

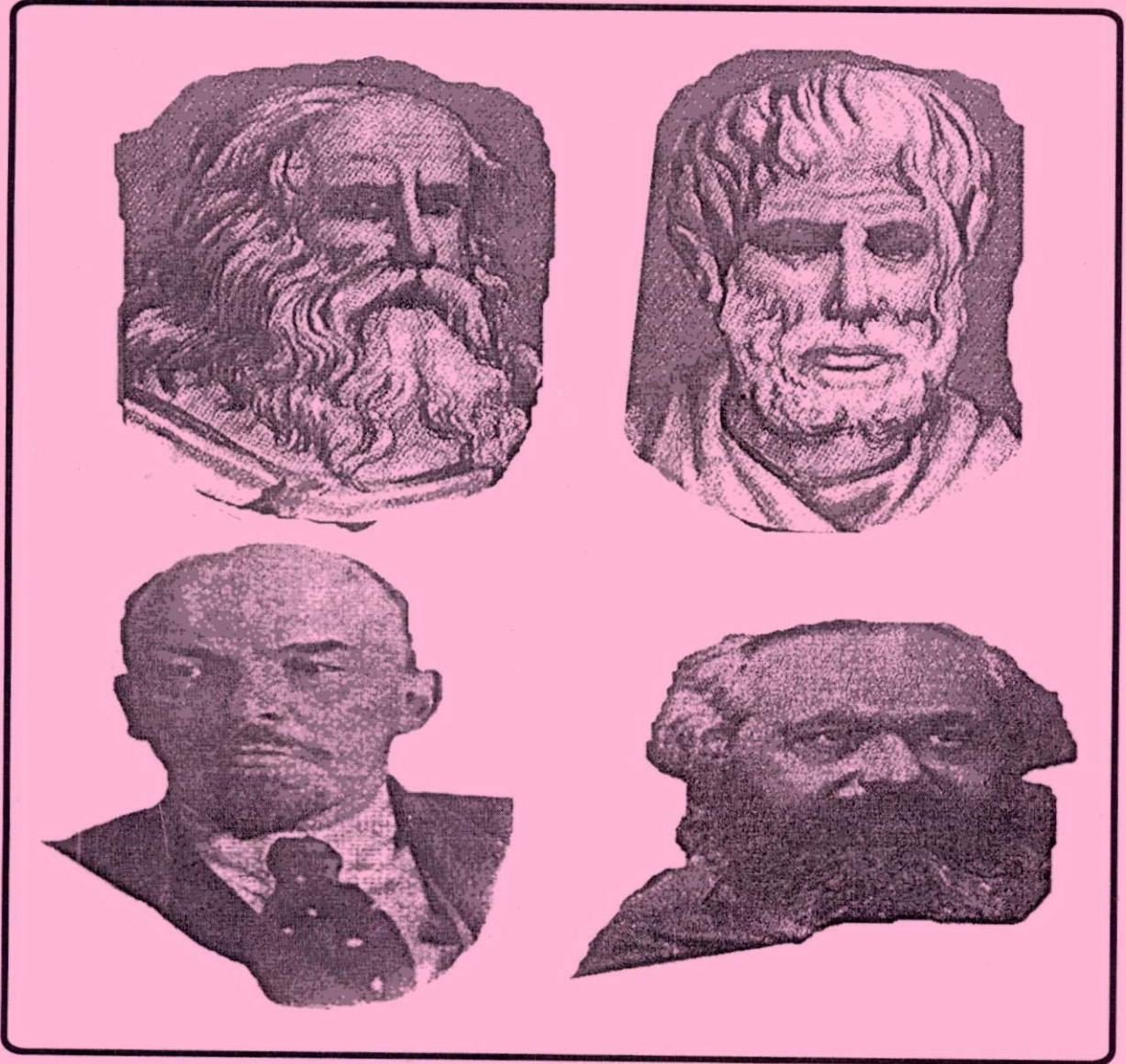
ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಮುಕ್ತ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ
ಮಾನಸಗಂಗೋತ್ರಿ, ಮೈಸೂರು - ೫೭೦ ೦೦೬



KARNATAKA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY
Manasagangothri, Mysore - 570 006

POLITICAL SCIENCE
MA [PREVIOUS]

494



Course - I
Paper - Western Political Thought

Block - III

ಉನ್ನತ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಇರುವ ಅವಕಾಶಗಳನ್ನು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಶಿಕ್ಷಣವನ್ನು ಪ್ರಜಾತಂತ್ರೀಕರಿಸುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಮುಕ್ತ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯನ್ನು ಆರಂಭಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ನೀತಿ 1986

The Open University system has been initiated in order to augment opportunities for higher education and as instrument of democratizing education.

National Education Policy 1986

ಮುಕ್ತ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯವು ದೂರಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬಹುಮಾಧ್ಯಮಗಳನ್ನು ಉಪಯೋಗಿಸುತ್ತದೆ.ವಿದ್ಯಾಕಾಂಕ್ಷಿಗಳನ್ನು ಜ್ಞಾನ ಸಂಪಾದನೆಗಾಗಿ ಕಲಿಕಾ ಕೇಂದ್ರಕ್ಕೆ ಕೊಂಡೊಯ್ಯುವ ಬದಲು, ಜ್ಞಾನ ಸಂಪತ್ತನ್ನು ವಿದ್ಯೆ ಕಲಿಯುವವರ ಬಳಿ ಕೊಂಡೊಯ್ಯುವ ವಾಹಕವಾಗಿದೆ.

ಡಾ. ಕುಳಂದೈಸ್ವಾಮಿ

"The Open University system makes use of Multimedia in distance education system. it is vehicle which transports knowledge to the place of learners rather than transport to the place of learning.

Dr. Kulanidai Swamy

ವಿಶ್ವಮಾನವ ಸಂದೇಶ

ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಂದು ಮಗುವು ಹುಟ್ಟುತ್ತಲೇ - ವಿಶ್ವಮಾನವ. ಬೆಳೆಯುತ್ತಾ ನಾವು ಅದನ್ನು 'ಅಲ್ಪ ಮಾನವ'ನನ್ನಾಗಿ ಮಾಡುತ್ತೇವೆ. ಮತ್ತೆ ಅದನ್ನು 'ವಿಶ್ವಮಾನವ'ನನ್ನಾಗಿ ಮಾಡುವುದೇ ವಿದ್ಯೆಯ ಕರ್ತವ್ಯವಾಗಬೇಕು.

ಮನುಜ ಮತ, ವಿಶ್ವ ಪಥ, ಸರ್ವೋದಯ, ಸಮನ್ವಯ, ಪೂರ್ಣದೃಷ್ಟಿ ಈ ಪಂಚಮಂತ್ರ ಇನ್ನು ಮುಂದಿನ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಾಗಬೇಕಾಗಿದೆ. ಅಂದರೆ, ನಮಗೆ ಇನ್ನು ಬೇಕಾದುದು ಆ ಮತ ಈ ಮತ ಅಲ್ಲ; ಮನುಜ ಮತ. ಆ ಪಥ ಈ ಪಥ ಅಲ್ಲ; ವಿಶ್ವ ಪಥ. ಆ ಒಬ್ಬರ ಉದಯ ಮಾತ್ರವಲ್ಲ; ಸರ್ವರ ಸರ್ವಸ್ವರದ ಉದಯ. ಪರಸ್ಪರ ವಿಮುಖವಾಗಿ ಸಿಡಿದು ಹೋಗುವುದಲ್ಲ; ಸಮನ್ವಯಗೊಳ್ಳುವುದು. ಸಂಕುಚಿತ ಮತದ ಆಂಶಿಕ ದೃಷ್ಟಿ ಅಲ್ಲ; ಭೌತಿಕ ಪಾರಮಾರ್ಥಿಕ ಎಂಬ ಭಿನ್ನದೃಷ್ಟಿ ಅಲ್ಲ; ಎಲ್ಲವನ್ನು ಭಗವದ್ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಿಂದ ಕಾಣುವ ಪೂರ್ಣದೃಷ್ಟಿ.

