Anglo-Papal Relations During the

Period of the Avignon Papacy,

1305-1378

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty Of Saint Meinrad College of Liberal Arts In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

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Outline I. The papal situation at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The pontificate of Boniface VIII. Α. The election of Clement V. Β. The transferal of the papal court to Avignon. С. II. Anglo-papal relations during the reigns of Edward I. Edward II, and the early years of Edward III: a time of generally smooth relations. Edward I. Α. 1. Relations with Clement V. English laity and the Church. 2. Β. Edward II. Relations with Clement V. 1. 2. Piers Gaveston. 3. Relations with John XXII. 4. Robert Bruce in Scotland. 5. Hugh Spenser. Early years of Edward III С. 1. Relations with John XXII. 2. Relations with Benedict XII. 3. Anglo-French relations. Papal French sympathy. a. Hundred Years' War. Ъ. III. Conflict in Anglo-papal relations. Α. Provision and reservation. Β. Pluralism and non-residence. С. Papal taxation. D. Accession of Clement VI. IV. Negotiations. Embassy of 1373. Α. Reply to embassy of 1373. Β. Five papal bulls of September 1, 1375. С. D. Two ordinances of Edward III, Februrary 15, 1377. Ε. Conclusion.

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Chapter I

The Papal Situation at the Beginning of the Fourteenth Century

Anglo-papal relations during the period of the Avignon papacy can only be understood in the context of the entire English and papal situation. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Black Death, war, the crusade, and church-state struggle were all major issues. All of these had their influence on the development of both the papacy and England.

Perhaps one of the most significant events of this period was the transfer of the papal court from Rome to Avignon. Many reasons can be given for this change, one of which was the troubled political condition of Italy. A constant struggle over the leadership of the Italian state was raging between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines.¹ Victory shifted from side to side, the Guelphs, those against German authority, winning one battle, and the Ghibellines, those for German authority, winning another. In any case, Rome and Italy were being torn apart, and there were obviously safer places for the pope to be than in the Eternal City.

Another reason for the move to Avignon was a result of the pontificate of Boniface VIII (1294-1303).

"Boniface was nothing but an uncontrolled tyrant... Boniface showed an extreme of pride, an immoderate lust for power, and a pathological theatricality as on the occasion when he appeared before the cardinals dressed alternately as a Pope and an emperor shouting, 'ego sum Caesar, ego imperator'."²

Boniface published the bull <u>Clericis Laicis</u>, which stated that the laity was the enemy of the clergy.³ And later he issued <u>Unam Sanctam</u>, which declared that papal authority extended over all temporal powers.⁴ When Boniface tried to exercise these beliefs he succeeded only in alienating and antagonizing temporal European leaders, the most notable of whom was Philip IV of France.

Philip IV, the Fair, was an important figure because he controlled one of the most powerful countries in Europe at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Until this time, France and the papacy had been on good terms; but being a powerful figure himself, Philip resented the attitude of the Pope. Soon after <u>Unam Sanctam</u>, Boniface VIII died; but the knot was broken between France and the papacy.

This conflict between Boniface and Philip had a direct influence on the choice of pope in 1304.⁵ The papacy needed the cooperation of all the Christian countries for the formation of a crusade against the invasion threat of the Muslims. Support from France was necessary for this crusade to succeed.

At the conclave of Perugia in 1304, the cardinals were divided into two main factions, one supporting the tradition of Boniface VIII, and the other desiring the restoration of relations with Philip the Fair at all costs.⁶ Napoleone Orsini, the head of the latter faction, was in favor of Bertrand de Got, archbishop of Bordeaux and friend of the French court. Who would have a better chance of restoring relations with Philip IV than a Frenchman? After much hard campaigning, Orsini finally won over the majority of the Sacred College, and Bertrand was elected on June 5, 1305.

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Bertrand, who took the name Clement V, chose Lyons as the place for his coronation. Indeed this was irregular, but Clement V wanted the kings of both England and France to be present to try to settle the current dispute between them. Since it was closer to both parties, Lyons seemed more suitable than anyplace in Italy.

