Belle Époque

Mass Culture

- Education
  o All countries making effort to bring education to more people
  o Education became more secular
    ▪ Contributed to overall secularization of society
    ▪ Church still controlled most schooling though
      • 90% of English schools were religious
  o More children went to secondary schools
    ▪ Literacy rate rose
  o Education Act of 1870
    ▪ Passed by English Parliament
    ▪ Established public schools where Anglican schools not available
    ▪ Secularized education
  o Mandatory Education
    ▪ Parliamentary law of 1880 requiring all children ages 5-10 to attend school
      • Eventually rose to 12
    ▪ Primary education became Free
      • Some parents demanded supplementary income to make up for loss of income
  o Ferry Laws
    ▪ Named after French Minister of Education
    ▪ Made French primary schools free, obligatory, and secular for all children aged 3-13
  o Women
    ▪ Some women began to be educated
      • Viewed as way to make daughters attractive to suitors
        o Home economics classes
        o Marrying up socially
          ▪ Elevate status
        o Making money is a secondary concern
  o Number of university students in Europe tripled in late 19th century

- Decline of Organized Religion
  o Churches’ influence on the state decreased throughout Europe
    ▪ Secular education and nationalism reduced religious influence
  o Fewer people went to church
    ▪ Less than 20% of Londoners attended church
    ▪ Marseilles, France
      • 1840 – Over 50%
      • 1901 – around 16%
    ▪ Some French regions and working class districts considered “missionary areas”
  o Religious revivals did occur in parts of Europe
    ▪ Great Awakening in Sweden
    ▪ Cult of Miracles inspired faith
      • Over 1,000,000 people a year visited miracle sites or relics

- Leisure in the Belle Époque
  o Money to do for people with money to spend
  o Paris set the tone for style in Europe
  o Dance Halls, cafes, and other venues were popular settings for performances
- Drama, poetry, music, comedy, etc.
  - Dances became much faster than the conservatives ones of the past
  - Hundreds of thousands went to movies at least once a week

- **Sports**
  - Cycling became first spectator sport
    - Became a sport to participate in and to observe
    - Bicycles accessible to almost all Europeans
  - Women in sports
    - Men complained women in sports attire was “not ladylike”
    - Served as way for women to achieve their own rights in society
  - Team Sports
    - European football and rugby were very popular
      - Professional Football started in 1863 in England
        - More of a lower class sport
      - Rugby more of an upper class sport
  - International competition
    - First modern Olympics held in 1896
      - In Athens
      - Arranged by Baron Pierre de Coubertin
        - French nobleman
    - Tied to strong sense of nationalism during period
      - Social Darwinism applied to sport
  - Racing
    - Very popular
    - First race was in 1894

- **Consumerism**
  - Department stores became popular destinations
    - Women with money used **shopping as a hobby**
      - Shopping was an “experience”
      - *Women spent less time at church and more time shopping*
    - Some stores became landmarks
      - Stores were massive with lavish decorations
      - Even tourist destinations
        - Ex. Gum Department store in Moscow
  - All classes shopped at department stores
    - **Mass production**
  - Glossy catalogues promoted items in stores
    - People could shop from home
      - Ex. Sears catalogue

- **Social Changes**
  - **Industrial Workers**
    - Industrial Worker Characteristics
      - Depended on their labor for survival
      - Came from proletarian families
    - Proletarian was a state of mind for the working class
      - Received university training for skilled jobs
      - Woman worked in factories and as servants
        - ½ of all working class women were servants
        - Wanted to save enough to have a respectable dowry
- Children worked fulltime after the age of 14

  - Industrial Workers Jobs
    - By 1900 more than half of all industrial workers in Britain, Germany and Belgium were employed in firms with more than twenty workers
    - Unskilled workers overtook skilled workers when machines overtook people
      - Statistician
      - Clerks
      - Salespeople Tax collectors
      - Postal workers
      - Food/drug inspectors
      - Engineers
      - Accounts
      - Bookkeepers
      - School teachers
      - Factory Workers
      - Servants

- Working Class Families
  - Moralists denounced working class families
    - They thought family values were destroyed
      - Woman were taken away from their reproductive jobs
      - Children were forced to work unmoral jobs
      - Men were left lonely
        - “forced” into the hands of prostitutes
    - Families were ripped apart
      - In fact families were usually separated when the children were 16
      - Children got jobs
      - Daughters got married
      - Parents stayed at home or went back to work
  - Family housing
    - Families would live in tightly packed neighborhoods
      - 1/3 of working class families lived in 1 room
  - Women
    - Women who could afford to do so raised children
      - When children went to work women went back
    - Viewed by moralists as morally depredated promiscuous
      - Forced by economic circumstances into prostitution
        - 10000s were in Paris, London, Berlin and Vienna worked in elegant brothels or in the streets
          - Many were working class married woman who became pregnant and were fired from their job
        - Chronic danger to public health
          - Prostitutes checked for VD
        - Banned brothels and when it was repealed all had to go into red light districts
          - Jack the Ripper

- Social Mobility
Clerks working for banks, railroads, utility companies, and insurance companies moved from the working class to above the working class

Rags to riches tales were popular
  - Most moved from poor to working class

People who saved could move into a different social class that was marked by clothes you wore, and leisure activities.
  - Woman moved up classes more than men