ಕುವೆಂಪು

Gospel of Universal Man

Every Child, at birth, is the universal man. But, as it grows, we turn it into "a petty man". It should be the function of education to turn it again into the enlightened "universal man".

The Religion of Humanity, the Universal Path, the Welfare of All, Reconciliation, the Integral Vision- these *five mantras* should become View of the Future. In other words, what we want henceforth is not this religion or that religion, but the Religion of Humanity ; not this path or that path, but the Universal Path ; not the well-being of this individual or that individual, but the Welfare of All ; not turning away and breaking off from one another, but reconciling and uniting in concord and harmony ; and, above all, not the partial view of a narrow creed, not the dual outlook of the material and the spiritual, but the Integral Vision of seeing all things with the eye of the Divine.

Kuvempu



**Karnataka State
Open University**

**Political Science
Course I**

Block

3

Introduction

Unit 11

Nature and Importance of Medieval Political Thought: Church Vs State

1 to 12

Unit 12

Conciliar Movement

13 to 24

Unit 13

Feudalism

25 to 32

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Block - III Introduction

Block - 3 dealing with Medieval Political Thought has been graduated into 3 units. Unit 11 is concerned with the Discussion on Nature, Stages of Development of Medieval Political Thought along with its Significance. Unit 12 embraces the explanation as the meaning, aims, intellectual ancestry of the Conciliar Movement, chief leaders of the movement, failure of the movement along with its significance. Unit 13 deals with the meaning of Feudalism, its features and importance.

1910

1911

1912

1913

1914

Unit – 11 Nature and Importance of Medieval Political Thought : Church Vs State

Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Nature
- 11.3 Stages of Development of Medieval Political Thought
 - 11.3.1 Initial Stage
 - 11.3.2 Second Stage : Church's upper hand
- 11.4 Importance
- 11.5 Let us sum up
- 11.6 Key words
- 11.7 Some useful books
- 11.8 Answers to check your progress Exercises

11.0 Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to understand

- the nature of medieval political thought
- the various stages of the development of medieval political thought
- the importance of medieval political thought

11.1 Introduction

There was no place for religion as such in the ancient Greek political thought, nor in the ancient Roman political ideas. Paganism and other forms of worship were in order. The birth of Christianity brought in its wake a new force, which could not be ignored in political ideas and developments. At first the Christian religion was met with opposition, later it was accepted and finally it was made the only official religion in Roman Empire. Soon thereafter however came the end of the Roman Empire. The question arose whether this religion was the culprit of the collapse of the Empire. Attacks on Christianity and defence of Christianity caused a fruitful and long discussion for nearly thousand years. The power of the Church was opposed by the rulers of the states. The ups and downs in the influence and prestige of the Church (or papacy) indeed constitutes an important chapter in the history not only of Europe but also of the world as a whole. It assumes special significance in the context of our own present debate of secularism and its relevance for our nation building.

11.2 Nature

Apart from the Jewish religion which was but confined to a very small territory (today's Israel and surrounding areas) there was no established religion in the European countries in the early times. The early Greek and Roman political thoughts had no religious component. Ethics or moral conduct was a significant factor in their thoughts. When Jesus preached, Christianity took birth. As it happens with new great ideas, Christianity in the beginning was feared and opposed, later accepted and finally worshipped. When Christianity did become a force to reckon with, the authorities of the state and the authorities of the religion as represented by the Church entered into a tussle for influence and supremacy. Men were on the whole during these years of Middle Age of Europe Stretching for 3rd to 14th century, more afraid of the after-life fortunes than the affairs of this world. Belief, faith and dogma were the hall-mark of life and not reason and scientific way of thinking. Hence, it became easy for the church

authorities to put fear of God in the hearts of men and command their obedience. The state authority was to that extent a poor loser. However, in course of time the religious authorities because of high concentration of power in their hands became oppressive to the people, and competitor to the kings. The conflict between the religious and political authorities, that is, between the church and state went on for about a thousand years in medieval Europe and there were ups and downs in the fortunes of the church in the competition. This lesson concentrates on these developments.

11.3 Stages of Development of Medieval Political Thought

11.3.1 Initial Stage

For nearly eight hundred years the Roman Empire stood like a mighty rock, When the Christian movement came into existence next door, Rome opposed it as being subversive and immoral. However, gradually the Christian religion grew in intensity and popularity. Rome was contrarily growing weaker on any accounts. As a bargain Rome allowed Christianity to enter the empire, then showed more and more favours to it as against the prevalent pagan practices and finally Christianity was declined to be the only official religion of the empire in 393 AD through the edict of Emperor Theodosius I.

In the meanwhile the Roman territory was subjected to repeated military attacks by the so called barbarians like the Huns, the Vandals, the Tutors and the Visigoths. The Roman Empire which was already weakened for any reasons collapsed like a house of cards in front of these attackers. The fall of Rome in 410 AD was attributed to the acceptance of Christianity as the two events were separated hardly by 17 years. While the Roman Empire flourished on the basis of manly paganism (Which was pre-Christian), Christianity made it collapse because of its neglect of 'this world' and its emphasis upon 'the other world' weakness, pacifism, loyalty to the Lord in Heaven, etc. "Pagan gods and hence Rome perished" this was the loud cry in Europe.

To defend the Christian faith in the face of this attack, there arose a scholar fro Algeria a pagan himself originally but converted to Christianity. That was St. Augustine (354-430 AD). He wrote a number of books all reflecting his great scholarship and strong commitment to defend the Christian faith. The most important work of his was De Civitate Dei, that is The City of God. In this book he offered a detailed and often convincing proof of why Rome fell. It fell, according to St. Augustine, not because of Christianity but because of its inherent

shortcomings. Its nature itself was defective. The city of God would never collapse; it is only the mortal city, the city of the Earth, which would decay and die. The fate is writ large in the very nature of the two cities; the City of God would never perish it is secure and permanent, which would consist of people 'redeemed', while the City of the Earth is inhabited by people of sinful nature, selfish, vain, and all those who follow Satan. Rome when she fell, had come to consist of such latter kind of people; that is why she collapsed. Had she been a truly Christian 'city', the end was impossible. That is how St. Augustine argued and won the battle for the Christianity.

While defending Christianity thus, St. Augustine did a marvelous job of raising the level of debate. He contributed a new theory of the state. He called the communion of men of righteous path a Christian commonwealth and further, made the church its visible symbol. At Augustine's Characterization of the two cities, one Christian and the other Unchristian ('This World') could roughly be quoted as follows:

The Christian city or 'The city of God' (De Civitas Dei)

Symbolised by God in Heaven. Love of God to the contempt of the self. Sings the glory of God. Says to God; Thou art my glory and the lifter of mine head. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength" Founded in the hope of heavenly peace and spiritual salvation. The love of God, the love of all His creations; submission to His wish and judgment. Faith in permanent and lasting peace in His Kingdom.

Therefore to be followed forever, as superior. Leading to true happiness and fulfillment – redemption.

The Unchristian City or The Earthly City (De Civitas Terrena)

Symbolised by Satan the Devil and paganism. Love of the self to the contempt of God; Sings the glory of the vain man and the devilish Satan.

Finds delight in own strength as represented by the ruler's strength. The rule is by the strength of the love of the self. Cruelty, extortion, pride, luxury and debauchery etc are the hall-marks of the self-love. Transient and illusive. Seductive and misleading. Based on greed and selfish impulses, all accomplishments bound to pass away – causing misery and anger.

