
Mussolini Looks at Jan Hus and the Bohemian Reformation

Pavel Helan

(Prague)

Benito Mussolini's book with the title, *Giovanni Huss il Veridico* [Jan Hus, the Veracious] was published by the house of Podreca and Galantra in Rome in May 1913.¹ The monograph appeared in the series, *Colezione storica dei Martiri del libero pensiero* [Historical Series: Martyrs of Liberal Thought].

The Book's Origin

The reasons for Mussolini's interest in the figure of Hus are somewhat murky. It is of course true that the Bohemian Reformer was not entirely unknown on the Apennine Peninsula. Giuseppe Garibaldi, for instance, referred to him,² as well as the poet Giosue Carducci, who named Hus in his "Ode to Satan" among a whole series of figures that for him were emblematic of human progress.³ It was evident that Mussolini admired Carducci.⁴ Hus in a medallion adorns Guiordano Bruno's monument in Rome's Campo de' Fiori, and he is the protagonist of the historical drama of Angelo Zanardini, put to music by Angelo Tessaro.⁵ The Bohemian Reformer was, of course, known in the Swiss and French intellectual milieu, with which Mussolini was also familiar. The problem is not Mussolini's awareness of Hus, but his motive for writing a book about the Bohemian paragon. In his preface to the 3rd ed. of *Giovanni Huss il Veridico*, the historian Renzo de Felice has suggested that the incentive might have come from Jaroslav Hašek, the author of the world-famous Czech classic, *The Good Soldier Schweik*. This hypothesis, however, seems weak.⁶

¹ Anežka Loskotová in her Czech translation used the term "man of the truth" [*muž pravdy*], Benito Mussolini, *Mussoliniho kniha o Janu Husovi, muži pravdy* (Turnov, 1937); František J. Holeček retained the adjectival form "veracious" [*pravdomluvný*] in referring to the book in his article, "O potřebě kacířů: Benito Mussolini a Mistr Jan Hus," *Dialog—Evropa XXI* 5, 3 (1994) 27-31.

² In a letter of 5 August 1869 he responded to an invitation to attend the celebration of the quincentenary of Hus's birth in Prague, see Libor Pruchta, *Giuseppe Garibaldi* (Prague, 1971) 195-196.

³ Giosue Carducci, "K Satanovi," trans. Zdeněk Kalista, in *Hrozny v sloupoví* (Prague, 1967) 33-35.

⁴ Frequent references to Carducci can be found in his writings. Margherita Sarffati mentioned Mussolini's intense attachment to Carducci's writings, see Margherita Sarfatti, *The Life of Benito Mussolini*, tr. Frederic Whyte (New York, 1925) 41. When speaking in his youth about the Roman Church, Mussolini enjoyed using Carducci's designation as "the bloody old Vatican she-wolf," see Benito Mussolini, *Opera omnia*, eds. Edoardo and Duilio Susmel, 44 vv. (Florence, 1951-1980), for instance, 2:206, 3:9. He cited passages from Carducci's poems in his articles, see, for instance, his "Socialismo e socialisti," *La Lima*, 19, (16 May 1908), cited in Mussolini, *Opera omnia*, 1:139.

⁵ Angelo Zanardini, *Giovanni Hus, dramma storico in quattro atti*, music by Angelo Tessaro (Florence, 1992-1993); on Hus in Italy see also Arturio Cronia, *Čechy v dějinách italské kultury: tisíciletá žeh* (Prague, 1936).

⁶ Renzo de Felice, "Introduzione," in Benito Mussolini, *Giovanni Huss il Veridico* (Palermo, 1988) 14. Mussolini and Hašek both visited Switzerland and Trentino, but never at the same time. The information about contacts between the two may be found in Břetislav Ludvík's *Kdo je Jaroslav Hašek* (Prague, 1946) 15-16, but the source is unreliable, even if Hašek himself was the informant. This

It is safer to follow the trail of evidence leading to Mussolini's contact with František Loskot and with the Czech Section of the international organization Free Thought [*Volná myšlenka* in Czech], which associated free thinkers, including atheists. Loskot was an officer of the Czech Section.⁷ The Prague City Archive [*Archiv hlavního města Prahy*] holds an anonymous manuscript of a lecture, dating from the late 1920s, which discusses the history of *Volná myšlenka* in Bohemia. It contains this bit of information: "The International Congress in Brussels decided in 1910 that the next Congress would be held five years later in Prague and its delegates would commemorate the 500th anniversary of Hus's execution. *Volná myšlenka* was preparing a large monograph on Hus, and wished to disseminate information about him abroad. By a special stroke of luck Benito Mussolini wrote an Italian booklet about Hus at the suggestion of the Czech Section [of *Volná myšlenka*]. The material and illustrations were supplied by the Prague Secretariat of *Volná myšlenka*."⁸ Even though the outbreak of World War I prevented a staging of the planned Prague Congress in 1915, its preparation provided the most likely source of Mussolini's incentive to write about the Bohemian Reformer.

