make the priesthood more effective. Trochta was very progressive and modern in the ways of the apostolate, but somehow traditional whenever discipline was at stake, especially that of a priest, and celibacy was

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<sup>89</sup> RFE Release of July 2, 1969: Bishop Trochta to visit Vienna.

<sup>90</sup> *Katolícké Noviny* No. 38 (of Sept. 21, 1969): Biskup Trochta členem Synody [Bishop Trochta member of the Synod].

<sup>91</sup> RFE Release „World Synod“ of October 12, 1970.

the key to it. He insisted on the exemplary role of the priest, but recommended a relaxed humanistic approach for the laymen. In this sense he was a true Salesian i. e. strict to himself and kind and generous to others.

Upon his return from Rome, Trochta met with great difficulties in the spiritual administration of the diocese, and also in nation affairs. It must be noted that the „Spring freedom“ of 1968 was overshadowed by the events of 1969, especially by the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Russian Army on August 21, 1969<sup>92</sup> and the subsequent internal political endeavors toward a normalization of the tense situation.

Once more, as a general rule, those who suffered first were the Catholic priests. The movement for rehabilitation ceased to exist, various opportunities of free manifestations were limited and restricted, and the control of the Church sharpened, because the leader of the *Government Bureau for Church Affairs* in Prague, Dr. Erika Kadlecová, was discharged from her office and replaced by the infamous Karel Hruža, who, faithful to his name „terror“, kept everyone in fear. The position of Trochta again became restricted because Dr. Kadlecová had more understanding for religions in general than Mr. Hruža. Notwithstanding, Bishop Trochta learned how to go along with him since he knew how to take the situation realistically and he adjusted his actions accordingly.

The negotiations with the Vatican did not succeed, and the Cultural Committee of the Czechoslovak Federal National Assembly was, in January 1971, too busy with some urgent Church problems. The unwillingness of the Czechoslovak Government to accept some candidates proposed by the Vatican for the vacant episcopal thrones, was affected because in December, 1970, negotiations between the Holy See and the Czechoslovak Government were suspended and this eventually affected the planned visit of the representative of the Vatican to Czechoslovakia which was postponed.

The Committee of the National Assembly was also preoccupied with the problem of a recently established and government inspired priestly organization called „Pacem in terris“<sup>93</sup>. The first constituting meeting designed on the 19th of January 1971 was postponed to the future. Only a few priests arrived and it was felt that here was no interest and as a result it was postponed. The reason behind this was the circumstance that the leaders of this new organization were again those priests who had been previously engaged in a Czechoslovak patriotic priests movement which ceased to exist in the spring of 1968.

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<sup>92</sup> Remington, Robin (ed.): *Winter in Prague*. Cambridge/Mass. 1969; cf. Zartman, William: *Czechoslovakia. Intervention and Impact*. New York, 1969; Roduick, David: *The Strangled Democracy*. Lubbock/Texas, 1970; Levine, Isaac: *Intervention: The Causes and Consequences of the Invasion of Czechoslovakia*. New York, 1970; Zeman, Z. A. B.: *Prague Spring*. New York, 1969; cf. Heidler, Alexander: *Die religiöse und kirchliche Entwicklung in der Tschechoslowakei seit August 1968*. *Kirche in Not* 17 (1969) 112—116.

<sup>93</sup> Heidler, Alexander: *Zur religiösen und kirchenpolitischen Lage in der ČSSR*. *Kirche in Not* 20 (1973) 81—86.

Their discreditation and unpopularity discouraged many priests who were fed up with the undignified servile collaboration of some „patriotic priests“, led by renegades like Father Josef Plojhar, Josef Beneš, Canon Mára, capitular vicars Anthony Stehlík of Prague and Edward Oliva of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) and others. Their names were repulsive enough to create great resentment. The negotiations of this Committee of the National Assembly had to be very important, because on January 30, 1971, Pope Paul VI received Bishop Trochta in a private audience who supposedly had been invited for consultations concerning the Czechoslovak situation.

Again in September 1971 Bishop Trochta took part in a *World Synod of Bishops* and on the program were priesthood and the problem of justice and peace. Trochta actively participated in the discussions because these problems were near to his heart. On October 13 he gave a speech in a plenary session of the bishops under the chairmanship of John Cardinal Wright. Trochta pointed out the difficulties which beset the priests in different countries. He stressed that the problem of the priesthood must be studied objectively, materially and, consequently, to the extent that the whole Church would and could profit by it. He also mentioned that a feeling of despair and frustration could be found in many contemporary priests. He stressed, however, that although he had great difficulties in the exercise of a bishop's functions during the past 20 years he was never affected by despair. There is a need for a spiritual motivation in the priestly life. The bishop's words were received with great attention and interest<sup>94</sup>.

