

Fuedilism essay

[History](#), [French Revolution](#)



The structure of the feudal system was based on land ownership, security and wealth. The more lands that you owned the higher you were on the social ladder. During the Dark Ages groups of people formed communities lead by a lord or master to be able to protect themselves from barbarians and thieves. This system became Feudalism with a larger hierarchy, which became firmly entrenched. In 8th century Europe, feudalism became the main organizing structure. Feudalism was the political and social system in which lands were owned by a king. Nobles then swore allegiance to the king for a portion of his land. Some nobles gave their knights a portion of their lands. The king and nobles had peasants and serfs that worked the lands. They made up 90% of the population. The difference between serfs and peasants was that serfs were slaves and peasants were free men who worked the land in exchange for protection by the lord. On the whole peasants were badly treated. It was very extremely hard to change your social status; if you were born a peasant you stayed a peasant. Feudalism spread from France to Spain, Italy, and later Germany and Eastern Europe. Feudalism in England was imposed by William I (William the Conqueror) after 1066, although most of the elements of feudalism were already present. It was extended eastward into Slavic lands, which were continually battered by invasions, and it was adopted in Scandinavian countries. It was such an effective system that it lasted 500 years. In some parts of Europe it was entrenched almost up to the 20th century. Feudalism had to different ways to create jobs. Each society level has a different way of reflecting the people's social standings. Lord and kings distributed land as benefices to their vassals and it attracted higher social levels into the rank of their

vassals . King used feudalism to expand their land and claimed ownership of the land . Feudal society was based on fundamental distinction between the aristocracy, whose function was military and governmental, and the commoners. The lord and the vassal had duties and rights. The other would provide the vassal with protection, food, and clothing. Peasants were usually the lowest people in the society. They would have to pay rent or labor it out of the feudal obligation; the peasants were bound to the land and the vassals who held it. Unlike anyone else peasants had to earn their living from their labor. Peasants only got on small piece of land from which they could feed themselves. People from the different classes had specific guidelines and rules to follow to show that they were faithful to the feudal system and also not to lose their land. The feudal system, with all its injustices, was destined to crumble. Around the fourteenth century feudalism started to collapse. The Black Death killed about one third of the population of Europe and Peasants started to realize how important they were. The peasants demanded rights and gained some concessions. There was also the introduction of the merchant class. They were wealthy traders who didn't fit into the feudal hierarchy. The wealthy middle class challenged the feudal way of doing things. The merchants married the nobles for titles and the nobles married the merchants for money. This started to blur the boundaries of the feudal structure. The Renaissance encouraged different ways of thinking, universities were established and the power of the church was challenged. Together with the plague, the peasant's revolts and growing middle class the feudal system was undermined and slowly collapsed. By the 1600s feudalism had virtually disappeared.