Therefore to be shunned forever as inferior. Leading to naught and condemned to suffer.

In this kind of description of the two cities or two worlds in which man can opt to live, St Augustine captured successfully the imagination of men, and won for the Church a significant role. True happiness must be the goal, and true happiness can be had through the grace of God alone and the church which was the custodian of the faith. Church to him was the march of God in this world. All history of mankind was “ a majestic unfolding of the divine salvation in which the church marks the decisive movement”. By giving the position of pre-eminence to the church, St Augustine implied an inferior position to the state. By upholding the authority and role of the Pope through the Church, he down graded automatically the role and position of the rulers of the state. Thus the superiority of the church was established over the secular entity the state. For this strong defence, the Church was going ever to be grateful to St. Augustine.

His idea of the Christian commonwealth was underlined by the Greek belief in the social nature of man and the natural desire of man to love peace. True peace and true social happiness could be had according to him, if only the people had drunk deep of the Christian faith.

Prof. G.H. Saline sums up St. Augustine’s approach what he actually wants is that the state must be a christian state, serving a community which is one by virtue of a common Christian faith, ministering to a life in which spiritual interests admittedly stand above all other interests and contributions to human salvation by preserving the purity of the faith. Prof William Ebenstein puts it in even more precise words as “the peace that the state provides is not an end in itself but only a means a condition that makes the service to God possible.

The peace of the state is the temporary tranquility which enables man to strive for the heavenly city wherein peace never ends”.

But for the invention of God and the Church there is a lot of resemblance between Plato’s concept of justice/harmony and St Augustine’s view of justice. Likewise there is a common insistence upon the obedience to rule or dictat of the Church. Not surprisingly , the institution of slavery is upheld if not justified forcefully by the greatest christian theologian St. Augustine. He believes that slavery is both the result of the original sin of man and a means of salvation. A slave is made slave by God and he should not grumble but earn salvation through slaving well. However, St. Augustine does not explain why and how only some individuals are made slaves and others free if all were to attain salvation through slavery or pay for the

original sin of en. St. Augustine also upholds the institution of private property – obviously the ruling class alone had property and St. Augustine provided a defence for their possession of property and privileges. A truly christian view might have denounced private property or riches, though!

In view of the strong and original argument advanced by him in favour of the christian faith the church and the wealthy rulers of his time At. Augustine emerged as a leading light among the faithfuls. He emerged as a stout defender of the aristocracy as well. However his greatness ultimately lay in the fact that he shaped the emergence of a new empire, the christian one, following the fall of the Roman one. Peace and Justice which were demanded all over the fallen Roman empire received a strong and enduring endorsement at the hands of St. Augustine with a distinct flavour of Christianity for an entire era to come.

11:3.2 The Second Stage: Church's Upperhand

No doubt St. Augustine accorded a prime place to justice and peace in human society, although both of these concepts were soaked deep in the christian faith. What resulted from this account was the downgrading of the political authority of the state (the rulers or kings) and a simultaneous ascendance of the church as the redeemer agency which was very important for the now religious minded man everywhere in the middle ages of Europe. Consequently, the kings and Popes entered into a battle of ideas for supremacy. St. Augustine had implied that the institution of the Church was divine while the earthly-regime was transient and inferior. The kings could not be expected to take their inferior position lightly or willingly. After all the kings and kingdoms were there for all the ages prior to the birth of Christianity and they have enjoyed a distinct advantage of being divine in origin. They now could not be expected to accept a humiliating position of being inferior to and the mercy of the Pope or the Church. The Pope too could not but assert his new-found position superior to that of kingship. The popular mood was swinging in favour of the church as Christianity was gaining momentum and spreading fast and wide. To crystallize their position the authorities of the church spared no opportunity. Around 495 AD Pope Gelasius I, for example, propounded a theory, in continuation of ST. Augustine's that God has endowed full authority upon the church to minister justice and peace among all the followers of the faith. Christ was both a king and priest himself. He handed over his responsibility of leading his flock as the shepherd to his

disciplines who continued the mission through the institution of the church and papacy. As the work-load was heavy and combined higher and lower nature of work. The authority of the church came to be divided into two and accordingly the ecclesiastical /spiritual religious responsibility was kept with the pope or the church itself while the inferior task of administering temporal/political/mundane/earthly matters were entrusted to the care of the political rulers of states. The “two authorities” came to be called in a later parlance The ‘two sword’ one the religious or the ecclesiastical and the other temporal or the secular.

Though the ultimate source of all authorities was God, and although the two authorities (swords) had to function in harmony and equilibrium it was still the prerogative of the Pope to plead before God for all the subjects, lords and kings. Also in the final analysis of what constituted ‘justice’ the Pope alone could deliver the judgment not the kings. The church was the direct recipient of its authority from God, while the kings received theirs from the church. Hence, it was propagated that the church was an authority higher than the secular state ruled by the kings. Pope was seen thus superior to the kings.

In view of the rising popularity, power and influence of the Church and Pope the kings felt everywhere that it was not wise to question the doctrines propounded by the church. Yet, from time to time the inevitable question of demarcating the boundary of the two domains the ecclesiastical and the secular would prop up and produce scope for conflict between the church and the state authorities. The church was seen as grabbing more and more powers from the kings and consolidating if not also expanding its domain to the disadvantage of the kings. In the course of a few hundred years the church commanded not only the loyalty/ allegiance of them asses but also owned considerably large (in some states, the largest) agricultural land in addition to gold, money, palaces and militia. The authorities of the church from the highest to the lowest rendered several administrative, Judicial and financial services and charged fees from the people. At times the Pope became much more powerful than the king. Or the church much more powerful than the state.

Power, prestige, glory which the Pope came to enjoy was unrivalled in European history. In the eleventh century be precise in 1076 the then Pope, Corepory VII, declared that he had deposed the German Emperor Henry IV and further, excommunicated him. He also said he had released the subjects of the kingdom from their oath of allegiance to their king. Frightened and trust rated the king Emperor had to beg forgiveness from the Pope before

whose palace the king stood barefoot in sack-clothes. He was forgiven, after being made to wait for days in penitence. Thus, the Papal power reached its pinnacle. And it stayed there for nearly two proclamation claiming supremacy over the kings in the manner the sun was superior to the moon since it was only the light of the sun that the moon ever reflected. The moon possessed no light of his own. The successor Popes claimed total allegiance from not only the kings and Christians but also from the non-christians alike. Even a forged documents were flashed to buttress such claims "Donation of Emperor Constantine" was one such. It was supposed to have recorded constantine's handing over a portion of his empire to the rule and care of the Pope in all matters as claimed by Pope Innocent IV.

12th and 13th centuries saw the highest point of power and prestige achieved by the Church as the Popes. The authorities of the Church had become so much powerful that they had come to be viewed by the people as ecclesiastical tyrants worse than tyrannical monarchs and bandits. John of Salisbury (1120-1180) a famous bishop who was an associate of the Archbishop of center bury, Thomas Becket(murdered by the king's henchmen inside his cathedral in and a childhood friend of Pope Adrian IV, gave clear expression to his own views on the twin issues of the time. How the church was and ought to be superior to the kings and how the church's prestige had comedown with the corrupt and insensitive authorities of the church.