The England of Edward I (1272-1307) was one of the stronger countries of Europe, but she was not as strong as France. Needless to say, since the two countries were so close to each other geographically, they constantly quarrelled. The Pope needed the cooperation of both countries.

After his coronation and with nothing settled between England and France, Clement V intended to return to Italy, but his departure was delayed. He was constantly being pressured by the French court to remain until the dispute concerning the late pontiff Boniface VIII had been settled. Moreover, Philip IV ordered the general arrest of the Knights Templar,⁷ charging them with heresy. Because of their wealth the Templars were im(4) portant to the Church, and their fate was to be decided at the

forthcoming Council of Vienne. Rome was now out of the question. Clement felt it would be very unwise to leave the situation of the Templars in the hands of Philip IV. In complete agreement with his cardinals, Clement decided to transfer the papal court to Avignon on the Rhone River in August, 1308. Thus began the period of the so called Babylonian Captivity of the Popes, during which the popes never saw Rome. This period extended through the reigns of seven popes and lasted for seventy years:

> Clement V 1305-1314 John XXII 1316-1334 Benedict XII 1334-1342 Clement VI 1342-1352 Innocent VI 1352-1362 Urban V 1362-1372 Gregory XI 1370-1378

During these years the papacy was, for the most part, dominated by the French government.

Footnotes

The struggle between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines was a continuation of the struggle between Welf and Waiblinger in Germany in the twelfth century. The Guelphs were against German rule in Italy, while the Ghibellines favored it. During the period of the Avignon papacy, the popes were associated with the cause of the Guelphs.

2 Kuhner, Hans, <u>Encyclopedia of the Papacy</u>, New York, Philosophical Library Inc., 1958, translated from the original German by Kenneth Northcott, p. 102.

3 · <u>Idem.</u>, p. 100.

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4 <u>Idem.</u>, p. 101.

- 5 Benedict XI was pope between Boniface VIII and Clement V. His reign (Oct., 1303- July, 1304) was too short for any real significance.
- 6 Mollat, G., <u>The Popes at Avignon</u>, <u>1305-1378</u>, Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., <u>1963</u>, p. 3.
- 7 The Templars were formed to protect pilgrims from Muslims on their way to the Holy Land. In time, they became a rich organization and were probably not guilty of the charges made against them by Philip IV. Philip may have only wanted their wealth.

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Chapter II

Anglo-papal Relations During The Reigns of Edward I, Edward II, And the Early Years of Edward III: A Time of Generally Smooth Relations

Although there were some points of friction, the first years of the Avignon papacy were marked by relatively smooth relations between the popes and the English kings. The main reason for this was the fact that the kings could hardly afford to offend the pope since they needed his support. English barons and nobles were very powerful at this time; and as long as relations between the pope and the king were good, the pope would side with the king against these barons.

In the last years of his reign Edward I (1272-1307) and Clement V were good friends. The movement of the papal court to Avignon really had no bad effects on Anglo-papal relations during Edward I's reign. In fact, Clement V was constantly taking the King's side against the powerful English barons. One of his first acts as pope was one by which he "freed the king from all concessions previously granted to the great nobles, the barons and 'other persons' concerning certain forest rights and royal prerogatives".¹ He also aided the King by suspending one of his strongest opponents, Archbishop Winchelsea, from his duties as primate of England. When Robert Bruce, another of the King's enemies, was spreading seeds of revolt in Scotland, he was excommunicated by Clement V. The Pope also allowed the English King a share in the papal taxation. And finally, Clement worked toward strengthening Anglo-French relations by supporting the marriage of the Prince of Wales and Isabella, daughter of Philip IV of France.