It is possible that the author of the quotation from the anonymous history was František M. Bartoš, who was involved with the *Volná myšlenka* in the period of the First Czechoslovak Republic. This Czech historian did contribute a preface to a partial Czech translation of Mussolini's *Hus*, published by Loskot's widow, Anežka, in Turnov in 1933.⁹ According to Bartoš, Loskot supplied Mussolini with an illustration for his book,¹⁰ which was evidently copied from Václav Flajšhans's *Mistr řečený Jan z Husince* (Prague, 1901).

Unfortunately, the manuscript in the Prague City Archive and Bartoš's preface are the only available pieces of information. Neither Mussolini's published correspondence, nor the Loskots' papers in the National Literary Archive of Prague [*Památník národního písemnictví*] give clues to any mutual correspondence or other contacts. It may be assumed, however, that Loskot's contact with Mussolini – such as it may have been – was only in writing.

As an additional consideration, the character of the series, which included Mussolini's *Hus*, was close in its spirit to the organization *Volná myšlenka*. It involved books of leftist and anticlerical orientation, treating historical figures, which were persecuted – and usually executed – by the Roman Church for their deviant views. A benchmark example of that church's unforgiving cruelty was Giordano Bruno, to

tenuous account reached de Felice in a telephone conversation from Claudio Poeta, an Italian student in Prague in the mid-1970s, as Poeta told me in 1999.

⁷ František Loskot (1870-1931) was originally a Catholic priest. Having obtained a doctorate in theology, he was active in the *Jednota katolického duchovenstva* [Union of Catholic Clergy], which gathered modernistically inclined priests. Responding to the Curia's measures against modernism and to his own intellectual evolution, he renounced the priestly office in 1903, and married in January of the following year. Devoting himself to the Free Thought, he edited its serials *Volná myšlenka* and *Volná škola* [Free School] from 1909 until the suppression of the organization in 1914. He attended the World Congresses of Free Thought in Brussels in 1910, and in Munich in 1912. For biographical details see Anežka Loskotová, *Dr. František Loskot* (Vsetín, 1933).

⁸ Archiv hlavního města Prahy, fond Svaz občanů bez vyznání a *Volná myšlenka*, karton č. 5, inv. č. 8, "Nedefinovaný rukopis o dějinách *Volné myšlenky*," 32-34.

⁹ See n. 1 above.

¹⁰ *Mussoliniho kniha o Janu Husovi*, 3.

whom Mussolini often referred in his anticlerical sallies, and who served as the subject of the first volume in the series, written by Arturo Labriola, a socialist politician and economist.

Hence, it is evident that, following the Brussels Congress, the Czech Section of Free Thought – and specifically Loskot – cooperated with Mussolini concerning his book on Hus. It is possible that the publishing house of the historical series also played a mediating role.

In his autobiography, written during his imprisonment in 1911-1912,¹¹ Mussolini stated that he had composed the first part of his *Hus* in 1911 when the publication was already assured.¹² The dramatic setting of Mussolini's authorship was evoked by an account in the newspaper, *La lotta di classe*, of 18 October 1911. According to this source, while being arrested for his part in a violent demonstration against the Tripolitan war, the future Duce exclaimed: "I understand! I understand! They wish me to complete my work on Hus in jail! Little do they know, how happy this makes me!"¹³

The Book's Character

Mussolini's opus was a paperback of 124 pages and 18.5 x 12 cm. in size. The text was supplemented by six illustrations and photographs, which – as mentioned earlier – were evidently borrowed with Loskot's help from Flajšhans's *Mistr Jan*. A brief preface, which listed most of Mussolini's sources, was followed by six chapters of historical text. The first chapter dealt with the late fourteenth-century setting, ecclesiastical corruption, and Hus's precursors; the second and third with Hus's life, work, and death; and the fourth one, allegedly devoted to his writings, essentially summarized, and quoted from, his treatise *On Simony*. Titled "Žižka and the Bohemian Wars," the fifth chapter described the wars of the Bohemian Reformation and concluded with the Reformation's influence beyond Bohemia's borders. This chapter included Mussolini's Italian translation (from a French text) of the hymn "Ktož sú boží bojovníci" [Who are the God's Warriors]. The sixth and concluding chapter contained Mussolini's polemic with the contemporary view of the Roman Church, represented by Cardinal Joseph Hergenröther, which saw Hus in an entirely negative light.

