

Review Notes: Women's History

-Renaissance

- the role of women in the Renaissance depended on your social class
- upper class/wealthy
 - change in status from the Middle Ages
 - women actually lost some status
 - were now seen as "ornaments" to their husbands
 - do have an increased access to education at this point in time
 - had the emerging "problem of women"
 - debate began to occur over the role of women in society and their nature
 - this was started with Christine de Pisan
 - City of Ladies* was an important work
- peasant/lower class
 - not a whole lot of change in status
 - important thing here was marriage patterns
 - nuclear family
 - economic considerations the basis for marriage
 - average age of marriage was 20 or below
 - were increased issues of infanticide
 - divorce was available in certain areas
 - women were supposed to make themselves appealing to men
 - was a sexual double standard here
 - women were to remain chaste until marriage, men did not
- did have some important women rulers during this time period
 - Elizabeth I of England is a good example
- also dealing with witchcraft claims
 - targets were usually older women (spinsters)

-the Reformation

- different based on religion
- Protestant women
 - role was to be a good housewife and take care of the family
 - Protestant churches actually had greater official control over marriage at first
 - suppressed common law marriages
 - Catholics followed this
 - marriage did become more based on love, but also had the idea of husband/helpmate
 - wife was meant to help the husband
 - subordinate role
 - increased literacy became valued since women needed to be able to read the Bible and teach their children
 - sex was to be enjoyed
 - women are supposed to be subordinate to men
 - can't be ministers or hold church offices
 - Calvin believed subjugation of women was crucial to maintain social order

-Catholic

-women had opportunities in religious orders, such as the Ursuline order

-18th Century and Industrial Revolution

-Women and the Agricultural Revolution

-enclosure movement had an impact

-women had fewer opportunities at profit since common lands were gone

-some were forced into towns or cities, many became prostitutes

-a lot being forced to work away from home

-Cottage industry

-women increasingly stayed home to work during the rise of the cottage industry

-young women became increasingly difficult for peasant families to feed due to the loss of common lands

-sent away to work

-this was a family enterprise, so women did play a role in production

-Industrial Revolution

-women did work in factories in late 18th century England

-often given lesser paying jobs or less prestigious work though

-did have a family wage economy

-families often worked together, especially women and children

-this did decline after the Factory Act of 1833

-marriage roles

-based more and more on romance

-did begin to have those that did not marry

-Protestant women were still expected to manage the home and Catholics still had religious orders

-families became smaller and children lived longer

-other features

-was an explosion in illegitimate births

-a decrease in witch hunts occurred

-was a decline in women's roles as midwives

-did have some important women rulers

-Catherine the Great in Russia

-Maria Theresa in Austria

-Women in the Enlightenment

-do have large roles here

-women were heavily involved with salons

-often were the ones leading these

-best example of this was Madame de Geoffrin

-this did go along with the idea of women in the domestic sphere

-most Enlightenment figures had little respect for women

-French Revolution and Women

- played a HUGE role

- examples of roles:

- bread riots

- women often led these and protested for better bread prices

- women's March on Versailles

- happened in October of 1789

- 7,000 women marched 12 miles from Paris to Versailles to demand the king redress their economic problems

- forced the king and queen back to Paris where they became virtual prisoners

- Olympe de Gouges wrote the *The Rights of Women* (1791)

- applied the *Declaration of Rights* to women

- Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792)

- women were inferior because they had been denied opportunity

- women were heavily involved with the Sans-Culottes (think of the stereotypical Madame Defarge if you have read *A Tale of Two Cities* (If you haven't, read it! It's good.))

- had the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women

- worried about women being a threat and viewing women as best kept in the home, National Convention closed women's clubs

- Charlotte Corday killed Jean Paul Marat in 1793

- did have salons during the Revolution

- some women were victims of the Reign of Terror (de Gouges was one)

- had issues in Napoleonic France as well

- women were viewed as legally incompetent under the Civil Code of Napoleon

- patriarchal system established

- few rights

- as you entered 1800, two different types of feminists were emerging in Europe

- individualist feminists

- these figures argued that women had the same natural rights as men did

- women should have the same legal, economic, social, and educational opportunities

- they got these ideas from Enlightenment ideology

- concept was heavily supported by John Stuart Mill

- relational feminists

- these figures argued women were fundamentally different from men, but were just as important

- women needed to be well educated to fill their special role as mothers and homemakers

- it was their duty to impart the native culture of their homelands to children

- they also needed to provide healthy children

- tied in with Romanticism

-19th Century

-Industrial Revolution (see notes above)

-Marriage and family

- ideal of romantic love became very important for marriage
- fewer children per family with more love toward children
- middle class was inclined to consider economic reasons more for marriage
 - many men married late for this reason
 - women were closely monitored by men
- still had a sexual double standard
- illegitimacy did decline after 1850
- prostitutes were sought after more by middle and upper class men
- idea of early childhood being a vital part of development began to emerge