Though not quite original, John of Salisburg was held by any scholars as the typical intellectual who gave a definite shape to the church's claim of superiority. The church according to him was the soul, the moral sovereign, while the Prince was the head of the body of the mortal authority. He also said that the over temporal affairs, an inferior Job by the church even as the church retained with itself the other, superior, sword to be wielded over the ecclesiastical affairs. Those who gave the sword could re-claim it as well, he said. Also, if the prince lost his head or turned tyrant he could be deposed by a declaration of the church or by the people who could kill him without a sense of guilt. "He who takes the sword shall perish by the sword". Justice is what marks the qualitative difference between a gang bandits and the state. A prince is justified in ruling because he acts with justice; and if the equality of justice is poor or missing he has no moral authority to judge whether the prince is acting justly or unjustly. "Law is the gift of god, the model of equity, a standard of justice, a likeness of the divine will, etc." To administer law and justice in this mortal world the sword is given to

the prince by the church. "The Prince is, then a minister of the priestly power and one who exercises that side of the sacred offices which seem unworthy of the hands of the priesthood". But if the prince took himself seriously and turned a tyrant the consequences would follow as mentioned above. The church or the ecclesiastical authorities too could go wrong at times, and become tyrannical according to any thinkers. In that case said John of Salisbury, as a very fair person. "between the temporal and ecclesiastical tyrant, the latter is the worse".

He had reasons to criticize the standards of the church authorities from the highest to the lowest. He told the enquiring Pope frankly;

Your church authorities are drunk with power and pelf, are vainglorious, love not Christ but money; the palaces of priests dazzle the eye their loved of gold and bribe in is the talk of the town; the highest authority the pontiff is seen as the oppressor of the churches and fathers, extorting money and creating conflicts between them and the people; and "even the Roman Pontiff himself is a grievous and almost intolerable burden to all"! "These are the things, further, which people are saying".

The holy Pope heard it all but refused to make any comments. "The Pontiff", according to John himself laughed and congratulated me upon having spoken with such frankness". If this was the state of affairs of the church, and Pope was either a leading partner in it or helpless witness to it, one could only imagine the rot that has set in. And this deterioration appeared to be in direct proportion to the increasing concentration of power in the hands of the church. John of Salisbury though critical of the functioning of the church authorities offered a strong defence of the church vis-a-vis the state at this time.

A hundred years later, the church faced two historical events. Unmindful of Salisbury's criticism and pleading for introspection, the popes of the church went on a spree of self-glorification. In 1296, the then Pope, Boniface VIII, issued a command (Bull) called Clericis Laicos in which it was stated. No mundane authority (that is, state or king) was to collect tax from the clergy nor clergy to make payment". If anyone did, he would be ex-communicated". The kings of England and France protested against this dictat of the Pope. However nothing untoward happened. Both the sides remained guarded and did not make any further move to precipitate a crisis.

Four years later, in 1300 the pope went one step further. The first christian Jubilee was celebrated in Rome at the behest of the Church in which thousands of faithful took part.

A great function was conducted which brought unprecedented glory and money to the church. In a spectacular ceremony, The Pope robed himself in the attires of Pontiff, Ceaser and Emperor. In 1302 issued a famous Bull called Unam Sanctum which contained hardly any new doctrine but signified the new arrogance of Power. In its wide ambit, the Bull conveyed to the people of all kinds that the Holy church's consent/blessing was a must for everybody without which nobody would go to heaven. "we declare say define and pronounce that it is altogether a necessity of salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roan Pontiff". Next it conveyed to the kings that they all were subordinate to the Pope's authority/ 'Both swords are in the power of the church, the one by the hand of the priest, the other by the hands of the kings and knights but at the will and sufferance of the priest". The sword held by the priest ought to be superior to that of the kings. The actions of the highest earthly power, the kings, were to be judged by the spiritual authority, the priests. And if the actions of the highest of the priests, the pope, were to be judged it has to be done only by God and God alone, never by man. Because the priest's authority was divine.

This kind of declaration was deemed worth challenging at least by one king who enjoyed the support of his people. The French King Philip IV not only rejected the Pope's declaration of superiority and immunity from the state control over finances, he also ordered an enquiry against Pope Boniface VIII for his alleged cries of various types-murder, heresy, sexual immortality, selling church offices, practice of magic, idol worship etc., twenty-nine charges in all. The French king sent a close advisor of his Nogaret along with 1600 men to arrest the Pope and put him on trial before a General Council. In September 1303, Nogaret succeeded in arresting the Pope but let him off soon. Pope Boniface returned to his office crest fallen and died of shock soon thereafter. Scarcely any attention was paid by the people to the fate of the Pope. The church thus lost its prestige along with power and influence which it has displayed only a few months before. Boniface VIII's success died within eight months, hardly able to withstand the trauma. He was made to withdraw the order of Pope Boniface VIII excommunications the French King. His successor Popes, six in all were French and made several concessions to the royalty, even Nogaret and his soldiers. The papacy itself was situated in Avignon in Southern France fro 1305 to 1378 (Babylonian Captivity). The church was split into two at times into three (The 'Third Rome' in Moscow). The Comet Schism took place in the church and also the protestant Movement was launched. The great Holy

Roman Church lay in debris within three years of its reaching the pinnacle of glory and power. Internal decay as well as external challenges proved too difficult to be overcome. The collapse of the challenge of the church to the state power ended an era in Medieval European history.

Check Your Progress - 1

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Discuss the nature of Medieval Political Thought.

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2. Examine the various stages of the Development of Medieval Political Thought.

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3. Explain the significance of Medieval Political Thought.

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11.4 Let us sum up

The history of the conflict between the Church and state in Europe during the period 300-1300 A.D. shows that religion has played a powerful role in shaping the society and polity. Also it shows that religious leaders and institutions can get drunk with power and tend to be overbearing in their attitude towards others. The two lessons are however not confined to the history of Christianity alone. Perhaps the same consequences are witnessed in the case of other leading religions of the world with varying degrees of availability of documental proof. The history of the modern world began with the decline of the church and importance of faith in Europe from 14th century, Renaissance, that is, the rise of reason and emergence of man as the central figure, was a logical outcome of the collapse of the dogma-power witnessed during the thousand years of medieval Europe.

11.6 Key words

Dogma	-	Belief or statement which cannot be questioned
Ecclesiastical	-	the affairs of religion: linking man-church-god.
Ex-communicate	-	throw out from the religious order boycotting
Mundane/Temporal	-	that which deals with this material world.
Pagan	-	Pre-Christian faith of the people, worshipping of spirits, nature and other forces.
Pontiff and Papacy	-	Pope and Pope's rule
Salvation	-	Liberation from this world's bondage: "Mukti".

11.7 Some Useful Books

William Ebenstein	-	Great political thinkers
George H. Sabine	-	A History of Political Theory
C.C. Maxey	-	Political Philosophies

11.8 Answers to check your progress exercises

Check Your Progress - 1

1. See section 11.2
2. See section 11.3
3. See section 11.4

Unit 12 Conciliar Movement

Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Meaning
- 12.3 Aims
 - 12.3.1 Intellectual ancestry of the conciliar movement
 - 12.3.2 Conciliar movement : Decisive moments
 - 12.3.3 Chief leaders of the movement
 - 12.3.4 Failure of the movement
 - 12.3.5 Significance of the movement
- 12.4 Let us sum up
- 12.5 Key words
- 12.6 Some useful books.
- 12.7 Answer to check your progress exercises.

12.0 Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to understand

- The final phase of the Church's confrontation with the state in the medieval history of Europe.
- How the conciliar movement laid the basis for the emergence of the modern state.

12.1 Introduction

The conciliar movement which occurred in the fifteenth century was both an effect and a cause. It was the result of

- i) the intellectual dissent expressed in the previous few centuries when thinkers like Dante, Marsilio and others raised doubts about the all-encompassing authority of the Pope,
- ii) the rise of nationalism which the counter attack on Papacy by the kings as secular power-holders,
- iii) was witnessed all over Europe, in addition to the resentment over the monopoly of the position of Pope by Italians and
- iv) the emergence of reason as against the hitherto prevailing dogmatic attitude. When the conciliar movement failed to reform the Roman church the inevitable occurred there was a result against the Roman church from outside, that is, the Reformist movement which was led by Martin Luther in Germany. Jean Calvin in France and other European countries, who broke away from the mainstream church and weakened it beyond recognition. Hence, a study of the rise and failure of the conciliar movement is an useful exercise.

