

Cause and Consequence: Peasants' Revolt of 1381



English Peasants' Revolt of 1381

Causes:

- Severe labour shortages caused by the Black Death led to food shortages (fewer serfs to work the land meant less food was grown).
- Wages rose and so did the price of food
- The lords tried to stop this. They passed a law returning wages to pre-plague levels.
- To help finance the Hundred Years' War, they set a heavy poll tax that took a fixed amount of money from every person in England
- Finally, the serfs had enough!

Peasants' Demand

What did the peasants want:

- The end of serfdom
- a repeal of labour laws limiting wage increases brought in after the Black Death
- free fishing and hunting rights for all
- more peasant participation in local government
- the Crown should be the only authority in the counties, not local lords
- the redistribution of the Church's riches, especially of the great abbeys

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Consequences:

- Immediate consequences...
 - Revolt collapsed
 - Serfs returned to their farms, and many were executed by their lords
- Ultimate consequences...
 - Social changes
 - poll tax was abandoned
 - Limits on wages were not rigorously enforced
 - Serfs were able to buy their freedom