Although the policy of Clement V helped Edward I, it also caused some resentment among the English laity. Naturally, the barons and the common people did not appreciate any papal interference with English internal affairs. This resentment was made clear in the Parliament of Carlisle in 1307. Members of this Parliament voiced their opinion against papal provision of foreign ecclesiastics for English benefices and the export of English money. Edward I could not support these opinions because of the risk of antagonizing the Pope.

Edward I died in 1307 and his son, Edward II, inherited the throne. Immediately he showed that he was less prudent than his father had been in dealing with Clement V.² He seized and held all messengers from the Pope and cardinals bearing documents which he considered contrary to the interests of the Crown. In return Clement presented Edward with a long list of grievances.

> "He complained of the tiresome measures taken against the cardinals tooprevent them from enjoying their benefices in England, the impediments which hindered papal provisions from taking effect and which debarred recourse to papal justice, the encroachments of royal officials on ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the maladministration of monasteries and

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churches during vacancies and the non-payment by the Crown of taxes due to the Holy See."³ Recognizing their validity, the English clergy supported these grievances under the influence of Winchelsea who had been restored to his position as Archbishop of Canterbury.

Edward was forced to change his policy because of the opposition of the Pope and the clergy and also because of a revived opposition by the barons. One of the favorites at the King's court was a man named Piers Gaveston, who had been one of Edward's best friends since early childhood. This man was hated by the barons and was forced to leave England and to take an oath never to return because of his disdainful attitude toward the barons. Losing this friend was too difficult for Edward II to bear so he persuaded Clement V to annul Gaveston's oath never to return to England. Eventually he also appeased the barons by bestowing favors and privileges upon them.⁴

Upon the death of Clement V and the accession of John XXII to the throne in 1316, Anglo-papal relations began to improve. In England the situation was generally praceful since there was a temporary lull in the active opposition against Pope and King by the barons. Moreover John XXII and Edward II were good friends, even though John was a strong and overpowering figure.

> "John XXII seems to have taken a paternal interest in Edward II, sending him letters of advice about prudent housekeeping, the appointment of good judges, the avoidance of youthful and imprudent friends and of extravagence in clothes, feasting and pre-

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sents... together with reminders that Peter's Pence and tenths were in arrears and hints that the political troubles of the kingdom may be a judgement of the injuries done to the rights of the Church."5

The peaceful political situation in England was only temporary however. It is important to understand that the last years of Edward II's reign wereefilled with serious internal troubles, much more serious than the bickerings he or his father had had with the popes. The King's two main problems were Scotland and the power of the barons.

Robert Bruce had established himself as king of Scotland, a possession of England at this time. He showed his power by defeating Edward II's army at Bonnockburn on June 23, 1314. From this point until 1322, England was in a constant struggle with Bruce over Scotland. Eventually, both countries grew tired of the war resulting in a thirteen year truce in 1322. This truce ended the actual fighting for a while, but the resentment for the English remained in the hearts of the Scots.

> "It was the singular fate of Edward that he could not live without an unworthy favorite, or could not admit another into his friendship without wounding the arrogance of his barons."⁶

After the barons had done away with Gaveston, Hugh Spenser, another court favorite, began to stir up trouble. He also was opposed to the Barons so they revolted against him. Edward II took the side of Spenser and the result was a revolution in 1327. The King felt the effects of this more than anyone else

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involved. He was dethroned and his son, Edward III, was made King. On September 21, in his own prison, Edward II was murdered by order of his wife's lover, Mortimer.

As a king, Edward III was probably stronger than either his father or grandfather had been. He also was prudent in his dealings with the popes. Again, there were some points of conflict with the papacy in Edward III's earlier years; but in general Edward maintained good relations with both Popes John XXII and Benedict XII.

However, when Benedict XII died in 1342, so did the period of smooth Anglo-papal relations. Before it is possible to understand the period to follow, one of crisis and turmoil, one must understand the condition of Anglo-French relations at the beginning of Edward III's reign.