12.2 Meaning

Intellectual efforts to restore the Roman Church to its original functions of a strictly ecclesiastical institution and purification of the Roman Church which had become obnoxious on account of corruption debanchery and arrogant: these two tasks were the purposes of the conciliar movement. The movement was led by the general council of Bishops or churches themselves who wished to make the pope accountable to the community rather than leave him unquestionable, infallible and a sovereign super-monarch in the name of god. Rationalization, purification and democratization may be the key words to understand the conciliar movement. It was called conciliar because the councils of churches tried to achieve these goals.

12.3 Aims

From the above description it should be clear that the aims of the conciliar movement were :

- i) to make the Pope and the Roman Church to shed the claim of superiority over the state/kings,
- ii) to restore the Pope to the original role of the head of an ecclesiastical institution.
- iii) to make the Pope answerable/accountable to the General Council of Churches or Bishops,
- iv) to respect the national sentiments of the various people and follows of the faith in Europe,
- v) to cleanse the Roman Church and the Pope of corrupt practices and despotic rule, and
- vi) to pave the way for democracy and intellectual (rational) enquiry. Whether the conciliar movement achieved success in all its goals or not is a different matter. In fact it failed. Even then it is important to know what it attempted and why it failed.

12.3.1 Intellectual Ancestry of the conciliar movement

- a) Though the conciliar movement occurred in the fifteenth century its roots can be traced much earlier. Perhaps the most fierce battle against the concept of the Pope being all powerful was put up by the great Florentine poet and politician Dante (1265-1321). His critical views against the Pope and the Roman church made him an enemy of both and his book *De Monarchia* was burnt on the order of Pope John XXII in 1329. He himself was banished from the Italian province of Florence by the church authorities, with a threat of being burnt alive. If he were to be caught! Dante's fame and all his troubles came from his views expressed in that book in which he held that the church could not have been the source of secular power at all since it was known very well that the Roman Emperors possessed all authority and power when the church had not even come into existence! He believed in separation of the two powers, secular and ecclesiastical and assign supremacy to the king and the Pope in each of them independently. It was in conformity with the biblical command: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto god the things that are god's" Yet the Pope would not hear of this. Dante visualized a secular universal rule by one world-Emperor who would alone be able to establish and maintain peace on earth akin to the ever lasting peace in

heaven. This infuriated the church to no end. Dante sowed the seeds of separation of church from the state and even more importantly theology from philosophy.

- b) Another name the church hated most was Marsilio of Padua about whom Pope Clement VI said the “worst heretic I have ever read”. Marsilio (or Masiglio, or Marsilius) of Padua (1270-1343) was no ordinary thinker, he is perhaps rightly rated as the greatest political thinker of Europe after Aristotle. He was a leading light in the University of Paris. His chief work *Defensor Pacis* or *The Defender of the Peace*, (1324) is a massive treatise written with the help of his friend and mentor, John of Jandun of the Paris University itself. The book deals with vital subjects like the state, law, church, representative democracy etc. Marsilio once visited the Roman church and came back shocked at its degeneration. He believed that those who plumped for papal supremacy had all mistaken views of the world, mistaken habits of life, mistaken ethics and mistaken theology. He further believed that things can be got right if only the secular ruler had supremacy over the world’s affairs. He subscribed to Aristotle’s view that state was a natural evolution which had come into existence to meet the needs of men in society, and that there should be proper peace and law & order if social progress were to be made. In this the church should not meddle. Man’s religion concerned itself with his inner life while his external actions had to be controlled by the state. The church had nothing to do with the external aspects. Also, the king as the ruler of the state and the Pope as the ruler of the inner-self affairs were to be like the foremost servants in their respective spheres and not to lord over the people without any accountability, Marsilio was perhaps one of the earliest in the middle ages of Europe to come up with the idea of representative government – both in the secular sphere and in the church. He wanted the Pope to be elected and controlled and if necessary changed by the council of churches! He threw up the idea of the legislator by which he meant the sovereignty of the people as against the mastery of the divine authority be it the king or pope. It was Marsilio who talked of removal of poverty and disparity of wealth, who emphasized the external regulation of the moral, political, economic, cultural and educational aspects of life, who foresaw the need for a welfare state and who foresaw the need for a welfare state and who thus laid the foundation for the concept of a secular state.

c) To a lesser extent than Marsilio, three powerful publicists and advisers to kings influenced the secular attack on Papacy. John of Paris and Pierre Dubois both on hand to advise and defend the French King Philip IV also called Philip the Fair, in his fight against Pope Boniface VIII in 1302-03, and William of Ockham of Oxford University who was perished and adviser and defender of king of Bavaria, Louis, in his fight against Pope John XXII in 1314, poured scorn upon the Papal claims of supremacy and ownership of property to the exclusion of the state control. They all believed that popes had stealthily usurped powers beyond their original authority and constituted a threat to the state. John of Paris went to the extent of saying. "The Prince may repel the violence of the Papal sword with his own sword, within measure and in doing so he would not be acting against the Pope but against his enemy and the enemy of society,"(1302). Pierre Dubois (1250-1320) asked for the abolition of the temporal power of the Papacy "Which was the cause of so much evil" and transferring it to the French king! In his view the French king Philip IV was eminently suited to establish peace on earth and head the domination of the world in the true Christian spirit. He advised to Pope to hand over his temporal power and ask for a handsome annual pension from the French King! William of Ockham (1280-1349) (who was less vitriolic and more scholarly, asked the pope to behave as a representative of the Christian body and not indulge in making audacious and autocratic claims. His ideas on several subjects like equality, liberty, justice, private property, public good, consent of the governed, representative government (both in the church and state), minority rights, tyranny, welfare state etc influenced the leading thinkers of the conciliar movement.

Check Your Progress - 1

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Why did the church lose its influence and prestige in 14th century?

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2. What was Dante's criticism of the church?

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3. Elaborate the ideas of Marsilio of Padua in relation to the Church or Pope.

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4. What were the Chief arguments put up in defence of the king?

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12.3.2 Conciliar Movement :Decisive Moments:

We have noted in the previous lesson how a battle royal took place between Pope Boniface VIII and French king Philip IV in 1303. The Pope had challenged the king over his right to tax church property, ex-communicated the king after deposing him. But unlike other kings elsewhere earlier, this king of France proceeded to arrest the Pope and put him on trial for various and sordid crimes. The pope died of shock and was succeeded by a series of Popes who all wanted to submit weekly to the French king and save their skin and save the

church from scandals. Once the balloon of ego, audacity and power was punctured the church ran into various difficulties. The seven popes who came after the demise of Boniface VIII were almost the nominees of the French king and in a way held captive in the southern France. They did not go to Rome but functioned from Avignon. This lasted for 67 years from 1309 to 1376. It is described as 'Babylonian captivity'. The ignominy of the defeat and exposure of sordid affairs of the Church left any of the pious Bishops, the heads of churches in various provinces or states aghast and also without a leadership worth the name. In 1378, when a new pope had to be nominated, the collage of cabinets which does the nomination faced a split. The French cabinets in keeping with the practice of 'Babylonian captivity' elected a French to the position of Pope who took the name of Clement VII, while the Italian cardinals elected one among themselves as Pope (Urban VI). The two popes refused to yield and another unseemly dispute ensued. The spiritual mission of the popes or the church was ignored and the two rival popes launched a fratricidal campaign one against the other. The devout men were shocked all over the Christian world. In 1409 a council of cardinals and Bishops was convened at Pisa and a solution was sought to be found. It decided to unseat both the popes and elected a new-third-pope. The solution proved to be worse than the disease. Instead of two, now there were three popes all claiming to be genuine vicar of Christ. This led to what is called 'The great schism' in the church. It represented the internal decay and the forgotten message of Christ. The church in general was discredited in the eyes of Christians. Any outstanding pious and fearless men disregarded the Roman Church and popes and preached on their own which attracted a good deal of following. These included great leaders like Wycliff and John Huss. They were victimised by the church. The revolt and revulsion against the church for all these happenings became known as conciliar movement. Because the council of church or general council of church took upon itself the responsibility of purification of the Papacy.