The monograph's content was mainly derivative from secondary sources. Mussolini utilized in particular Louis Leger's pieces "Jean Huss," and "Jean Zizka," which first appeared first in *Revue Suisse*, then in book-form in *Nouvelles d'études slaves* (Paris, 1880-1886). Leger familiarized the author with the views of František Palacký and Václav V. Tomek, as well as some of Hus's writing, especially his

¹¹ After the outbreak of war with Turkey, following Italy's invasion of Libya on 25 September 1911, Mussolini participated in two-and-a-half days of disturbances sponsored by socialists and republicans in Forli. The demonstrators delayed the departure of military recruits for the front. In addition, a general strike, involving sabotage, was organized in Forli. Arrested with his associates, Mussolini was sentenced to imprisonment, which he completed in Bologna in five months, regaining freedom on 12 March 1912.

¹² Benito Mussolini, "La mia vita dal 29 luglio 1883 al 23 novembre 1911," in: Mussolini, *Opera omnia*, 33:268; 1st ed. (Rome, 1947).

¹³ "Una folle ventata reazionaria a Forli l'improvviso arresto del nostro direttore e dei repubblicani Nenni e Loli," in: *La Lotta di Classe*, 2, supplement n. 90 (18 October 1911) cited in Mussolini, *Opera omnia*, 4:281.

treatise, *On Simony*. Leger was also the source for Mussolini's translation of the Taborite hymn "Ktož sú boží bojovníci." It was the song's later form from 1530, the so-called Mladá Boleslav version, which was commonly used in the nineteenth century.¹⁴

This principal source was supplemented by the Italian translation of Friedrich von Bezold's work on the Reformation in Germany, which provided information on the overall ecclesiastical situation in Europe and on the Bohemian Reformation's influence abroad.¹⁵

Mussolini's lesser sources included Cesare Cantù's *Racconti di Storia Universale*,¹⁶ and P. F. Erizzo's published lecture, "Giovanni Huss il riformatore boemo," originally delivered in Padua in 1878.¹⁷ Mussolini also had on hand the Italian translation of Hergenröther's church history,¹⁸ and he pilloried its article on Hus, as an example of the unforgiving rigidity of the Roman Church's mind.

The text contained numerous factual errors, some due to the author, some adopted from the sources. Likewise, quotations tended to be inexact, particularly in cases of multiple translations.

At the end of his book, Mussolini provided an appendix, which contained Luther's preface to the 1537 edition of Hus's letters, and substantial excerpts from nineteen letters. This material was translated from Emil de Bonnechose, *Lettres de Jan Hus* (Paris, 1845).¹⁹

Mussolini's opus cannot be viewed as an example of genuine scholarship. In addition to the errors and mistakes, its character as a compilation is obvious. Entire passages were often copied verbatim, although at times the Duce's own style shone through. A cavalier attitude toward sources and toward editing was evident from the lack of verification of data, and from repeated citations of identical quotations. If it were not for the author's stature, the book, however, would still have significance. For a long time – leaving aside Erizza's pamphlet – it was the only monograph on Hus in Italian, and the only source, sampling Hus's letters and other writings for the denizens of the Apennine Peninsula. Yet, the book was above all a political statement. Hus was used as a vehicle to highlight the Moloch-like perversity of ecclesiastical authority with asides drawing contemporary parallels. The overarching aim was to expose the corruption of the Roman Church both in the past and at present. The scenario of the concluding polemic with Hergenröther was crafted to dramatize the impudence of the incorrigible Rome, which had not as yet given any sign of apology or regret for the outrage committed five hundred years previously.

¹⁴ See further, Zdeněk Nejedlý, *Dějiny husitského zpěvu*, 2nd ed. 5 vv. (Prague, 1955) 4:327-348.

¹⁵ The Protestant theologian's work, *Geschichte der deutschen Reformation* (Berlin, 1890) appeared in Italian as Friedrich von Bezold, *Storia della Riforma in Germania*, tr. D. Valbus (Milan, 1902).