When he returned home the new Czech organization of priests *Pacem in terris* was finally formed and its structure was ended. Msgr. Josef Vrána, capitular vicar of the Archdiocese of Olomouc (Olmütz) and Msgr. Nicholas Višnovský, professor of the Theological Faculty in Bratislava (Preßburg) was elected chairman in Slovakia. On October 20, 1971, a delegation of priests, led by these two chairmen together with Bishop Trochta, made an official visit to the Minister of Culture, Dr. Brůžek, whom Bishop Trochta addressed in this direct way: „Mister Minister, we want to have as many rights as we deserve, and we will do our best to merit all of them<sup>95</sup>.“ Trochta here paraphrased a well known phrase of T. G. Masaryk who used to say „Catholics will have as many rights as they will defend“<sup>96</sup>. By this Bishop Trochta wanted to stress that the Catholic Church was not after privileges but only after her rights which should not be denied to her because she represented the majority of the views of all those priests who wanted to have the fundamental rights which belong to all citizens.

Bishop Trochta organized his whole diocese and he also filled in several canonical posts. He did this in order that he could have more helpers in the administration of his diocese. On September 30, 1972, he appointed these new

<sup>94</sup> RFE Release of October 13, 1971: Bishop Trochta addresses synod.

<sup>95</sup> Wünsche von der Zensur gestrichen. Sudetendeutsche Bl. of October 20, 1971.

<sup>96</sup> N e m e c, L.: Church and State in Czechoslovakia. New York, 1955, p. 135—145.

cannons at the Cathedral of St. Stephen in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz): general vicar T. Holoubek of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) a member of the Central Council and Chairman of the North Bohemian section of the Association of Catholic priests „Pacem in terris“, a vicar of Mladá Boleslav (Jungbunzlau) J. Hendrich, vicar of Česká Lípa (Böhmisch-Leipa) and dean in Dubá, Wenceslaus Červinka, a member of the Association, and finally dean of Bělá pod Bezděsem (Weißwasser) Jaroslav Dostálek<sup>97</sup>. This was a good opportunity to invite representatives of the Secretariat for Church Affairs who took part in the rite of installations. Trochta made a great effort to bring the Church and the State closer. As one may see from the selection of candidates, Bishop Trochta cooperated closely with the Association of Catholic Priests and with the government authorities as well.

With all this work at hand, Bishop Trochta never forgot that he was a member of the Salesians. On the occasion of the beatification of Don Michel Rua, held on October 29, 1972, Bishop Trochta arrived with Czech pilgrims to Rome. He concelebrated Mass in the basilica of San Giovanni Bosco. The Salesians took great pride in the fact that one of their Society was a Cardinal. Trochta, on the other hand, utilized their ideals and methods in a modern apostolate so that they mutually benefited.

At the same time a Congress of European National Conferences of Bishops was held in Rome and Trochta not only took part in it, but presided at several sessions and shared his rich experiences with the bishops of other countries who looked up to him as a leader.

By the end of 1972 Trochta was nominated counsellor of a *Papal revision of the Code of Canon Law* and was busy with various proposals toward its reform. In the first half of February 1973, he was again in Rome, this time for legal consultations, and on February 15, he again had a private audience with the Pope. It should be said that Trochta was an expert in pastoral theology and education and used his practical approach and concern in the sphere of canon law effectively and successfully. In this sense he was greatly instrumental in making useful proposals toward reforms to be incorporated in a new code.

At this time the negotiations between the Holy See and the Czechoslovak Government quietly continued and they produced, by the end of February 1973, some partial and modest results. Three bishops were nominated for Slovakia: Father Julius Gabriš became apostolic administrator in Trnava (Tyrnau), Father Josef Feranec became a bishop in Baňská Bystrica (Neusohl), and Father Jan Paszlör became a bishop in Nitra (Neutra). One priest in Moravia, Josef Vrána, became a bishop and was appointed apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Olomouc (Olmütz). As soon as these appointments were announced, Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, head of the Vatican's Dept. for Foreign Affairs, arrived on March 3, 1973, in Slovakia where in the Cathedral of the historical city of Nitra (Neutra) he consecrated three Slovak bishops. The Apostolic Administrator of Prague, Msgr. Francis Tomášek, and Bishop Trochta of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz)

<sup>97</sup> Instalace nových kanovníků [Installation of new canons]. Lidová Demokracie, Sept. 30, 1972, p. 4.

were coconsecrators. The following day, on March 4, in the Gothic Cathedral of St. Wenceslas in Olomouc (Olmütz), Msgr. Josef Vrána was also consecrated<sup>98</sup>. The Church in Nitra (Neutra) and in Olomouc (Olmütz) was overcrowded with the faithful and the episcopal consecrations were received with great joy and enthusiasm by all the faithful. Archbishop Casaroli of the Vatican was surprised with the great piety of the Slovak and the Moravian faithful<sup>99</sup>. He praised the faithfulness of the four men he consecrated and said he anticipated that their ministry as bishops could and would be spiritually fruitful. He departed for Rome with great satisfaction and in confidence and hope that the fragile relations between the Holy See and Czechoslovakia would improve gradually in the near future.

