

Social and Economic Change, 1700-1900  
AP World History  
Kienast

Industrialization initiated many social changes such as suffrage demands, increased coerced and semi-coerced labor, increased labor migrations, and discrimination based on immigration.

The suffrage (voting rights) movement started in Britain. Up until the mid 1800's British citizens had to own land in order to vote in Parliamentary elections. The lower classes began to demand universal male suffrage due to their poor treatment and a desire to have more say in government. Universal male suffrage would allow all males to vote. Many in Parliament were opposed to letting lower classes vote because the upper classes did not want to give up their power and they did not think the lower classes would make educated decisions with their votes. Despite these concerns, reform efforts began in the mid 1800's due to fears of revolt. Universal male suffrage existed in several countries like France and the United States by the late 1800's and British leaders knew that they would eventually have to consider the possibility. Additionally, communists were talking about violent revolt against the middle and upper classes, something that British leaders wanted to avoid at all costs. Britain passed their first universal male suffrage law in 1867.

Women also began to demand rights in mid 1800's. The women's rights movement actually started during the French Revolution, but the Industrial Revolution intensified the discussions because women were now contributing so much to the economies of the Western world. The woman who began the French Revolution's women's rights movement was Olympe de Gouges. She wrote *Declaration of the Rights of Women and the Female Citizen* during the French Revolution, and was eventually sent to the guillotine for views. Later, an Englishwoman named Mary Wollstonecraft published *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792. Her work is considered the first great women's rights declaration. She argued that women needed to act tougher and less delicate. Wollstonecraft saw femininity as a sign of weakness.

In the mid 1800's the first women's rights conference was held in Seneca Falls, New York. Seneca Falls is considered the beginning of the women's rights movement. This conference was led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Martha C. Wright, Mary Ann McClintock, and Jane Hunt. The women (and men!) at the conference were upset over stalled rights laws in New York, and ended up passing a series of resolutions that argued women had a natural right to equality in all spheres. Despite these calls, women would not get right to vote until early twentieth century in most countries and full equality is still an ongoing effort.

While social change was occurring in the Western world during the period 1700-1900, labor problems such as slavery, convict labor, and indentured servitude continued despite the other reforms. One continuity was the use of some form of forced labor throughout the whole period. Slavery was abolished in Britain by 1774 but continued in its colonies until 1833. France abolished slavery in 1789, but it still arose again from time to time in its colonies, most notably when slavery was resumed in Haiti under Napoleon Bonaparte. The United States

abolished slavery in 1865 after fighting a war in part because half the country wanted to keep slavery.

Indentured servitude was also common throughout the world in the period from 1700-1900. Indentured servants were unpaid workers who served an employer due to owing debts or because they could not afford to live without financial assistance. Many indentured servants were used as labor in colonies because they owed money to the government or banks and their service was a way to pay off their debts. Others lived in horrible living conditions and chose indentured servitude as a way to escape crippling poverty. Indentured servants are considered forced labor because their situations give them no other choice but to serve another person. Indentured service was common in the American colonies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was also used in India and China during the nineteenth century. In the early 1800's Indian indentured servants were forced into laboring in South African diamond and gold mines. Between the years 1849 and 1900 Chinese indentured servants were common. Chinese workers were trying to escape poor economic conditions and agreed to go to places like South America for agriculture and to the American West during gold rush to mine and build railroads. Convict labor was also used during the eighteenth century. People who were in prison for non-violent crimes were allowed to become settlers in colonies. Two well-known examples are in the British colonies of Georgia (yes, the state) and Australia, which was originally called New South Wales.

So, what were changes in labor from 1700 to 1900? The abolition movement was certainly a change. Slavery was abolished in most Western areas by 1865. The Enlightenment ideas of equality and freedom certainly was one reason why abolition became popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. How could someone enlightened believe in enslaving another human? The Haitian Revolution was another factor in why slavery was abolished. Many Western countries feared similar revolts among their slaves. Abolition of slavery in the West during the period from 1700 to 1900 did have unintended consequences on the rest of the world. The abolition of African slavery in the West led to other forms of forced labor in parts of the world, such as the use of indentured servants from China and India.

The last social impact that industrialization had was large-scale migration. Large numbers of people from Europe and Mideast migrated to new areas of the world. Examples of these migrations include Japanese agricultural workers migrating throughout the Pacific to find temporary and seasonal agricultural work, the flow of Lebanese merchants to the Americas, especially to South America in order to follow the booming cocoa trade, the immigration of Italians to Argentina and the United States due to poor economic conditions in Italy, Chinese to Southeast Asia for agriculture and trade, Chinese to South America and United States, Irish to the U.S. due to the potato famine, and Indians to South Africa for gold and diamond mining. The main problem with all of these large-scale immigrations (and problem with large-scale migrations throughout history) is that migrants are often discriminated against by the native people of the countries where they migrate.