¹⁶ See the German text, Cesare Cantù, *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte*, ed. J. A. Brühl, Band 8, Buch 13 (Regensburg, 1876). I was not able to track down the Italian version.

¹⁷ P. F. Erizzo, *Giovanni Huss il riformatore boemo* (Padua, 1878).

¹⁸ Joseph Hergenröther, *Handbuch der allgemeinen Kirchengeschichte*, 3rd ed. 6 vv. (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1885); in Italian: *Storia universale della Chiesa*, tr. Enrico Rosa, 9 vv. (Florence, 1904-1910).

¹⁹ Also available in English translation as Emil de Bonnechose, *Letters of John Huss*, tr. Campbell Mackenzie (Edinburgh, 1846).

Mussolini's book, however, helps us to understand the Duce's own personality, and it should be interpreted with reference to his political ideas and persona. In my opinion, the gain of insight is here of paramount importance. The book sheds light on Mussolini's cultural and political thought both at the time of its composition, and later. For instance the *Schlamperei* evident in his work as an author could serve as a mirror revealing the sloppiness of Duce's future political behaviour.

Mussolini viewed Hus as an extraordinarily positive, even exemplary figure. According to his biographer, De Felice, it was possible that the Duce felt a moral and psychological kinship with Hus, viewing him to some extent as a model. The resonance of "veridico," attributed to Hus by Mussolini, with "vero eretico," used by him as an occasional pseudonym, may be significant in that regard. His pseudonyms served as vehicles for self-characterization.²⁰ In any case, Mussolini felt a deep sympathy with the Bohemian Reformer.

De Felice also calls attention to the fact of the book's appearance in the publishing house of Podrecca and Galantara, an enterprise not directly dependent on the Italian Socialist Party. Podrecca was among those expelled from the party after its congress in Reggio Emilia in 1912. According to de Felice, the choice of publisher might have reflected Mussolini's partial estrangement from the official party line. De Felice recalled in that connection Mussolini's statement that his own religious form of socialism was far removed from the Philistine revolutionism, entertained by many of his friends.²¹ Mussolini's indirect, but distinct, polemic against Philistinism in his book might have reflected his current attitude toward the Italian Socialist Party.

The future Duce viewed the Bohemian Reformation in its militant stage as a social upheaval, even a "socialist" one.²² Much in this sense was copied from Bezold,²³ but also in the original passages (which are fewer) it is possible to find his attribution of social and socialist ideas to the Bohemian Reformation, as well as a stress on their allegedly revolutionary consequences. Thus, on the whole, Mussolini had a fairly positive view of the Bohemian Reformation at that of his writing. Yet, there were qualifications. The Bohemian religious wars, because of their violence, did not appeal to him as much as Hus's personality. In particular – despite his anti-Roman tendency – he showed dismay at the bloody excesses of the Taborites, even though their radicalism should have been close to his own heart as (then) a radical socialist. He claimed that the Taborites perpetrated the same kind of atrocities "for which hitherto the Catholics had been reproached,"²⁴ and that "their barbarism had bested the Roman Church."²⁵

²⁰ De Felice, "Introduzione," 7. For Mussolini's articles signed "vero eretico," see Mussolini, *Opera omnia*, vv. 1-4.

²¹ De Felice, "Introduzione," 18-19.

²² Benito Mussolini, *Giovanni Huss il Veridico* (Rome, 1913) 14, 81, etc.

²³ See, for instance, Bezold, *Geschichte der deutschen Reformation*, 11, 90, 124-126, 141-144, 150-161, etc.

²⁴ Mussolini, *Giovanni Huss il Veridico*, 81.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

Of interest is Mussolini's groping toward a view of the revolution as a mystical and religious phenomenon, which was noted by the Duce's subsequent official biographer and historian, Ivon de Begnac. According to the latter, for Mussolini "religious mysticism was the prime ingredient of a revolution, and the nation found its revolutionary confirmation in a return to its own origins."²⁶ A careful reading of his book on Hus reveals that Mussolini already hinted at these aspects of the future ideology of Fascism. These facets of thought were also discernible in other writings of his early period, and from his use of the pseudonym "vero eretico".