The Pope, having been informed about these events and evidently comforted with the developing favorable situation in Czechoslovakia, decided to make public the surprising news that Bishop Stephen Trochta of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) had been named a Cardinal „in pectore“ in a secret consistory in 1969. Pope Paul VI, on the occasion of a secret consistory held on March 5, 1973, surprised the Cardinals in the following way when he said:

„We still have more important news to announce to you. It concerns the fact which we announced in the last consistory on April 28, 1969, that two bishops were named into the Cardinals Council, names we have kept in our heart, „in pectore“.

With great joy we communicate now that the first of those is our venerable brother, Stephen Trochta, Bishop of Litoměřice in Czechoslovakia. It was our intention, when we elected him, not only to solemnly and publicly acknowledge the merits of this faithful and zealous pastor, but also to manifest by this our love for that beautiful land of which he is a son, and which is for so many reasons especially dear to us.

We did not announce previously his name publicly because then was still living, although stricken by a heavy illness which finished his earthly life, the venerable Cardinal Josef Beran. Although he was living outside his country, he reserved the title of the famous Archdiocese of Prague for himself. Furthermore, we abstained from a public announcement then, first of all because of our hope and desire which neither then or now the Holy See gave up, namely, that some progress may come out of the negotiations, a long time previously initiated for the concern to normalize the position of the Catholic Church in the Czechoslovak Republic, and to provide canonically valid administrations of their dioceses.

We achieved this goal now, in the past days, by the nomination and consecration of four bishops of that country. It is only the beginning and a partial result, but we have hope that some further progress may develop in this direc-

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<sup>98</sup> Čtyři novi biskupi v ČSSR [Four new bishops in Czechoslovakia]. *Nový Život* 25/ No. 4 (1973) 93—94.

<sup>99</sup> Stronger religion viewed in Iron Curtain countries. *National Catholic Register* 49/ No. 45 (Nov. 11, 1973) 4.

tion, as is our desire. Therefore it pleases us that we are able to announce this news which, as we firmly believe, will fill with joy and satisfaction not only the faithful but all of the Czechoslovak nation<sup>100</sup>."

From the Pope's speech it is clear that the news concerning the Cardinalate of Trochta was kept a secret (in pectore) because of the tense conditions of the Church in Czechoslovakia, and that the Pope waited with this news until better times<sup>101</sup> had arrived.

This announcement also surprised Prague as one may see in the fact that the official Czechoslovak radio commented this news with this brief notice: „Bishop Trochta is one of the Cardinals nominated today by Pope Paul VI.“ It did not mention the circumstances that Trochta had already been secretly nominated a cardinal in 1969<sup>102</sup>.

As is the ancient custom, the new Cardinal Trochta was also nominated an honorary protector of the Church, dedicated to St. John Bosco, founder of the religious Society of Salesian, of which Bishop Trochta was a member. This circumstance itself discloses how Pope had great concern and special consideration for Bishop Trochta personally.

Bishop Trochta was informed that he was nominated a cardinal when on March 5, 1973, on the occasion of the consecration of the new bishops, the Vatican's head of the Office for Foreign Affairs, Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, visited him and brought him the news personally. Casaroli, on his way to Litoměřice (Leitmeritz), was accompanied by his assistant, Msgr. Giovanni Cheli, and by the apostolic administrator of Prague, Msgr. Francis Tomášek. Trochta was surprised but received the news with great calm<sup>103</sup>.

Archbishop Casaroli then visited the deputy prime minister of the Czechoslovak Government, Matthew Lučan, in Prague with whom he discussed several controversial problems related to the relationship of the State to the Vatican, and, having been assured of good will on the part of the Czechoslovak Government, he returned to Rome on March 9, 1973, where he detailed everything to the Pope.

It is interesting to note that Casaroli visited Trochta at about the same time and hour i. e. on March 5, when the Pope opened a Sacred Consistory in Rome so that the news coincided with the event.

When Bishop Trochta has been questioned as to how it felt to be a Cardinal, he answered with his typical quietness:

„I was a little surprised that I have been named a Cardinal. In the last few days I had some suspicion, but I did not know anything for certain. I take everything as it comes and I see Divine Providence in everyting. I never desired it and I did not refuse it because of my great respect for the Holy Father.

<sup>100</sup> AAS 18 (1973); *L'Osservatore Romano* of March 6, 1973.

<sup>101</sup> Also *der Kardinal in Böhmen. Die Furche* (Wien, March 24, 1973); cf. *Československo má opět kardinála* [Czechoslovakia has again a Cardinal]. *The Calendar Národ*. Chicago, 1974, pp. 127—129.

<sup>102</sup> ČTK, Prague, March 5, 1973.

<sup>103</sup> *L'Osservatore Romano* of March 9, 1973.

I am grateful for his goodness and generosity because it is he who makes cardinals. Such indeed are my feelings<sup>104</sup>.“

On April 6, 1973, Bishop Trochta arrived in Rome in order to accept the insignia of his new dignity. He was greeted at the Roman airport of Leonardo da Vinci by Cardinal Sebastiano Baggio, prefect of the Congregation of Bishops, by Archbishop Casaroli and his assistant Msgr. Giovanni Cheli who was the principal negotiator with Prague. Dr. Jaroslav Forst, representative of the Czechoslovak embassy in Rome was also present. Trochta was warmly received by these Roman prelates who embraced him in a friendly fashion. A great number of Czech priests employed in Rome either in the universities or in various congregations, including priests from the Pontifical College of *Nepomucenum*, especially Msgr. Francis Planner and spiritual director Thomas Špidlík, came to greet the new Czech Cardinal. Besides this, a great number of Salesians came to salute their confrere.