Anglo-French tension culminated in 1337 when the two countries began a war which was to last for more than one hundred years. It is not necessary to relate here all the major issues of the Hundred Years' War, but it should be remembered that this war caused extremely bitter feelings among Englishmen for the French. There had been opposition for several years between the two countries over the fact that the French had aided Robert Bruce in his efforts in Scotland against the English Crown. The problem intensified upon the death of Charles IV of France in 1328. He was one of the three sons of Philip IV, all of whom came to the throne after their father's death.⁷ However, none

-. . of the three sons left an heir. Edward III felt he could claim the throne since he was one of the closest male, blood relatives to the line. His mother was Isabella, daughter of Philip IV.⁸ His claim was rejected however, and Philip de Valois was made king.

Dispute over the French throne was not the real spark of the Hundred Years' War. It seems that Edward was actually more interested in his feudal possessions in France than in the French throne. Open nostilities actually began when Philip advanced on English lands south of the Loire River in France. After 1342 this war had quite an effect on Anglo-papal relations.

Footnotes

- 1 Mollat, G., <u>The Popes at Avignon</u>, 1305-1378, Thomas Nelson and Sons, Edinburgh, 1963, p. 257.
- 2 <u>Idem.</u>, p. 258.
- 3 <u>Idem.</u>, p. 258.
- 4 This was a temporary appeasement. Once Gaveston was restored to favor, he renewed his contempt for the barons. Civil War broke out, and it was not stopped until Gaveston was murdered on June 9, 1312.
- 5 Pantin, W.A., <u>The English Church in the Fourteenth Century</u>, Cambridge University Press, 1955, p. 77.
- 6 Lingard, John and Belloc, Hilaire, <u>The History of England</u>, Volume III, <u>From the First Invasion by the Romans to</u> the Accession of King George V, New York, 1912, p. 44.

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7	The	reigns of Louis X, John I, Philip V, and Charles IV extended from 1314, when Philip IV died, until1328, when Charles IV died. Dates taken from Langer, W.L., <u>An Encyclopedia of World History</u> , Boston, 1968, p. 1312.
8	The	marriage of Isabella and Edward II was the one which Clement V had encouraged to strengthen Anglo-French relations.
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Chapter III

Conflict and Struggle in Anglo-Papal Relations

Four main reasons can be given as a basis for the conflict in Anglo-papal relations after the year 1342: papal provision and reservation for English benefices, pluralism and non-residence, papal taxation, and the accession of Clement VI to the pontificate.

Concerning bishoprics, the idea of papal provision, an act by which the pope appointed a bishop to a vacant see without employing the traditional methods of choosing a bishop, had become a regular thing by 1342. Although papal provision was a reality, it seems that its effects were much exaggerated. For one thing, the popes did not fill the English sees with foreigners. Between 1305 and 1378 only two aliens became bishops of English sees. One was Rigaud d'assier to the diocese of Winchester, the other Lewis de Beaumont, a candidate of the King, to Durham.¹ Appointments such as these were resented by the English people, but not nignly disputed at the time because the people believed provision to be the right of the pope.

Moreover, these provisions were generally made in accordance with the King's will.² More often than not the king's nominee would be accepted and appointed by the pope. Sometimes, however, the pope would reject the royal nominee and provide someone else. These bishops provided against the king's will were the ones that caused the conflict. It should be made clear that the pope generally tried to satisfy the king; the pope would not go against the royal will for no reason at all.

When a vacancy occurred, the traditional way of filling it had been election by cathedral chapters. It was often the case that these elections were disputed and were eventually presented to the pope for settlement. By settling a dispute, the pope would more or less have to provide a bishop himself. This method of provision, to prevent disputes, became more regular as the fourteenth century progressed. During Edward II's reign twenty-eight episcopal appointments were made; fifteen were by election, the other thirteen by papal provision. During the early years of Edward III's reign, under Popes John XXII and Benedict XII, there were twenty-three appointments; ten elected, thirteen provided. After 1342 provision became the norm.