12.3.3 Chief leaders of the movement.

Three of the many leaders of the conciliar movement deserve our special attention. John Gurson of France 1363-1429 was endowed both with intellect and leadership. His pamphlets and speeches exercised tremendous influence in the councils meetings. He regarded of the church as a hierarchy of the clergy and entrusted all powers of conducting the affairs of the church to a general church council. The Pope was supposed to be a nominee of the

church council and was under its control. He reined in both the king and Pope giving people a right of control over them. He was influenced in his thinking obviously by Marsilius of Padua. The second leader was Nicholas of Cusa (1400-1464) who was an outstanding academic personality of the time. He contributed or unity which put both the king and pope on equal footing asked to work in harmony within their allotted spheres. As in God's universe so in human affairs each had a specific assigned role which was to be performed so as to achieve the perfect end of the whole system. There was to be no question of inferiority or superiority. The second theory propounded by Nicholas was that all power emanated from God ultimately, but to the kings and popes it comes to them through the people only. Hence there was an attempt to reconcile the divine and human origin of authority. According to Nicholas the people who gave authority to the rulers also agreed to obey them. "There was a general compact of human society to obey its kings". This theory influenced greatly the future thinkers of the social contract. He also held the view that Christ was the real head of church and he manifested himself through the council of church. Pope being merely an executive head answerable to the council. "The Judgment of a single fallible man was likely to contain which reflected the whole wisdom of the church", he observed. The third thinker of the conciliar movement was Aeneas Sylvius (1405 -1464) who was a versatile personality. Like Nicholas he too endorsed the consensual and contractual foundation of authority. In addition he gave a dimension of history to the state of nature – which was to be used later by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. He put up a fanciful tale of the transformation of nature of men from the Garden of Eden to the Roman Empire. Maintenance of universal peace was their objective and the rulers, secular as well as ecclesiastical, were chosen by the people and hence responsible to them.

On the whole the common contention of the intellectuals of the conciliar movement was that the church was the receiver of God's mandate and Pope was merely its tool the church existed by virtue of divine and natural law. The rulers and officials of the church were subject to these laws which could be interpreted and upheld by the representative body of the church (The General Council of Church). If the Pope exceeded the limits he may be deposed. He was the vicar of the church and not of Christ.

As Prof. Phyllis Doyle sums up the Conciliar movements, "it was a reaction against the riches. Desire for high office, simony and personal laxity which debauched the morals of the

clergy. It represented a struggle between two opposite systems of government – constitutional versus autocracy”.

12.3.4 Failure of the Movement

In spite of the brilliance and royal support it received the conciliar movement failed in its mission miserably. The church fought back and won partially whereas the councils faded away. The reasons were not far to seek. Some of these may be mentioned as below.

- i) the leaders of the conciliar movement attempted something which was impossible at that time: to lay down a constitution for the church which was spread all over Europe. There was no conducive international atmosphere nor amity and good will among nations to corner the church authorities.
- ii) The meetings of the conciliar were often marked by nationalistic feelings and mutual jealousies, and hence a frontal attack on the church was not credible.
- iii) Everyone believed in reforms of the church but everyone expected somebody else to start the process, and not come forward to bell the cat.
- iv) England, France and Germany were all interested in defining and delimiting the powers and position of the Roman church but these countries were engulfed in serious protracted wars one against the other, and the church did not get the short shrift it expected. But instead it was ignored or used as expediency demanded in each case.
- v) There were no great leaders to inspire the unity and strength of the movement.
- vi) The medieval European mind was, after all, ignorant, dominated by faith, orthodoxy, conservatism, fanaticism, and other worldliness. The man in the street was not well informed. He was not aware of what was going on in the minds of brilliant thinkers from the university of Paris or elsewhere.
- vii) Geographic, linguistic and other differences were too strong to expound common cause against the church.
- viii) The corrupt authorities of the church who had to lose much if thrown out, united and fought back successfully.

As a result, the cry for constitutional and reform had to remain a cry in the wilderness. At least it had to wait a bit longer to be heard and responded to.

12.3.5 Significance of the Movement

Eventhough the conciliar movement failed in its main objective, it was not without significance altogether. It exerted even in its failure some noteworthy influence on the coming events. For example, the failure of this movement which was from within the church, led to the outbreak of revolt against the church from outside. The protestant movement launched in Germany by Martin Luther, and by Jean (John) Calvin in France, Holland etc was much too powerful for the church lost a great deal of prestige, power, influence and at times appeared too feeble before the protestant ideas and institutions. Also, the failure of the conciliar movement left a fragmented, not united, Europe with its inevitable internecine warfare and nationalistic Jingoism. Though not able to make and instant impact, the theories of representative government, secular state, popular foundation of sovereignty, social contractualism, liberty and equality came up in a big way a century or two later. In a measure the conciliar movement truncated the power and role of the Pope though not altogether as intended. The significance of the movement lay in the fact that it heralded the end of the universal/European Papal rule and instead facilitated the emergence of the competitive nationalistic secular state system. It also should be noted that the fifteenth century not only belonged to the conciliar movement but also to the Renaissance in Europe. The two together unleashed a new era in European politics, history, economy etc.

12.4 Let us sum up

The conciliar movement was a reaction to the self aggrandizement and abuse by the popes and the Roman church. Brilliant minds worked on how to save the people and princes from the oppressive Papacy. The 'General Council Church' was thought of as a better substitute for the pope. Many new and brilliant ideas were thrown up during the discussions like popular control, elected government, representative legislator, natural right and natural laws, secular basis of power, minority rights, universal emperor, moral and legal basis of state, and purification of the papacy. They all produced no immediate influence but did make impact on the next centuries. With the failure of the conciliar movement, a move drastic revolt against the Roman catholic church became inevitable and thus the protestant reformation movement took birth. Also, the Renaissance came up in Europe which brought down the curtain on the middle ages of Europe and heralded a new age. The conciliar movement paved the way for Renaissance knowingly or unknowingly. The church won but a temporary reprieve with the

failure of this movement. A new era was waiting to be born, the conciliar movement appeared to have come a wee bit early rather than timely.

Check Your Progress - 2

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Describe the events that led to the conciliar Movement.

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2. Discuss the main features of the theories propounded by the intellectuals of the conciliar movement.

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3. Account for the failure of the conciliar movement.

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4. Bring out the significance of the conciliar movement.

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12.5 Key Words

- Babylonian captivity : Holding (of the Pope) by Demonic and deceptive means(befitting Satan)
- Heretic : One who makes his own interpretation of the Biblical writings, departing from the official
- Jingoism : Narrow, unthinking nationalism or patriotism
- Renaissance : The rise of reason and reemergence of man as the central concern
- Schism : split or division
- Vicar : Earthly representative of God or Christ.