A solemn rite of the installation of Bishop Trochta was carefully prepared and scheduled to be held on April 12, 1973, at the Vatican's Consistorial Palace. Present were: dean of the Council of Cardinals, Cardinal Cicognani, Cardinal Ottaviani, and Cardinal Felice from the Secretariat of Councils, Archbishop Casaroli, head of the Vatican's foreign affairs office, Archbishop Verolino, who was the last chargé d'affaires of internunciature of the Holy See in Prague in 1950, Dr. Jaroslav Forst, representative of the Czechoslovak Government in Italy, the general Superior and a great number of Salesians, Sisters of the Blessed Mother Auxiliary and Czech and Slovak priests.

After the invocation by a papal ceremoniary and a brief and affectionate salute by the Pope, Bishop Trochta thanked the Holy Father for the honor which he graciously bestowed upon him, and through him upon all Catholics in the Czechoslovak Republic. Trochta said the following:

„My nomination as a Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church and my acceptance into the illustrious Council of Cardinals obliges me to express my truly sincere and grateful thanks. The true reason of my nomination into the closer circle of your closest collaborators is only the confidence, generosity and Fatherly love of your Holiness, which selected a simple man for a Cardinal, who is not different from so many others who would be, perhaps, more worthy.

In the person of Your Holiness I always saw the visible vicar of Christ on earth and according to this view I take all your decisions and instructions. When I look into my past in the light of the Spirit of truth and Faith, and when I take into consideration all the events which occurred in my life, I have to say: „God made all this, and how all this appears now to be so unbelievable!“

In contemporary times frequently the unexpected and surprising events occur. Peculiar are the ways of Divine Providence by which she miraculously leads all people and directs all events for the purpose of their last supernatural goal, which we, with our human reason, so frequently have great difficulty

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<sup>104</sup> L'Osservatore Romano of April 9, 1973.

in comprehending. The Divine Wisdom really „plays“ (as one reads in the Bible) in our earthly realm and directs everything with much precision and harmony. It depends on us, if we want — as one modern Saint said it — to become a tool in God's hands, always ready to follow their instructions. And I, my Holy Father, wish truly to become in this manner a tool, fitting to the service which Divine Providence will, through your representation, designate for me.

By my promise, which I will soon profess, I wish to dedicate myself to the services of God, the Church and Your Holiness, the whole of human society and especially to my beloved country, with all my strength and abilities until the last breath of my life.

I am thankful to Your Holiness for the generosity which you manifested to me by this nomination. I wish to express not only my thanks, but also that of all the faithful in Czechoslovakia, of all the Czech and the Slovak people and their delegates, which one member of the embassy of my country in Rome represents today. All these see in the action of Your Holiness a testimony of your interest and the love of a Father. In these days I received an avalanche of greetings and congratulations at my home. These all clearly and unanimously express one thought, 'The Holy Father thinks of us, he likes us and wants us to feel good'.

Therefore, I thank you again for all this, Holy Father. And may God bless us by the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Auxiliatrix of all Christians and Mother of Jesus, Mother of the Church and of all of us<sup>105</sup>.

Bishop Trochta articulated his speech with great emotion which was very visible and revealing the great sincerity of a humble man. The Holy Father took this opportunity and with an emotional expression of his great love for a father and a friend, he answered the following:

„With great joy We receive this numerous and respected group which accompanies you, Lord Cardinal, in this so important and so distinguished occasion of your life. We are delighted that we also see in it a representative of the government of your land and we respectfully welcome him. We greet you all and are thankful to all.

With great emotion and appreciation we listened to your beautiful speech which you just read, and in which you gave an outlet for the feelings of your heart. With great pleasure we answer it in order that we express from our side, in this especially joyful moment, how our heart is replete with joy: it is a firm confidence in your personality, dedication and love to the faithful and to the people of Czechoslovakia and it is our hope for a serene and quiet tomorrow.

1.) As we have announced in a secret consistory of March 5, 1973, we have decided in 1969 to bestow upon you the dignity of a Cardinalate first off as a sign of our confidence in you, venerable and dear Lord Cardinal. Divine

<sup>105</sup> L'Osservatore Romano of April 12, 1973; cf. AAS 18 (1973), for Czech text see Nový Život 25 (Rome, April 1973) 103—104.