Because of their wealth, the English bishoprics were important to popes and kings alike. This importance increased after the war with France broke out. Edward III needed money to finance this war, so naturally he desired bishops who shared his sympathies. On the other hand, he did not need bishops to oppose him and cause even more trouble.

Perhaps the resentment of the English laity was more directed toward the papal provisions for less important benefices such as the cathedral offices. "Many of the best of these benefices were flooded with foreign cardinals and other papal pro-

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visors."³ Ecclesiastics in these positions had more direct contact with the average layman than did the bishops, so they are bound to have had more of an influence.

As a result, some of these provisions contributed to a general lack of devotion and a trend of anti-clericalism among the English people. As Edward III expressed it in a letter to Clement VI in 1343:

> "Thus Christian worship is diminished, the cure of souls neglected, hospitality withdrawn, the churches' rights perish, church buildings fall down, the people's devotion weakens; the clerks of this realm, men of great learning and honest conversation, who might advantageously undertake the cure and rule of souls there, and would be useful in our public councils, are deserting study, because the hope of suitable promotion is taken away."⁴

One may think this is an exaggeration on Edward III's part, and it may be to a certain extent, but many of the same protests had previously been made by the subjects of the English kings, as evidenced in the Parliaments at Carlisle and Stamford.

Non-residence and pluralism were consequences of the system of papal provision. However, the Avignon popes were against this, as is shown by the fact that three papal constitutions were issued against pluralities: <u>Si Plures</u> by Clement V, <u>Exe</u>-<u>crabilis</u> by John XXII, and <u>Consueta</u> by Urban V.⁵ The reality did exist though because dispensations could be easily obtained for a fee.

"The worst effect of the whole system was that it

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tended to deepen the gulf between the wellto-do pluralists who were drawing their incomes from the Church and the mass of the stipendiary clergy who were doing its work."⁶

Another source of resentment among the English was the strain of papal taxation. Most of the burden of the tax rested upon the clergy. The only forms of tax to be paid by the whole nation were traditional ones, Peter's Pence, the hearth tax, and the cess, a feudal tribute to the pope. Income tax, or subsidies, annates, and procurations were the heaviest forms of tax, paid solely by the clergy. Income tax raised little objection since a substantial portion of it went to the king. This being the case, the subsidies brought little profit to the popes so the English clergy agreed to pay annates.

> "John XXII's constitution, <u>Execrabilis</u>, by depriving many pluralists, created a large number of vacant benefices subject to papal collation, and the activities of the papal collector, Rigaud d'Assier, resulted in a rich haul of annates for the Curia."⁷

Another tax, the procurations, was established to pay for the expenses of papal envoys and tax collectors. All of these were resented by the laity as well as the clergy because they felt that by paying so much to the Church they would not have enough money to finance the needs of the state.

When Clement VI became pope in 1342 all of the above problems intensified. The fact that he was thoroughly French in sympathy was enough to arouse antagonism because of the Hundred Years' War. But he was lavish in providing benefices;⁸ and as provisions increased so did pluralism. Moreover he incdeased the tax on England and tried to enforce payment of those concerning which other popes had been more lenient. The English needed money for the war and they suspected the Pope, out of his French sympathy, of supplying the French with English money.⁹ Thus Edward III felt to pay these taxes was the same as financing the war for France.

An immediate reaction followed Clement VI's papal actions. The parliament of 1343 forbade entrance into the kingdom of any documents contrary to English interests.¹⁰ The years to follow brought repeated complaints about the popes from the English and about the English from the popes. All the while the Pope continued his provisions and insistance on the tax.

One of the most important publications during this period concerning Anglo-papal relations came out in 1351 in the form of the Statute of Provisors. By this Edward III decreed that he would imprison papal provisors until they had paid compensation and had undertaken not to appeal to the Curia. If there was much complication, the King would simply expel the provisor and fill the vacancy himself.¹¹ However, Edward III did not make this a law; instead he decided to save it for when he might have a greater need for it.

