

Labor Organization/Forms

Post-Classical Period (600 CE-1450 CE)

- BIG PERIOD FOR LABOR CHANGES
 - The increased volume of trade during this period led to new labor practices, including the adaptation of existing patterns of free and coerced labor. This impacted social and gender structures as a result.
- Agricultural production heavily increased due to technological innovations
 - The horse collar in Europe for example allowed for agricultural growth to occur
- Industrial production of iron and steel expanded in areas like China
 - Other areas, like Persia and India, expanded their production of textiles and porcelain
- Many areas continued to use labor practices from previous periods
 - The diversification of labor organization continued
 - Forms of labor during this period:
 - Free peasant agriculture
 - Nomadic pastoralism
 - Craft production
 - Guilds (associations of individuals in the same artisan industry; blacksmiths for example)
 - Coerced and unfree labor
 - Labor taxes
 - Military drafts/obligations
- New forms of coerced labor appeared during this time period
 - Serfdom in the feudal systems of Europe and Japan
 - Remember, serfs were bound to the land (they could not leave the area they were born in or worked in).
 - Serfs were expected to live on the lord's estate/manor and farm
 - Serfs had almost no rights in this type of system
 - Mita system for the Inca
 - You had to work on a public works project, like road construction, for a certain part of the year.
 - Many areas raised taxes on peasants
 - Many peasants responded by revolting. This was common across Europe and China.
 - The demand for slaves for military and domestic purposes increased across Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Early Modern Period (1450-1750 CE)

- Labor during this period:
 - Slavery (coerced)
 - The slave trade heavily increased as Europeans needed labor for cash crops in their colonies. This was especially true after native populations died off from European diseases like smallpox.
 - European established control over coastlines in Africa and traded manufactured goods (such as rifles) for slaves.
 - Slaves were packed onto slave ships and shipped across the Atlantic in the Triangular Trade Network. The slave portion of the Triangular Trade Network was referred to as the Middle Passage.
 - Slaves arrived in areas like Brazil and the Caribbean and were used to produce cash crops, most notably sugar, on plantation systems.
 - The influx of slaves led to the creation of new ethnic groups and social classes in the Americas.
 - It also led to the transfer of crops like rice to the Americas and the creation of syncretic religions like Voodoo.
 - Do not forget about maroon communities as well.
 - Indentured Servitude (coerced)
 - This became a major form of labor.
 - Europeans or other individuals would agree to work on a plantation or agricultural area for a period of 5-7 years in exchange for transportation across the Atlantic.
 - Mita System-Spanish (coerced)
 - The Spanish forced Native American groups to work in silver mines like Potosi
 - Traditional peasant agriculture increased (free and coerced in the case of serfdom in Russia)
 - Peasant labor intensified in many regions:
 - Russia still had serfdom during this period.
 - Peasants produced cotton textiles in the cottage industry in areas like India.
 - Peasants still produced silk in China

Modern (1750-1900 CE)

- Labor organization during this period:
 - Industrialization led to the development of the factory system.
 - This was a change from the use of the cottage industry in the countryside in many areas.
 - This concentrated labor in a single location and increased the degree of specialization of labor
 - Factory owners could heavily regulate and control labor in these factories. Conditions were not very good early on in the factories.
 - Many governments eventually improved conditions in factories as factory workers and lower class individuals advocated for more rights.
 - Industrialization led to the creation of a new social group: the factory worker/proletariat class
 - Workers organized themselves to improve working conditions, limit hours, and gain higher wages
 - Some were attracted to new ideas like socialism
 - Enlightenment ideas challenged the traditional use of slavery in many regions.
 - This led to a variety of abolition movements that gradually saw the end of the slavery in many regions of the world throughout the 1800s.
 - Serfdom also ended in areas like Russia
 - Indentured servants continued to be used at this point in history and increased as slavery was abolished in many areas.
 - Chinese and Indian indentured servants were common in many regions. For example, many Indian indentured servants went to South Africa for work.
 - Despite slavery being abolished, some areas did continue to use it.
 - Various types of labor migrants emerged during this time period
 - Indentured servants continued
 - Migrant workers to new locations to work in mines
 - Convict labor was common
 - Specialized professionals emerged as well
 - These labor migrants often faced discrimination in areas they want to

Contemporary: 1900-present

- Migration based on the need for jobs and labor has continued into the 20th/21st centuries
- Slavery has been abolished, but people are still forced into slavery in some areas of the world