Providence selected you from a poor family, in which, however, flourished the most beautiful virtues and made of you a shepherd of the people of God. Individual events of your life followed each other as though they had been directed by Divine Providence which would clearly manifest what kind of intentions God has for you. You have answered your vocation gladly, joyfully and unconditionally you have followed his voice and offered all your abilities into the service of the Church; in a religious community of Salesians you faithfully followed in the steps of Don John Bosco and Don Rua; you understood what it means to dedicate oneself to God, who put you, together with your confreres in the service of those of the poorest and into the service of youth and of workers. Divine Providence strengthened you in an especially strict and purifying school of sufferings, and granted you also a visible sign of his help which was often of a miraculous nature, and accompanied you always until you became a bishop, who always received everything with great obedience and humility under all circumstances which were not without many difficulties. God's hand helped you through all these years, comforted you and made your personality mature in all these events which never broke down your willingness to give of yourself to His brothers and never undermined your confidence in Divine Providence, by which you let yourself obediently be led and guided.

2.) Our recognition in regard to your person goes even further and it would like to include also your beloved land; therefore, this recognition is also an expression of my good wish and love for Czechoslovakia which is always so close and dear to our heart. Your country bore great figures of Saints like that of St. Wenceslaus and St. Adalbert, successors of these were exemplary bishops and cardinals in whose work, we are sure, you will also continue.

With this dignity granted to you we also intended to manifest our love toward the Czechoslovak priests and faithful; we wished also to honor the whole Church in your country and we are thinking of her at this moment; we would like to assure them that we share in their joys and sorrows, hopes and anxieties, and that we would like to encourage them in the faithful following of Christ.

Our wish goes even further and would desire that you, after your return home, communicate to all in your dear fatherland that the Pope is always with them, that he likes them and honors them all and embraces them in one spiritual embrace like a father embraces his beloved children, and that this, our assurance, belongs to all not only to the faithful, without reservations.

3.) We are also enclosing, finally, our word of hope; this is one's feeling which always goes with good will. This nomination of the Bishop of Litoměřice into the supreme Senate of the Church should be a joyful expression of it. We hope, indeed, that this nomination of one of the most illustrious sons of a beloved land on the part of the Holy See will be a fruitful contribution toward the clarification of all those problems which the Church has the responsibilities to solve.

As you all well know, it matters only that the Church has an opportunity

of developing fittingly her mission which is in principle a spiritual one, but still concerns the total welfare of all. As we have stressed, on March 5, in a consistory, the nomination of four new bishops we considered as the first step in an ongoing process, following the normalization of the situation of the Church in the Czechoslovak Republik and a canonically valid administration of their dioceses. Your nomination into the Cardinals' Council was somehow like a crown of the first and promising results of such patient and prudent endeavors. These are signs of a hope and that, for us as well as for you, is a joy to see them as promises to a brighter and fruitful tomorrow.

We take as our responsibilities to thank all our collaborators by whose efforts these first successes were made possible. Let it not be the end of negotiations which are now in the process, but let these be a sign and forerunner of their happy conclusion which must be a full ecclesiastical peace and order in that land.

With these feelings we implore the rich graces of God for a continuous and orderly civil and social progress in your land. With our whole heart we bestow upon you, dear and esteemed Lord Cardinal, and all here present, faithful as well as the sons of the Church in Czechoslovakia, our apostolic benediction<sup>106</sup>.

When Pope Paul VI finished his speech, Bishop Trochta publicly recited a profession of faith. Then he expressed his vow of fidelity to Pope Paul VI and his successors, and a promise that he will keep a silence about everything related to this office in official secrecy. After that the Pope presented to Bishop Trochta a Cardinal's biret and ring and announced officially that the Church of St. John Bosco in Roma will be under his patronage. The whole rite was simple and was performed at the Mass concelebrated with the Pope.

On this occasion about 300 invited persons were present and after the Church event Cardinal Trochta was a guest at a banquet held in his honor by the Superior General, Father Luigi Ricceri.

The following, on April 15, 1973, Cardinal Trochta celebrated a pontifical Mass in the Church of St. John Bosco and hereby, officially, this Church came under his protection as is the ancient custom for all Cardinals. This Church is located in a new suburb of Rome called *Cinecitta*, a famous place for her film ateliers, and was built in May, 1959, and consecrated by Pope John XXIII.

Cardinal Trochta also celebrated Mass for all the employees of the Vatican paper *L'Osservatore Romano* and its printers shop on April 13, 1973. About 300 workers and clerics attended the Mass at which the Cardinal also had an Italian sermon about the meaning of Easter. It is clear from this event, that Cardinal Trochta enjoyed great popularity.

On Saturday, April 14, Pope Paul VI received a new Cardinal in a private audience which was held on the third floor of the Papal Palace. The contents of their discussions were never revealed.

The Cardinal returned to Czechoslovakia on April 16, 1973, where at the

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<sup>106</sup> This text is to be found in *L'Osservatore Romano* of April 12, 1973; cf. AAS 18 (1973). Czech text is in *Nový Život* 25 (Rome, April 1973) 104—105.

airport at Ruzyně in Prague a great multitude of people, including many representatives of the government authorities, warmly greeted him. It was seen as good sign of the expression of their sympathy, in the sense that the Church-State relationship is on the way toward a brighter future, which would be a confirmation of the Pope's firm hope which he so sincerely expressed on the occasion of the elevation of Cardinal Trochta.