12.6 Some useful books

- William Ebenitein : Great Political Thinkers
- William Ebenitein : Introduction to Political Philosophy
- George H. Saline : A History of Political Theory
- C.C. Maxey : Political Philosophies

12.7 Answers to check your progress

Check Your Progress -1

1. See section 12.1
2. See section 12.3.1(a)
3. See section 12.3.1(b)
4. See section 12.3.1(c)

Check Your Progress -2

1. See section 12.3.2
2. See section 12.3.3
3. See section 12.3.4
4. See section 12.3.5 and 12.3.6

Unit 13 Feudalism

Structure

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Meaning of feudalism
- 13.3 Features and growth of feudalism
- 13.4 Importance of Feudalism
- 13.5 Let us sum up
- 13.6 Key words
- 13.7 Some useful books
- 13.8 Answers to check your progress exercises

13.0 Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to understand

- The circumstances leading to the emergence of feudalism
- Meaning of feudalism
- Its influence on Society
- Features of feudalism and
- Importance of feudalism

13.1 Introduction

Feudalism in form or another prevailed in various parts of the world. In the West/ Europe it existed for nearly five hundred years until the end of the middle ages or the emergence of a new age, Renaissance. It existed in China Japan and Egypt too. In India its variant had been in existence for a long time. The fact that we do not have a proper equivalent term for feudalism may suggest that our system was quite different in its essence fro the European annotation. Yet, the institution functioned in different forms in different times and places. What is understood by the term feudalism in Europe is a kind of society or civilization that flourished during the closed agricultural economy of Europe in the medieval period of its history.

According to the standard summary of the subject by the New Encyclopedia Britannia (1974) the origins of European feudalism are to be found in the early Carolingian period of the Frankish kingdom of the eighth century when the granting of lands (fief) and the establishing of personal bonds between the king and the holders of the fief were linked together. This bonding of the higher and the subordinate with mutual rights and obligations came to be replicated at various other levels and even the church followed suit. Feudalism spread with the Frankish conquests into northern Italy, Spain and Germany and later into the St. Slavic territories. The Normans took it to England in 1066 and to southern Italy and Sicily a few years later. From England feudalism spread to Scotland and to Ireland. Finally the near Eastern territories that the crusaders conquered were given a strong feudal organization.

13.2 Meaning of Feudalism

“In its Specific and technical meaning feudalism means a social system of rights and duties based on land tenure and personal relationships in which land (and to much lesser degree other) sources of income is held in fief by vassals from lords to whom they own specific

services and with whom they are bound by personal loyalty". As the Encyclopedia defines it.

In this explanation two words are used which need to be made clear. Fief means the land / fields handed over for cultivation on for purposes of custody as property. Fief also means the holder of it. He is obliged to the donor of the fief that is, the king or any superior for this grant. In return he should pay tribute and offer other services (including fighting men from among his peasantry) to the king. The king also extends, in exchange, protection to the fief and bestows upon him certain administrative, financial and judicial functions almost as rights of the fief. Vassal is essentially a military man who provides fighters and equipments of fighting and leads in battles for the sake of and on behalf of the king. Vassal is given in exchange prestige and powers which may also include a fief. He would also be in charge of collecting military intelligence and diplomacy. He would bear and demonstrate personal loyalty to the king. Whereas fiefs would be usually hereditary, Vassals may not be so, unless of course if they held fief too.

13.3 Features and Growth of Feudalism

The Roman empire was essentially a city based system. Hierarchically arranged and integrated very well the system revolved around the city or big towns. The population of Rome itself was estimated to be one million in the first century A.D. The invasions which occurred repeatedly of the Germanic tribes. The Arabs and Magyars all but destroyed this system. The Roman empire collapsed and city of Rome was deserted. Its population in the fourth century A.D. was no more half of what it used to be in the first century. It was further reduced to a mere 17000 by the fourteenth century. The kingships or imperial rule had vanished and along with it vanished a central authority to command obedience over a large territory. Small towns and villages became the only viable units of rule. Also, the exchange economy was lost and in its place locally self-sufficient agricultural economy came to prevail. This too made the medieval Europe a world of villages. The local landlord or the warrior was all that represented power. The land was the measure of everything: power, economy, wealth, status and prestige. People were cut off from neighbourhood and of course the outside world altogether. Illiteracy, closed minds, 'a believing mind', and close links between the sons of the soil and the local lord were all there to be seen and felt. This was in fact feudalism. A congregation of feudal lords into kingdom which in a way was no more than a feudalism on a larger scale, emerged as a viable entity for centuries.

It has been said aptly that in the later Roman and early medieval society in Europe the prevailing need was protection-protection against the sudden attacks of invaders, results of peasants, protection against the unwarranted demands of government officers, and even against the heavy though legal exactions (taxes) from the superior rulers. This protection should have been made available in the normal course by the emperors or kings but in this period it was not possible. Hence a series of interdependent relationships involving mutual rights and obligations evolved, starting from the lowest level of villages to the seat of king or the court of the royals. This too was feudalism. The dependence of the king on the services and money offered by the fief-holders and vassals, usually the two went together made the landlords the kingpins of the system. They demanded more and more autonomy in their functioning. Which they got in return for meeting the increasing demands of the kings. The feudal lords staying in their manors commanded the services and loyalties of their jurisdiction, enforced their own administrative, economic and judicial rules. They adjudicated disputes and imposed punishments. Their lands were immune from the visits and control of the king's officers. This too was feudalism. To make the situation even more special, the church too behaved like a feudal lord. They owned lands administered almost all the functions of a feudal lord and even the Bishops acted as super lords comparable only to the Barons and Vassals. They even possessed armies and used them directly or lent them for a price. Moreover the clergy from the church were the only literate people. There was so much demand for the services of the clergy for administrative, diplomatic and other services from the king and barons, that the church became a powerful tool and could exert its own influence on the entire system. Servitude of the people, oppression of the landlords and opportunism of the church became the hallmark of the system. This too was feudalism. The system flourished from the ninth century onwards and reached its peak in the early eleventh century and declined in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

In the eleventh century cities started coming up all over Europe once again and this posed a serious challenge to the landlords and churches who viewed the rising class of merchants and traders with suspicion and hostility. The static agrarian economy which suited the was beginning to give place to the money-based and trade-based economy which gave rise to mobility and new solidarity among the businessmen. The revival of urban life was particularly vigorous in Italy from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. As William Ebenstein

observes. The capitalist system did not start with the Industrial revolution in the eighteenth century England but with these bold commercial and financial enterprises in the thirteenth century Italy". It was not a mere coincidence that the discovery of Aristotle and Greek intellectual power-house ignited a new curiosity among the enterprising Italians especially in Florence, Genoa and Venice. From these cities there emerged the new class of thinkers and doers who led a new blaze in Europe called renaissance. In the wake of thinking as influenced by the Greeks a new concern for man who was for the Greeks the measure of all things, and discovery of the outside world (that is, overseas trade and location of 'new' countries across the oceans including the Americans) a new parameters of knowledge hit Europe. Gone, or going, were the old-world ways: God, Lords, scriptures, agriculture closed minds, illiteracy and lethargy. The spirit of the renaissance foreclosed the feudal era in Europe and opened a new one which led to the modern nation-state system and professionally managed state-system. New economic. Social, legal and international system were struggling to be born even as the feudal system lay on its death-bed.

Check Your Progress - 1

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Explain what is meant by feudalism in the medieval Europe.

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2. Estimate the importance of feudalism in the history of political thought.