-role of women

- after 1850, the idea of separate spheres began to increase
 - men should work out in the public sphere in the factory and bring home “the bacon”
 - women should stay at home (domestic sphere idea)
 - even had protective legislation passed to drive women out of certain kinds of employment
 - more and more jobs became based around gender
 - jobs defined as women’s work (usually things like teaching or secretarial work) had wages go down
 - idea of domesticity was heavily linked to this
 - this was a “Victorian” ideal (Victorian period England)
 - reinforced women as the homemaker and reinforced homeschooling or church schools
 - despite this fact, lower class women did work outside the home
 - was needed to have enough income for the family
 - also had a rising feminist movement among middle class women

-Socialist views of women

- Karl Marx:
 - women were doubly oppressed (capitalist society and by men)
 - should work for socialism since it would lead to equality
- other socialists
 - Utopian socialists emphasized the fact that men and women complemented each other
 - also advocated free love
- did have many women involved in socialist movements

-women’s role in social reform efforts

- got heavily involved in school and hospital reform
 - this was especially true for those involved in Catholic religious orders
- women heavily led the temperance movement in many countries
 - movement to ban alcohol
- female teachers began to increase going into 1900
- women began to specialize in certain occupations as mentioned above
 - this did lead to men being kicked out of these occupations and wages being driven down

-Women's Rights Movement

- women began to advocate for equal rights across Europe
 - biggest example of this was in England
 - women originally began to try and amend property and marriage laws
 - were very favorable toward men, especially divorce laws
 - first direct legal target were laws that had a double standard
 - best example of this was the Contagious Diseases Acts
 - basically blamed prostitutes for the spread of STDs
 - reformer, Josephine Butler, pressured Parliament to repeal the laws in 1896
 - women then moved on to suffrage as a key goal
 - argued women needed to be able to vote to get real change in public affairs
 - had the rise of the Suffrage movement/Suffragettes
 - these figures came largely from the middle class
 - had benefited from education and access to earlier feminist works
 - had two types:
 - 1) those that were peaceful and went through legal action
 - example: Millicent Garrett Fawcett (1847-1929)
 - leader of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS)
 - demanded Parliament grant women's suffrage through legislation
 - 2) Militant Suffragettes
 - led by the Pankhurst family, especially Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928)
 - founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU)
 - based ideas on military principles
 - undertook violent activities
 - targeted property
 - destroyed railroad stations
 - desecrated works of art
 - committed arson
 - chained themselves to the gates in front of the Parliament building
 - also organized parades and demonstrations
 - this led to the widespread arrest of militants
 - some responded with hunger strikes
- eventually, suffrage came across Europe
 - Finland came first in 1907
 - most countries didn't have it until after WWI (by 1920) (they LOVE to ask this on the exam)
 - a lot of these countries took into account women's supportive role during WWI
 - examples of countries:
 - Austria, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Russia
 - Britain passed two important acts for this:
 - Representation of the People Act of 1918 and 1928
 - 1918=women 30 and over
 - 1928=21 and over
- some countries waited until WWII or after though
 - France=1945
 - Italy=1946
 - Switzerland=1971! (last country to give women the right to vote in Europe)

- women in the 20th century
 - Russian Revolution/Soviet Union
 - in theory, women had full equality after the Russian Revolution
 - had voting rights
 - had an equal access to education
 - were supposed to have the same job opportunities
 - no sexual double standard in place
 - in practice, not so much
 - this all makes sense as in theory, a socialist society is fully equal, but this is never the case in reality
- women played a huge role in the world wars
 - made large contributions to the home front
- Fascist states were chauvinistic in nature
 - both Hitler and Mussolini encouraged women to have children to benefit the state
 - the idea with this was that women were supposed to be good mothers and glorify the state
 - both Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany denied women higher paying jobs
- did have repressive legislation passed in many countries after WWI
 - women had a lack of rights in terms of reproductive freedom and employment opportunities
- after WWII
 - baby boom occurred right after WWII as we have discussed in past lectures
 - middle class children were less economically dependent on their parents
 - women remained in the workforce in large numbers
 - had an increase in women rights movements and feminism
 - major figures:
 - Simon de Beauvoir (1908-1986)
 - wrote *The Second Sex* (1949)
 - argued women were in essence free
 - had simply been trapped by inflexible and limiting rules and conditions
 - women needed to take courageous action and assert themselves
 - needed to be creative and their own person
 - all of this would allow them to break free and escape the role of the inferior
 - heavily inspired the future
 - Betty Friedan (1921-2006)
 - wrote *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)
 - American, but influenced European feminist groups
 - argued women were being expected to conform to a false role and live for their husbands
 - needed to live for yourself

- typical demands:
 - birth control rights
 - abortion rights
 - equality for the gay and lesbian community
 - demand for equal pay and work
 - rejection of sexist symbols (bras and high heels, pageants)
 - better divorce rights

- birth rate issues
 - remember the “baby bust”
 - less children being born, which was/is an issue