If a sincere Pope's hope that in the betterment of the Church-State relationship in Czechoslovakia has been the principal motivation of Trochta's elevation into a Cardinalate, then it is fitting to say that Bishop Trochta was perhaps the best person able to bring this hope to its fruition. Perhaps it was a role designated to him by Divine Providence i. e. the role and mission of a peacemaker as he had excelled in it in the concentration camps under the Nazis and during the persecution by the Communists; he always built the bridges of understanding, good will and sacrifices, and he always let the execution of justice to God.

Cardinal Trochta represents not only a builder of bridges of mutual understanding, but also a peacemaker in the sense of a biblical emphasis<sup>107</sup> in the circumstance that a peacemaker can only be — and in fact is — he, who is a faithful follower of the beatitudes of Christ — and in this heritage Cardinal Trochta manifested himself as a faithful follower and disciple. Cardinal Trochta was, furthermore, an example of a modern apostle of peace, where one's firm stand on Christian principles<sup>108</sup> is in harmony with the activities of good will even at the price of sufferings and sacrifices, which Trochta brought on the altar of peace in such great quantities, always and without reservations. In this lies the greatness of Cardinal Trochta; not so in the greatness of mind but in the generosity and magnanimity of the good will of an educator, Churchman and the ecumenist.

The Czech poet, Josef V. Tománek, expressed these characteristics of the new cardinal very appropriately when in a poem dedicated to his nomination<sup>109</sup> he says how in all sufferings „his heart was always brave and certain“ and his Cardinal's hat is a symbol of his cross, which Cardinal Trochta always shared in full measure and in great dedication as one whose greatness was his perseve-

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<sup>107</sup> Beatitudes; cf. Matt. 5, 3—8; cf. Steinmüller, John E. / Sullivan, Kathryn: Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia. New Testament. New York, 1950, pp. 67—88.

<sup>108</sup> Bainton, Roland H.: Christian Attitudes Toward War & Peace. N. Y., 1960 (Historical Survey); cf. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich: The Cost of Discipleship. N. Y., 1970 (12th Printing) (Personal Involvement); cf. May, Rollo: Power and Innocence. N. Y., 1972; cf. Merton, Thomas: Faith and Violence, 1968; cf. Helder, Camara: Spiral of Violence. Denville, N. Y., 1971; cf. Douglas, James W.: The Non-Violent Cross. N. Y., 1970; cf. Potter, Ralph B.: War and Moral Discourse. Richmond/Va., 1970; cf. Regamey, P., O. P.: Non-Violence and the Christian Conscience. N. Y., 1966; cf. Paoli, Arturo: Freedom to be free (translation by Charles Underhill Anin). N. Y., 1973, passim; cf. Broucker, Jose de: Dom Helder Camara. The Violence of a Peacemaker (translation from French by Herma Briffault). N. Y., 1973.

<sup>109</sup> Tománek, Josef V.: Kardinal Štěpán Trochta. This is a poem dedicated to the Cardinals's nomination. Národ of June 16, 1973.

rance in „walking before God in humility and truth“<sup>110</sup> as he always did, indeed. Cardinal Trochta had a captivating personal charisma similar to that of the late Pope John XXIII<sup>111</sup> as a true apostle for modern times.

When Cardinal Trochta died, Pope Paul VI, in a telegram to Bishop F. Tomášek, apostolic administrator of Prague, called him „a defender of the Faith, and a worthy citizen of his nation“<sup>112</sup>. Especially the circumstance that Trochta was always „a defender of the Faith,“ and as such he was in firm command of a respectful authority that he enjoyed among the Czech people of all walks of life, was the most resented by the Communist leaders<sup>113</sup>. In no time, they relaxed their efforts to restrict his activities. The Cardinal was under constant harassment and subjected to strict limitations. Even in the last weeks before his death, Trochta was not granted permission to celebrate mass in Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad) during his sojourn at the spa after his three eye operations, but was limited to a private chapel, closed to the public. He was not permitted to attend the traditional celebration of Blessed Zdislava in Jablonec, located in his diocese<sup>114</sup>. These few examples reveal also how Communist leaders took all precautions to restrict the Cardinal's influence, by all means. Their endless cynicism did not stop anywhere, as one can see from the cruel event, which came soon to be known by leading international news agencies.

A Czech priest assigned to Vienna has charged that the day before Cardinal Stephen Trochta died of a cerebral hemorrhage he had been subjected to six hours of „brutal“ interrogation by an „intoxicated“ local civil official.

The charge was contained in a report sent to the Benedictine Abbey Press of Chicago by Fr. Josef Novotny, director of a Czech Catholic pastoral counseling center in Vienna, and forwarded to Religious News Service by the managing editor, Fr. Wenceslas Michalicka.

Fr. Novotny prefaced his report with these words: „On my honor, as a Catholic priest, I declare that the following report is based on trustworthy immediate co-workers of the deceased Stepan Cardinal Trochta. Its truthfulness is thereby guaranteed.