Its national thrust was another aspect of the Bohemian Reformation, which Mussolini viewed as fundamental. In this connection, he also relied heavily on his sources, particularly Leger and Bezold, but he did endorse unambiguously the national accent. It must be emphasized that this endorsement of the Bohemian Reformation's national aspirations – rather than their rejection (which might have been expected from a true-blue socialist) – gave the first warning of Mussolini's impending defection from internationalism to nationalism.²⁷ As the Marxist Leninists might have put it in the olden days, it was not accidental that Mussolini chose the Bohemian – rather than an Italian context – to make his nationalist point. After all, the Czechs had to face the same Teutonic oppressor as did – prior to World War I – the Italians of his beloved Trentino, where Mussolini had agitated in 1909.²⁸

The closing chapter of the book, "Žižka and the Bohemian Wars," summarized Mussolini's essential evaluation of the Bohemian Reformation. He spoke of two inseparable components of its epopoeia – religion and nationalism. Revealing his awe of the role of personality in history, he saw Hus as the crux and the spiritus movens of the entire phenomenon. He viewed Hus's death as an element, which had imparted a special aura of nobility to his teaching. While pillorying the despicability of Hus's judges, he did not forget to deplore – as mentioned earlier – what he considered the Taborites' horrendous savageries.

The author showed a notable political savvy about the exfoliation of the Bohemian Reformation. He stated: "A political party superceded religious heresy. Taboritism, at its core, was more a socio-political phenomenon than a religious one."²⁹ This statement profiled Mussolini's embryonic *Anschauung* not only on the Bohemian Reformation, but also on the dynamics of social evolution in general, namely on the partisan struggle causing a fission of energies, and on its class dimensions.

Let us leave aside the book's evident anticlericalism, which however was more pronounced than in the author's previous publications. We can then define the book's salient tenets as: nationalism; religion, understood generally as faith in an idea; the centrality of a leader incarnating and directing this idea, which then

²⁶ Ivon de Begnac, *Trent'anni di Mussolini* (Rome, 1934) 146.

²⁷ Paul P. Bernard and Gilbert B. Benthley, "Mussolini on Huss: Notes on the Birth of a Fascist," in: *Colorado College Studies* 1 (1958). Concerning nationalism and the Bohemian Reformation, see also Petr Čornej, "Idea národa v husitských Čechách" *Husitský Tábor*, Supplementum 1 (2001) 379-393.

²⁸ Mussolini stayed in Trentino from 6 February until 26 September 1909, as editor of several serials, belonging to Cesare Battista, namely *Avvenire del lavoratore*, *Il Popolo*, and *Vita Trentina*. He was officially expelled from the territory of the Habsburg Monarchy for seditious activity and dissemination of illegal publications.

²⁹ Mussolini, *Giovanni Huss il Veridico*, 81.

engulfed the masses; warning against the fission, which tended to weaken radical movements; and a strong social instinctive. These principles not only infused the mind of young Mussolini, but they also foreshadowed the contours of his mature views, as well as of the Fascist system, which he would begin to shape upon his 1922 assumption of power in Italy.

The Book's Aftermath

It cannot be said that the timing of the book was a happy one. Its publication was overshadowed by momentous historical events. During 1913, Mussolini and his admirers were distracted by a major strike of metal workers in Milan, and World War I took the center stage the following year.

At last, in January 1918, Mussolini's newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, partially reprinted two chapters from *Giovanni Huss il Veridico*.³⁰ De Felice has thought that their republication was to stoke the anticlerical fires of incipient Fascism.³¹ In my opinion, the reprint had to do with Mussolini's support of the Czechoslovak legions, about which he would write frequently with admiration during 1918. It was entirely logical to recall Hus as a hero of the Czech nation in that context. In the introduction to the reprint, Mussolini dwelt on the national and anti-German accent of the Bohemian religious wars: "The Czechs, who have fought the Germans and the Magyars heroically for centuries for their rights...could boast – at the threshold of the modern age – a national heretical movement of the highest historical significance."³² Similarly, the future Duce injected Hus's and Žižka's names into an article "Boemia," published in *Il Popolo d'Italia* after the battle on the river Piave, in which he spoke of the Czechs as a warrior folk, "whose qualities traced back to Hus's times."³³

The book's fortunes, however, plummeted after Mussolini's assumption of power. The ideology of revolt, which he had embraced as an author, now proved counterproductive. As a Prime Minister and the Italian Duce, he needed to stabilize society and his own power. For that purpose, he also concluded an armistice with the Vatican in the form of a concordat, and in this atmosphere of appeasement his book on Hus, damning the Roman Church, struck a distinctly discordant note. Hence, the Duce had it taken out of circulation and withdrawn from libraries.³⁴ Nevertheless, he remained proud of his opus, as attested by his official biographies, which not only mentioned, but also cited from, the volume.³⁵

³⁰ Benito Mussolini, "Il martire della nazione Boema Giovanni Huss," in: *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 5, 22 (22 January 1918).