The conflict continued after Clement VI's death in 1352 on into the reign of Innocent VI. In 1352 another important document was published, the Statute of Praemunire. Its purpose was

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to control those who refuted the decisions of the royal courts.

"Whosoever shall arraign the king's subjects in a foreign court, in matters whose cognizance belongs to the king's courts, or shall seek by the same means to annul the judgements made by these courts, shall have two months to answer for the reasons for his defiance; at the expirity of which term, his procurators, advocates, executors and notaries, and he himself and his abbettors, shall be out of the king's protection, his lands, merchandise and chattels shall be forfeit and if he is siezed, he shall be imprisoned until the payment of a ransom is fixed by the king."12

As in the case of the Statute of Provisors, this was not made law either.

These two statutes were probably not as important as they may seem. As previously mentioned, neither was made into law; they were probably intended to be more of a threat than a weapon. Moreover, the ideas presented in these statutes were not new. Even before their publication, Edward III had been exercising what they decreed he could do.

This heated situation cooled somewhat after the death of Clement VI in 1352. Clement VI had threatened England with excommunication and interdict, but had died before he could put these into effect. Moreover, Innocent VI (1352-1362) was not as demanding as his predecessor had been, and a temporary peace had been established between England and France.¹³

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		Footnotes
	1	Pantin, W.A., <u>The English Church in the Fourteenth Century</u> , Cambridge, 1955, p. 56.
	2	<u>Idem.</u> , p. 57.
	3	McKisack, May, The Fourteenth Century, Oxford, 1959, p. 277.
	4	Pantin, W.A., The English Church in the Fourteenth Century, Cambridge, 1955, p. 52.
	5	McKisack, May, The Fourteenth Century, Oxford, 1959, p. 280.
	6	<u>Idem.</u> , p. 280.
	7	<u>Idem.</u> , p. 286.
	8	Pantin, W.A., <u>The English Church in the Fourteenth Century</u> , Cambridge, 1955, p. 81.
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	10	<u>Idem.</u> , p. 263.
	11	McKisack, May, The Fourteenth Century, Oxford, 1959, p. 280
	12	Mollat, G., <u>The Popes at Avignon, 1305-1378</u> , Edinburgh, 1963, p. 205.
	ز د	This peace was established at the Peace of Bretigny in 1360. This ended the first stage of the Hundred Years' War. By this time France was in chaos and exnausted by war. Langer, W.L., <u>The Encyclopedia of World His-</u> tory, Boston, 1968, p. 288.
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# Chapter IV

Negotiations

The years after Clement VI were years of negotiations between Edward III. and the popes. During the 1360's and early 1370's, these negotiations were constantly interrupted by more protest and conflict. Protests and negotiations could have continued indefinitely except for the fact that both parties had other serious problems to contend with.

While the English were waging war with France, the popes, beginning especially with Innocent VI, were preoccupied with the problem of returning to Italy. Public opinion was against the Avignon popes, and they were drawing much criticism from other countries as well as England. Albornez, a Spanish cardinal, was sent to Italy by Innocent VI to investigate the problem. He managed to reduce the power of the Italian nobles, thus making it possible for the popes' eventual return to Home.¹ With the cooperation of Charles IV, who was less hostile than Henry VII had been, Urban V(1362-1372) returned to Rome.² However, he was forced back to Avignon by the entreaties of the French cardinals. Gregory XI (1370-1378) visited Rome and died before he could leave. Gregory XI was the last French pope and the last pope to reside in Avignon.

The first serious attempts at a settlement in Anglo-papal relations came in 1373 during Gregory XI's reign. This was the

embassy of 1373 through Edward III.demanded five things. The Roman Curia should not interfere with those cases where the King's rights were concerned. English subjects should not be called to the Roman Court because of the dangers of traveling abroad during the Anglo-French war. Reservation of benefices which were not yet in effect should be stopped. The Pope should not make any more reservations or provisions. And finally, payments of subsidy by the English clergy should be stopped during the war.³

In reply to this, the Pope basically promised to moderate his use of reservations and provisions, although he would not give up his right to use them. Gregory XI also promised to always try to honor the King's candidate for a bishopric, and to try to ease the tax burden.⁴ Both sides were willing to make limited concessions, but neither was willing to give in fully.