<sup>110</sup> Thomas à Kempis: *The Imitation of Christ*. Ed. J.M. Lelen. New York, 1941, bk. IV, ch. III, pp. 145—148.

<sup>111</sup> Elliott, Lawrence: *I will be called John*. A biography of Pope John XXIII. New York, 1973; cf. Capovilla, Loris: *The Heart and Mind of John XXIII*. London, 1964; cf. Pope John XXIII. *Journal of a Soul*. New York, 1964; cf. Michaels, Louis: *The Humor and Warmth of Pope John XXIII*. New York, 1965.

<sup>112</sup> Death of Czech Cardinal Trochta mourned by Pope. *Jednota* (Middletown/Pa.) of April 17, 1974; cf. *The Byzantine Catholic World* (Pittsburgh/Pa.) of April 21, 1964; cf. *Národ* (Chicago/Ill.) of April 13, 1974; *V československu zemřel Štěpán kardinál Trochta, biskup litoměřický* [In Czechoslovakia died Stephen Cardinal Trochta, bishop of Litoměřice].

<sup>113</sup> Nemeč, Ludvik: *Štěpán kardinál Trochta, biskup litoměřický 1905—1974*. *Národ* of April 20, 1974, pp. 1—3.

<sup>114</sup> *The American Bulletin* (Czechoslovak National Council of America in Chicago) of February, 1974, and of March, 1974; cf. *Nový Život* (New Life, Rome) of January, 1974.

The day preceding the death of Stephan Cardinal Trochta, Friday, April 5, 1974, the district secretary for Church Affairs, named Dlabal, came to the cardinal's residence in Litomerice at 11 : 30 a. m. and demanded an interview with the cardinal.

These civil officials are named by the top communist state office in Prague to supervise all ecclesiastical life in the country with a view to suppressing it.

This district secretary Dlabal came intoxicated, as was evident from his speech and gait, and forced himself to be admitted to 'interview' Cardinal Trochta.

The 'interview' lasted from 11 : 30 a. m. to 5 : 30 p. m. — a full six hours. Secretary Dlabal in an incessant and brutal manner subjected Cardinal Trochta to a cross examination coupled with the vilest invectives and vituperations . . .

The cardinal had undergone three eye operations, just recently, and was advised by his surgeons not expose himself to any excitement. This evidently was known to secretary Dlabal, who had been following every move of the cardinal and had repeatedly questioned him about church affairs.

After the 'interview' Cardinal Trochta, deeply shaken and exhausted, retired, spent a very bad night (and) the next morning suffered a cerebral hemorrhage, and died in the afternoon of April 6<sup>115</sup>.

Father Novotný sent his appeal in this matter of Trochta's death to Pope Paul VI<sup>116</sup>, to the Secretary General of the United Nations<sup>117</sup>, and to all European and American news agencies<sup>118</sup>. Government officials even tried to conceal the event from the general public. The funeral mass, significantly enough, was not held until 10 days later, April 16.

The Mass was celebrated in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz) by bishop František Tomášek, the Apostolic Administrator of Prague, the acting head of the Czech Catholic Church.

The visiting church prelates, including Cardinal Alfred Bengsch of Berlin, Cardinal Franz Koenig of Vienna, and Cardinal Wotjyla of Cracow, were not allowed by state officials to concelebrate the Mass with Bishop Tomášek.

In addition, no funeral services for the cardinal were permitted anywhere in Czechoslovakia outside of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz). No visitors were admitted to the cathedral for the funeral Mass except the invited guests, so that about 5,000 persons had to stand in the square outside the church<sup>119</sup>.

<sup>115</sup> Catholic Star Herald (Camden/N. J.) of May 10, 1974: Czech Cardinal died after 6 hours interrogation.

<sup>116</sup> A full text may be found in Americké Listy (New York) of May 17, 1974, p. 3: Pozadí kardinalova úmrtí [Behind the scene of Cardinal's death].

<sup>117</sup> A full text may be found in Národ (Chicago/Illinois) of May 14, 1974: Nové ohromující podrobnosti v příčinách smrti pana kardinála Štěpána Trochty, biskupa litoměřického [New surprising details about the causes of death of Cardinal Stephen Trochta, bishop of Litoměřice].

<sup>118</sup> České Slovo (Munich) of May 5, 1974: Kardinál Dr. Štěpán Trochta zemřel [Cardinal Stephen Trochta died], p. 4.

<sup>119</sup> Communists tried to hamper funeral services for Cardinal. Národ-Supplement of May 18, 1974, pp. 1—12.

Bishop Tomášek told the assembled congregation in Litoměřice's Cathedral of St. Stephen that Cardinal Trochta's life could be summed up in the words „work, humility and love“. He added: „Stephen, the bishop, lived through the most painful trials but he also had the highest honors<sup>120</sup>.“

Present at the funeral were Cardinal Franz Koenig of Vienna, Warol Wojtyła of Cracow, Poland, Alfred Bengsch of Berlin, and Archbishop Luigi Poggi, the Vatican's special roving ambassador representing the Council for the Church's Public Affairs, which is often described as the Vatican's foreign office.