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13.4 Importance of feudalism

From eighth to twelfth centuries feudal system worked in Europe. Though it is called a dark age it was not without significance. Feudal relations made a deep impact upon the evolution. in course of time, of several important political, legal and social institutions. As observed by a scholar the structure of modern ethical and political thought from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century was built, in the main, of stones heron in the medieval quarries". He was referring of course, to the feudal quarries. As a political institution feudalism gave the people a much needed protection against all forces – internal as well as external of aggression. It gave a social cohesion to the isolated units. The agrarian economy provided a universe of its own. Land laws, maintenance of order, consultation and mutual dependence between the king and lords on the one hand, and between the lords and the peasants and serfs on the other, cheap militia, a low but contented life-style for the common man, and respect for local customs all these marked the feudal system which survived for so long. At the end of it, birth was given to the modern ideas of property, rights, representative assemblies, international law, political and legal sovereignty, secularism and so on.

13.5 Let us sum up

Feudalism was necessitated by the lack of a control authority which could have been provided by the Roman Emperor. Since the empire collapsed and along with it collapsed the city based civilization, an isolated, agrarian, closed but protected system based on the land alone had to come about. The landlord and the king and likewise the peasants and the landlord evolved first and informal and later on a formal system of Interdependence. One would give land and privileges pertaining to it and the other would get military to it and the other would get military and financial help. So far as the Land lord and the peasants and serfs were concerned there would be a close-knit relationship between them based on service for protection. In the course of time the hold of the landlord and the clergy (who alone were the literate group) came to command too much of power. Yet as time passed by the hold of the church weakened, the landlords began to lose their clout, merchant class amassed wealth, the intellectuals spread a new wave of re-discovery of man (in place of God-centered thoughts) following the influence of the Greek classics, and mechanic inventions commended a new scientific enquiry. From the twelfth century onwards feudalism started sliding under attacks from various rival forces. centralized bigger states helped by a regular salaried staff, and a

paid/mercenary armies to fight battles eclipsed the system of free-service of feudalism operating in smaller territories.

But it is wrong to dismiss feudalism as an unproductive and irrelevant socio-economic-political-military system. Almost all of the eighteenth – nineteenth century ideas (like natural rights. Natural laws, customs and tolls, sovereignty, representative assemblies, responsible government, secularism, international law, military system and international banking and trade) owed their birth to the feudal practices. As the new Encyclopedia Britannica would sum up. “Although feudalism by the end of the 14th century was no longer as political and social force, it had left its mark on European Society. It exercised its greatest influence in the elaboration of modern forms of constitutional government. Ideas about consent to taxes, resistance to and defiance of the lord, and the whole balance of rights and duties between lords and vassals played a great role in colouring the outlook of early representative institutions”. Therefore it would be appropriate to say “The Middle Ages and Feudalism are not dead. They live among us, and are contemporary with us, in many institutions of our life and many modes of our thought” (J.F.C. Hearnshaw in *The Social and Political Ideas of some great Medieval Thinkers*, 1923)

13.6 Key words

Feudalism	:	From Latin word feodum or feudum : fee or fief; holding land or trade rights for a fee
Fief	:	the land held by the landlord, or the holder of the land.
Vassal	:	the head of militia owing allegiance personally to the king with or without a fief.
Manor	:	the headquarter and living house of the feudal lord or Vassal
Renaissance	:	Emergence (in the fifteenth century Italy) of a rational and humanistic thinking.

13.7 Some useful books

William Ebenstein	:	Great Political Thinkers
William Ebenstein	:	Introduction to Political Philosophy
J.F.C. Hearnshaw	:	Social and Political Ideas of some great Medieval Thinkers. 1923

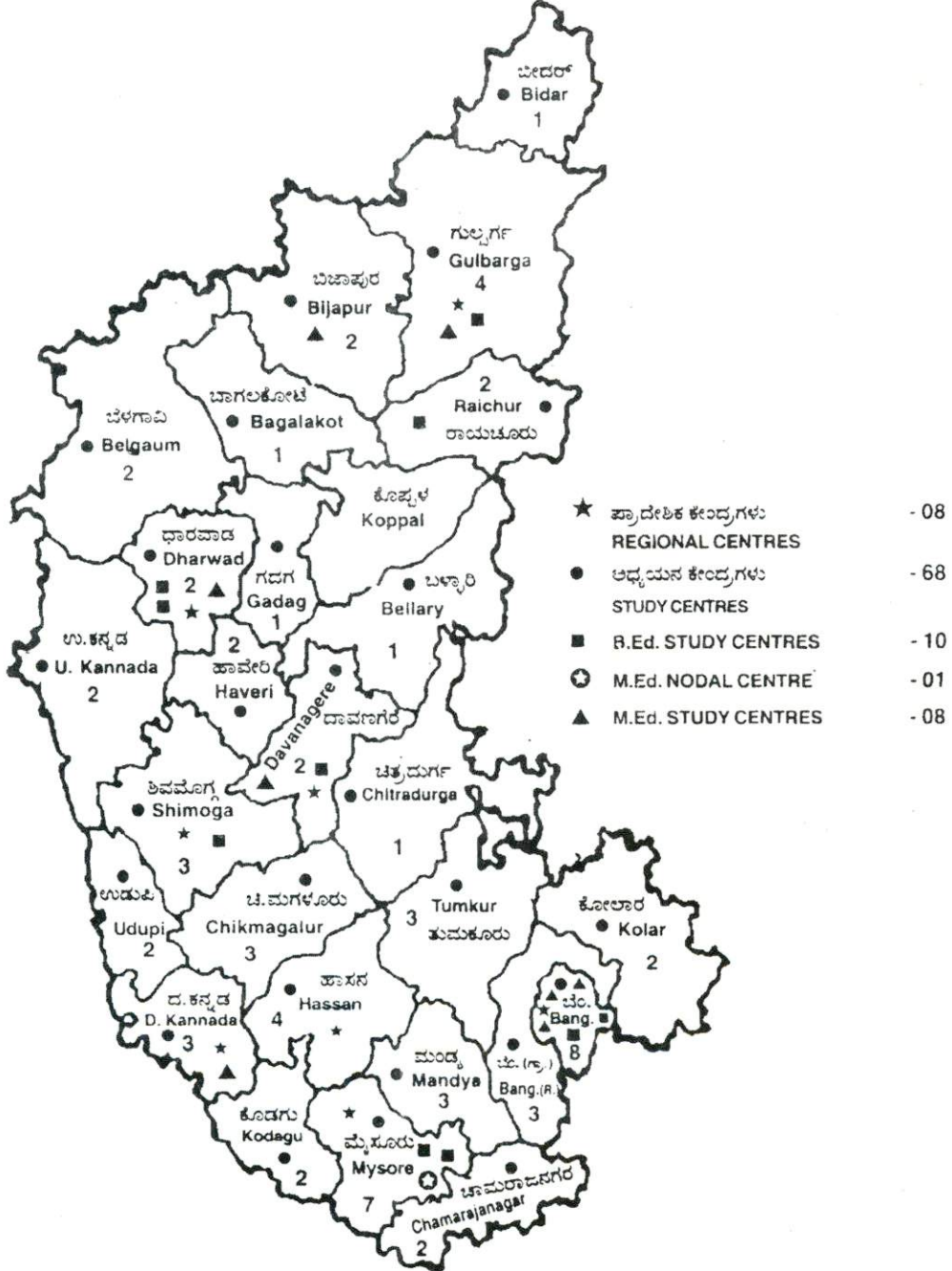
G.H. Saline : A history of Political Theory
New Encyclopedia Britannica, 1974

13.8 Answers to check your progress

Check Your Progress -1

1. See section 13.2
2. See section 13.4

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಮುಕ್ತ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯದ ಪ್ರಾದೇಶಿಕ ಹಾಗೂ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳು
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(ನಮೂದಿಸಿರುವ ಅಂಕಿ - ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಒಟ್ಟು ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯನ್ನು ಸೂಚಿಸುತ್ತದೆ.)
(The Number indicate the total number of study Centres existing in that districts.)