³¹ De Felice, "Introduzione," 7.

³² Mussolini, "Il martire della nazione Boema."

³³ Benito Mussolini, "Boemia," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 5,180, (1 July 1918); Mussolini, *Opera omnia*, 11:167. By the fault of either the author or the printer, the name "Tisza" was substituted for "Žižka" in the text of the article. *Loc. cit.*

³⁴ De Felice, "Introduzione," 8; Benito Mussolini, *Giovanni Huss il Veridico* (Rome, 1948) 5; Bartoš's preface in Mussolini, *Mussoliniho kniha o Janu Husovi*, 4. See n. 1 above.

³⁵ De Begnac, *Trent'anni di Mussolini*, 69, 114, 119,144-146, gives citations; *idem*, *Vita de Benito Mussolini*, 3 vv. (Milan, 1940) 3:248-249, provides an even broader coverage; Armando Carlini, *Filosofia e religione nel pensiero di Mussolini* (Rome, 1934), 13, 44-45, gives excerpts; Sarfatti, *The Life of Benito Mussolini*, 149-150, tries to cover up the book's proscription, citing instead the publisher's obscurity and the author's neglect to deliver copies to libraries; the authoritative *Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti*, 36 vv. (Rome, 1929-1939) 24: 161, lists the book in its entry on Mussolini.

An element of *Schadenfreude* also helped to rescue the book from an utter obscurity. Mussolini's former revolutionary comrades could use the text as evidence of the subsequent perversity and treachery of the Italian führer. Such motives apparently inspired an English-language edition of the Hus book by the publishing house of Albert and Charles Boni in New York in 1929. The volume, however, lacked editorial preface or notes.³⁶

Another English-language edition appeared in New York ten years later under the imprint of the Italian Book Company.³⁷ It was a new and distinct translation and its editors were apparently unfamiliar with the previous New York edition. If the former was evidently a product of the Duce's ill-wishers, the editors of 1939 belonged among Mussolini's uncritical admirers, who characterized in the preface the reason for their work "as a solemn vow of loyalty to the Duce to set forth his image of a greater writer, which had stood in the shadow of a statesman."³⁸

Aside from its incorporation into Mussolini's collected works, published in 1951-1963,³⁹ *Giovanni Huss il Veridico* appeared in two more Italian editions. The house of Edinac published the monograph in Rome in 1948,⁴⁰ and Bonnanno Editore with the preface by De Felice in Palermo in 1988.⁴¹

As far as I know, the only scholarly commentary has been a study by Paul P. Bernard and Gilbert B. Benthley "Mussolini on Huss: Notes on the Birth of a Fascist," published in 1958.⁴² Relying exclusively on English-language sources, the article has called attention to the fact that Mussolini's endorsement of a nationalist movement signaled a waning of his internationalism.

Paradoxically, Mussolini's work has not aroused much attention in Bohemia. For a long time the only significant responses were an article by Julius Mader in *Literární noviny* in 1935,⁴³ and Loskotová's publication of excerpts with a brief introduction by Bartoš, an undertaking, which – as noted earlier – was related to her late husband's contacts with Mussolini.⁴⁴ The topic was tabooed in the post-World War II period, and the first harbinger of renewed interest was Holeček's article of 1994, which contained extensive citations from the text, as well as commentary based on the book itself.⁴⁵

Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David

³⁶ Benito Mussolini, *John Huss* (New York, 1929).

³⁷ Benito Mussolini, *John Huss, the Veracious* (New York, 1939).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁹ Mussolini, *Opera omnia*, 33:271-327. See n. 4 above.

⁴⁰ Benito Mussolini, *Giovanni Huss il Veridico* (Rome, 1948).

⁴¹ Benito Mussolini, *Giovanni Huss il Veridico* (Palermo, 1988). This edition lacks the supplement with Luther's text and Hus's letters.

⁴² Bernard and Benthley, "Mussolini on Huss." See n. 27 above.

⁴³ Julius Mader, "Mussolini jako Husův životopisec," *Literární noviny*, 8,2 (1935) 5.

⁴⁴ Mussolini, *Mussoliniho kniha o Janu Husovi*, ed. Loskotová. See n. 1 above.

⁴⁵ Holeček, "O potřebě kacířů: Benito Mussolini a Mistr Jan Hus." See n. 1 above.