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*Edited by* WALTER ULLMANN, LITT.D., F.B.A.  
*Professor of Medieval Ecclesiastical History  
in the University of Cambridge*

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# MONARCHY AND COMMUNITY

POLITICAL IDEAS  
IN THE  
LATER CONCILIAR  
CONTROVERSY  
1430-1450

ANTONY BLACK

*Lecturer in Political Science*

*University of Dundee*



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FOR MY GRANDMOTHER

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## PREFACE

The struggle between the Council of Basle (1431–49) and the papacy under Pope Eugenius IV (1431–47) and Pope Nicholas V (1447–55), raised questions of lasting importance. The central issue was, Who holds authority over them, and for what reasons? This was partly a theological debate, but it also developed into a debate about political theory. For both Council and pope claimed authority not only on the basis of revealed truth, but also of secular political norms. This book is about the political theory of Conciliarism (Part I) and of papal monarchy (Part II), and, since this dispute involved a power-struggle for the actual machinery of church government, about the influence of contemporary politics and diplomacy on the theories advanced by each side (Part III). Though inter-related in various ways, each Part could be considered separately. In order to minimize footnotes, full bibliographical details have been relegated to the Bibliography.

The dispute between the Council of Basle and the papacy has previously been studied chiefly from the point of view of political history, in the general opinion that this was a time when the doctrines of Conciliarism and of Papalism respectively—the earlier development of which has received so much attention—had become ossified. The academic popularity of Nicholas of Cusa, and Carla Eckermann's brilliant and too little-known work, *Studien zur Geschichte des monarchischen Gedankens im 15. Jahrhundert*, are notable exceptions. In recent years, furthermore, increasing attention, much of it biographical, but some also concerned with doctrine, has been paid to certain of the participants. But the works of many individual thinkers are still virtually unexamined (though aspects of Turrecremata's theology have been studied). Above all, the importance, and even existence of Baslean Conciliarism and Eugenic Papalism as distinctive political doctrines of vital interest in themselves, and full of significance for later political thought, has never been brought to light. Further, the intricate and in some ways unique interrelation between theory and practice in this dispute, noticed by Eckermann, has never been expounded.

This book, then, sets out to examine Baslean Conciliarism and mid-fifteenth century Papalism as schools of political theory, and the interaction in them between doctrine and diplomacy. John of



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### *Preface*

Segovia among the Basleans, and John Turrecremata among the Eugenians, emerge as political thinkers of primary significance by any standards.

The original writings in this dispute, as even contemporaries acknowledged, were voluminous. It has therefore been necessary to concentrate on political theory at the expense of other, no less intrinsically important, aspects of the dispute. Above all, the theology of each side, which certainly predominates in the actual sources, is here considered only as it bears on their political theory (with the exception of the *Epilogue*). This has meant a certain amount of distortion, since this was the period when the true, theological notion of the papacy was obscured by an almost neo-pagan theory of absolute monarchy. The issue of reform, which was hardly less important than that of conciliar supremacy (and about which a good deal has been written), and the influence of the renaissance, are only touched on. Naturally, the themes that I at first selected for consideration have constantly had to be re-weighed and re-stated in the light of actual sources; in fact, this work began with the question, To what extent did the papacy seek an alliance of monarchical powers against subversion?—which is now only dealt with in the last Part of the book.

We of today are fortunate in being able to utilize centuries of patient work by men whose names are too easily forgotten. Not only were many of our sources for the thought of this period actually printed in the sixteenth century, but also a great number of the treatises and documents have been published in the sturdy collections of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. And, since the early nineteenth century, commentators have been sifting the evidence. The modern enquirer has tremendous facilities at his disposal.

I would like first to offer my sincere and lasting gratitude to Professor W. Ullmann for the kindness and inspiration which he has given to me in this work. My thanks are also due to the Department of Political Science in the University of Dundee for their help and encouragement; I am also most grateful to the librarians of the Cambridge University Library, particularly of the Anderson Room, and of Dundee University Library, for the way they have facilitated research. Above all I want to thank those friends who have made this work possible.

*Dundee, 1969*

ANTONY BLACK

## ABBREVIATIONS

- Ampl. disp.* Segovia, Joannes de. *Amplificatio disputationis in id., Historia gestorum generalis synodi Basiliensis*, xvii, 25–60; ed. C. Stehlin in *MCG*, iii, 695–941
- Auct. ep.* Segovia, Joannes de. *De magna auctoritate episcoporum in generali concilio*, Universitätsbibliothek, Basle, B.V. 15.
- Barb. lat.* Codices Barberini latini
- CB* Haller, J. and others, edd. *Concilium Basiliense, Studien und Quellen zur Geschichte des Konzils von Basel*, 8 vols. (Basle, 1896–1936)
- CBC* Piccolomini, A. S. (Pius II). *De gestis concilii Basiliensis commentariorum libri II*, ed. and trans. D. Hay and W. Smith (Oxford, 1967)
- CMH* viii *Cambridge medieval history*, viii: *The close of the Middle Ages*, ed. C. Previt -Orton and Z. Brooke (Cambridge, 1936)
- Conc. cath.* Cusa, Nicholas de. *De concordantia catholica*, ed. G. Kallen (Hamburg, 1959–65)
- Dec. advis.* Segovia, Joannes de. *Decem advisamenta*, Vat. lat. 4039, fos. 192r–231v
- FM*, xiv. Fliche, A. and Martin, V., edd. *Histoire de l’ glise depuis les origines jusqu’  nos jours*, xiv: *L’Eglise au temps du grand schisme et de la crise conciliaire (1378–1449)*, by E. Delaruelle, E-R. Labande and P. Ourliac, 2 vols. (Paris, 1962–4)
- Gub. conc.* Escobar, Andreas de. *Gubernaculum conciliorum*, H.v.d. Hardt, *Magnum oecumenicum Constantiense Concilium*, vi (Leipzig, 1700), 139–333
- MCG* Palacky, F. and others, edd. *Monumenta conciliorum generalium seculi decimi quinti, Concilium Basiliense. Scriptorum*, 4 vols. (Vienna–Basle, 1857–1935)
- Mon. Pol.* *Monumenta medii aevi res gestas Polonias illustrantia*, ii (Cracow, 1876), xii (Cracow, 1891), xiv (Cracow, 1894)
- Panorm.* Panormitanus or Nicholas de Tudeschis
- Rayn.* Baronius, C., Raynaldus, O., and Theiner, A. edd. *Annales ecclesiastici*, xxviii–xxix (Barri–Ducis, 1874–6)

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- RTA* Weigel, H. and others, edd. *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*,  
xiv-xvii, Hist. Komm. d. Bayer. Akad. d. Wiss. (Stutt-  
gart-Göttingen, 1935-63)
- SE* Turrecremata, Joannes de. *Summa de ecclesia* (Venice,  
1561)
- VL* *Codices Vaticani latini*