Social Segregation
  - Based on class and ethnicities
    - Urban areas became mixtures of ethnicities
      - Especially in United States
    - Some jobs reserved only for members of certain nationality
      - Jews considered outsiders in Vienna, Berlin, Budapest, and Paris (among others)
        - Led to Zionist movement

Demographic Changes
  - General Trends
    - From 1870 to 1914 population of Europe increased by half
      - Rose from 290 to 435 million
    - Most countries urbanized
      - People living in cities and towns increased
    - Urban births outnumbered deaths
      - Mortality rates fell rapidly
        - Especially among children
          - Dysentery and Diarrhea continued to kill 15 out of 100 infants born
    - White collar positions (clerks, salespeople)
      - Increased factory production altered physical structure of industrial cities
    - Characterized by greater social segregation within their limits
    - Overseas emigration

England
  - Big decline in infant mortality after 1900
  - Greater medical knowledge of chest and stomach infections
  - General improvement in the standard of living
    - Poor people afford to eat more nutritious food
    - Lived in warmer, drier accommodations
      - Improvements lagged in large, dirty, and industrial Cities

France
  - France unique plunging birthrate
    - Population increased only 15% from mid-century until 1914
    - Southwestern France- birth of a second child was one more mouth to feed
      - Division of farmland into small plots
        - Another child meant another subdivision of land
    - France no longer had primogeniture

Social Changes
  - Families
    - Infant mortality reduced
      - Parents sought to control number of children they had
        - Contraception movement
    - Number of families with more than two or three children fell
      - Poor families had more children than upper class
• Upper class limited births to devote more resources to the education and inheritance of each child

- Increase in births to unmarried couples or single mothers
  • Young female migrants to the city were no longer constrained by living with their parents
  • Vulnerable to men promising marriage or nothing at all
  • Unmarried women were common especially in Scotland, Ireland and Brittany in France

- Living standard improved for ordinary people in each industrialized country
  • Standards were higher in northern Europe compared to southern and eastern Europe
  • Greater in Britain than France
    o Britain- real wages continued to go up

- Workers had higher levels of consumption
  • Price of food declined
    o Increase in agricultural production and improved transportation

• Working Class
  • Working class spent half their money on food
    • ¼ less than during past several centuries
    • This left more money to spend on clothes and sometimes with some left over

- Small-town shops were better supplied
  • Ready-made clothes sold on market with manufactured household appliances
  • Grain and meat

- Refrigerated ships
  • Reached Europe from Australia, Canada, United States and Argentina
  • Meat was no longer considered a luxury
  • Germans now consumed 105 pounds of meat in 1912
    o From only 60 pounds in 1873
    o Germans also consumed three times more sugar

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**Migration and Emigration**

- Background
  • Worldwide movement of men and women
    • Becoming a global labor force
  • Migration- permanent and seasonal
    • Italian laborers known as “swallows”
      • Spent 4 weeks a year going to and from Argentina to work the harvest
    • France- industrial workers returned to their villages to help with the harvest
      • Many miners were also part-time farmers
    • Russia- peasant-workers of Moscow and St. Petersburg kept one foot in the rural world
      • Lived on the edge of the cities, dressed like villagers, legal ties to rural commune
        o Responsible for share of commune’s tax quota
      • 1900, peasants made up 2/3 of St. Petersburg
        o City had more than 1.4 million people

- Migration
  • Migration was considered a two way street
    • Migrants returned home with stories of their experiences in the cities and towns
- Different ways of speaking, knowledge of birth control, habit of reading, sports, greater political awareness and interest

- **Emigration**
  - Emigration to other countries- social phenomenon of the age
    - Increased dramatically in late 19th century
    - Resulting from agricultural stagnation, religious persecution, and hope of finding a better life
  - Peasants and laborers left Europe in search of economic opportunity in the US, Canada and Latin America
    - Ireland, Britain, Germany
    - earlier waves of emigrants
    - “hungry forties” Irish potato famine
  - Late 1890’s improving economic times
    - Emigration slowed from Germany
    - Still high from Ireland
    - Increasing from Italy
  - First decade of 20th century
    - Emigration from Europe rose to between 1 to 1.4 million people each year
  - Many families traveled together overseas
    - Many married men went alone
      - Hoping to send for families or return after making and saving money
  - Single men more than single women left
    - Many never saw families again
  - “In new homes, migrants forged new collective identities, a process shaped not only by their own ethnic backgrounds and solidarities but also by conditions in their new homelands”

- **Great Move to the United States**
  - Packed themselves on overcrowded steamers to the United States
    - Italians and Irish- New York, Boston, Philadelphia
      - Migrants to US from southern Italy- mostly likely to return again permanently
        - Almost 2/3 eventually go back
      - Russian and Polish Jews to New York’s Lower East Side
      - Portuguese to Providence and New Bedford
      - Germans and Poles to Chicago, Milwaukee, Philadelphia
  - 1907
    - Italian emigrants sent back enough money to cover half the commercial deficit of their native country
  - Pushed by crop failures and pulled by the US Homestead Act of 1862
    - Guaranteed land in the American West
    - Swedes, Norwegians, Finns emigrated to northern United States
      - Minnesota, and Washington State
      - Reminded them of home

- **Jewish Emigration**
  - 1871-1914, 1.5 million Jews left Russia for US
    - Fleeing poverty and anti-Semitic violence
    - In search of freedom and jobs
  - Left their homes with few cherished items and great hopes
    - Tens of thousands of Jews moved westward to European capitals
      - Retained cultural traditions, religion, language
        - Spoke Yiddish as first language