

The Black Death - Decline of Feudalism

Introduction

The Black Plague, or Black Death, was a terrible disease that spread across Europe in the 1300s. It killed a huge number of people, around 30-60% of Europe's population. This disaster changed European society and led to the end of the feudal system, where rich people had power over the poor.

Origins and Spread of the Black Plague

The Black Plague likely started in Asia and traveled to Europe along trade routes like the Silk Road. The disease spread through fleas that were carried by rats. It reached Europe through seaports and quickly spread to many countries.

Impact on Feudalism

The feudal system was how society worked in medieval Europe. There were strict rules about who had power and who did the work. The Black Plague changed this system in several ways:

- Labor Shortage: So many people died that there weren't enough workers. This made peasants more valuable and they could ask for better pay and working conditions.
- Social Mobility: The decrease in population changed society, giving peasants the chance to take on jobs that were once only for rich people. This challenged the old rules of society.
- Economic Changes: Landowners had to find new ways to grow food with fewer workers. This led to changes in farming methods and a move toward modern ways of doing business.
- Unrest and Rebellion: Peasants gained more power, but they still faced difficult lives and high taxes. This led to protests and uprisings, like the English Peasants' Revolt in 1381.

Decline of Feudalism

The Black Plague helped bring an end to feudalism in Europe by taking power away from the rich and causing changes in society, the economy, and politics. After the disaster, new ideas and systems began to develop, leading to the Renaissance and the growth of modern countries.

Number of Workers	Before Plague (Cost/Day)	After Plague (Cost/Day)
1 Peasant	1 silver coin	3 silver coins
10 Peasants	10 silver coins	30 silver coins
100 Peasants	100 silver coins	300 silver coins

The Black Death - Decline of Feudalism

Questions

Use information from the text to support your answer

1) What was the Black Death? What impacts did it have?

2) How did the Black Death lead to the decline of feudalism?

Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer

1) Where did the plague likely start?	Asia	Africa
2) How did the plague spread?	Fleas	Water
3) What caused labour shortages?	Deaths	Holidays
4) What period was after the medieval period?	Renaissance	Philosophical
5) As many people died, serfs got more/less power?	More	Less

Calculate

How was the budget of the manor affected by the plague?

# of Peasants	Before Plague	After Plague	Cost For 100 Days	Cost for 1 Year
1) 1				
2) 10				
3) 50				
4) 100				
5) 200				