Representatives from all the dioceses and archdioceses of Czechoslovakia were also present, as were Karel Hruža, director of the Czechoslovak federal government's secretariat for religious affairs, and a representative of the Czech regional government's ministry for cultural affairs.

Following the funeral the casket was accompanied by the assembled clergy and many of the late cardinal's relatives and placed in the crypt of the bishops of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz).

Among the funeral wreaths accompanying the body of the cardinal to his final resting place were those sent by the bishops of Poland and by a group of German priests who had known him in the concentration camps.

The casket with the Cardinal's remains was carried out from St. Stephen's Cathedral into the funeral car without any decoration. Government officials did not permit any procession to the nearby cemetery, so that all official guests had to use cars. Here again Bishop Tomášek eulogized, singling out the dead Cardinal as a man of work, sacrifice, and love. Then against the fixed protocol, after the official ceremonies, an older man stood up and spoke, praising the Cardinal as a brave man, in the name of his co-prisoners of the concentration camp Mauthausen. The assembly of people then spontaneously sang the Czechoslovak anthem and St. Wenceslas' chant. No Czechoslovak newspapers except the Catholic paper (*Katolické noviny*) carried any mention of the Cardinal's funeral. The fear of dead honest people, who, like Cardinal Trochta especially, suffered not only in the Nazi but also in Communist jails, incriminates the Communist regime and their only memento makes them frightened of the dead because of its reminder that the Communists are primary accomplices of all atrocities committed<sup>121</sup> on the innocent people.

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<sup>120</sup> Cardinal Trochta's funeral brings together Church and government leaders in Czechoslovakia. *Národ-Supplement* of April 27, 1974, p. 12.

<sup>121</sup> *Americké Listy* (New York) of April 20, 1974, p. 2: Pohřeb kardinála Trochty [Funeral of Cardinal Trochta].

## KARDINAL STEPHAN TROCHTA

Erzieher, Geistlicher und Anhänger der ökumenischen Bewegung

Am 6. April 1974 starb der zu dieser Zeit einzige tschechoslowakische Kardinal, Bischof Stephan Trochta, in seiner Residenz in Leitmeritz in Böhmen.

Der Fall dieses tschechoslowakischen Kardinals ist menschlich so eindrucksvoll, daß es sich lohnt, über ihn nachzudenken. Trochta durchlebte unstreitig alle Stadien der Bedrückung und ging durch die kommunistische Hölle. Der interessanteste Sachverhalt ist, daß dieser Mann unter den widrigsten Umständen auch die höchsten kirchlichen Würden erlangte. Dies kann man den Sieg eines unerschrockenen Menschen bezeichnen, der für alles mit großen Leiden und Opfern zahlen mußte, bevor er eine menschliche Anerkennung erfuhr.

Im Jahre 1905 als Sohn einer armen Bauernfamilie geboren, schloß er sich früh der Salesianer Kongregation in Turin in Italien an. Dort besuchte er von 1922—1926 das Lyzeum, anschließend studierte er Philosophie und Theologie. Am 29. Juli 1932 wurde er, kurz nachdem er das Doktorat der Theologie erhalten hatte, zum Priester geweiht.

Sein Lebensweg führte zunächst nach Prag. Dort ging er in der engagierten Jugendbewegung völlig auf und wurde als anerkannter Führer der katholischen Pfadfinder deren Sprecher. Da man von seinem Patriotismus wußte, setzte ihn die Gestapo am 1. Juni 1942 fest und schickte ihn in die Konzentrationslager in Theresienstadt (1942), Mauthausen (1943) und Dachau (1944—45), wo er sich durch barmherzige Betreuung der Mitgefangenen hervortat.

Auf Grund seiner außerordentlichen Qualitäten ordinierte ihn die Kirche im September 1947 zum Bischof von Leitmeritz. Nach der Machtergreifung der Kommunisten am 25. Februar 1948 begann insbesondere für die Katholische Kirche eine schwere Zeit der Verfolgungen. 1949 wurde Bischof Trochta der führende Kirchenmann bei den Verhandlungen zwischen dem kommunistischen Staat und der Kirche. Er zeigte sich gemäßigt und diplomatisch, indem er eine Verständigung mit der Regierung auf der Basis von Mindestforderungen religiöser Freiheiten für die Kirche zu erreichen suchte. Doch gelang ihm dies nicht; und er mußte sich zusammen mit anderen Geistlichen fügen. 1954 wurde er wegen „subversiver Tätigkeit gegen den Staat für den Vatikan“ zu 25 Jahren Gefängnis verurteilt.

Bis zum Jahre 1960 verbrachte er im Kerker, bis er schließlich von Präsident Novotný begnadigt wurde. Im Juli 1968 war er völlig rehabilitiert und erhielt die Erlaubnis, seine Diözese bis zu seinem Tod wieder in Obhut zu nehmen. Am 5. März 1973 verlieh ihm Papst Paul VI. die Kardinalswürde, nachdem er ihn bereits am 28. April 1969 zum Kardinal „in pectore“ ernannt hatte.