In 1375 and 1377 the King and the Pope both took a step farther. On September 1, 1375 the Pope issued five bulls. Nominees by the King for benefices were confirmed even if they had previously been reserved by the Pope. Nine law suits between the cardinals and royal nominees were suspended. Reservations for certain benefices were stopped and the existing holders of benefices were confirmed. And finally, when English subjects were cited by the Roman Court they could appear at some point closer to England because of the war.⁵

Edward III, in his turn, also conceded more in two ordi-

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nances he presented on Februrary 15, 1377. By one, he gave up the right to fill the benefices due to him which were vacant before Februrary 15, 1377. By the other, he stopped all his presentations to benefices which were not yet in effect.⁶

Neither Edward III or Gregory XI would live to see a lasting settlement because these negotiations, mixed with periods of conflict, would continue for the rest of the century. Edward III died in 1377, and Gregory XI in 1378. But at the time of their deaths there was somewhat of a settlement, and indeed an improvement in relations.

Perhaps another reason, other than the negotiations, for this improvement was the great schism of 1378. Gregory XI had died in Rome and the conclave had elected an Italian pope, Urban VI, because of threats from the Roman mob. In Anagni, however, thirteen French cardinals had met and elected a Frenchman. Clement VII. Later on, another pope was introduced by the Council of Pisa, the members of which who had assembled to settle the dispute over who was really pope. So at one time there were three men claiming to be pope. Of the three possibilities the English pledged their allegiance to Urban VI of the Italian line, which is considered the line of true popes.

Allegiance to one of the rival popes was partly determined by practical considerations. France, for example, supported Clement VII because she could have more influence on a French pope. England, on the other hand, backed Urban VI because she

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wanted no more French popes, and she did not want to support the same pope her rival in war did. It is significant to note here that in Anglo-papal relations in the fourteenth century most decisions were much like this one of allegiance. It seems that political aspects took preference over the spiritual ones.7

"To defend one's office or community was one of the highest and noblest duties that a man could undertake and suffer for" during the Middle Ages.⁸ Although it is more important, the duel between the popes and kings is characteristic of many such duels which occured during this period. This conflict cannot be taken as a move on the part of the English to shake off the yoke of papal spiritual authority, because the English believed in the spiritual supremecy of the pope. The struggle was over what the English considered papal encroachment upon the legal rights of the Crown.

Before the period of the Avignon Papacy blind faith was characteristic of the English people. The whole system of Catholicism was taken for granted from the pope to the parish priest. By the end of the fourteenth century, however, the ecclesiastical system and ecclesiastical authority had been challenged. Complaints about the pope and the system had increased to a degree that was highly dangerous to the Church. These complaints represented a nation which could not be stifled forever.

Most authors agree that it is too much to conclude that

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a national Church was beginning to take form by the end of the Avignon papal period. But the English people were at least open to the ideas of men like John Wycliffe, a fact which cannot be said of the English at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Violent attacks were being made against the Church by men like Wycliffe. And although there was a temporary peace between England and the popes, England was slowly becoming ready for a schism.

# Footnotes

1	Just as in England, the Italian barons were also strong. They were the strongest forces in the war.
2	From 1310-1313 Henry had claimed control of Italy.
3	Pantin, W.A., <u>The English Church in the Fourteenth Century</u> , Cambridge, 1955, pp. 88 and 89.
4	<u>Idem.</u> , pp. 89 and 90.
5	<u>Idem.</u> , pp. 90 and 91.
6	<u>Idem.</u> , pp. 91 and 92.
7	McKisack, May, The Fourteenth Century, Oxford, 1959, p.275.
8	Pantin, W.A., <u>The English Church in the Fourteenth Century</u> , Cambridge, 1955, pp. 93 and 94.

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