THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Restoring Women to World Studies

A Document-Based Question Curriculum Unit for Grades 9–12

Hemispheres

Restoring Women to World Studies

A Document-Based Question Unit for Grades 9–12

Primary Researchers:

Natalie Arsenault, Outreach Director
Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies

Christopher Rose, Assistant Director
Center for Middle Eastern Studies

Allegra Azulay, Outreach Coordinator
Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies

Rachel Meyer, Outreach Coordinator
South Asia Institute

Hemispheres
The International Outreach Consortium
at the University of Texas at Austin

http://www.utexas.edu/cola/orgs/hemispheres/
hemispheres@austin.utexas.edu

Restoring Women to World Studies:
A Document-Based Question Curriculum Unit for Grades 9–12

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Table of Contents

Welcome vii

Standards Alignment ix

Introduction: Restoring Women to World Studies 1

Classroom Activity: Graffiti Wall—"What are Gender Norms?" 15

Graphic Organizer: Gender Norms and Women's Responses 16

Classroom Activity: Analyzing Images of Women 17

Case Studies

The Arab World: Islam and Feminism in the Age of the Arab Renaissance 29

Brazil: Black Women's Work and Social Progress 37

Chile and Argentina: Madre = Resistencia: Mothers of the Disappeared. 47

India: Women in the Indian Independence Movement: The Salt Protests of 1930 59

Israel: Pioneers in Pre-state Israel: The Women of the First Aliyah 69

Russia: Women's Work or Women's Rights? Russia after the Revolution 75

Sri Lanka: Juki Girls: Clothing, Factory Work, and Changing Gender Roles in Sri Lanka 85

Yugoslavia: Women in Black—Belgrade: Making Their Silence Heard 97

About Hemispheres 107

Welcome!

In much of the social studies—especially courses focused on world history, geography, and culture—there has been a long-standing awareness that the experience of women has been left out of the narrative. Recent changes in state, national, and Advanced Placement educational standards have sought to remedy this omission by calling for the inclusion of women's studies in the social studies curriculum. However, the most widely available resources tend to focus on the experience of women in Western Europe and North America. *Restoring Women to World Studies: A Document-Based Question Curriculum Unit for Grades 9–12* seeks to address these new requirements and the current regional bias in available resources. The unit is based on the 2007 Hemispheres Summer Teachers' Institute *Restoring Women to World Studies*. That four-day workshop explored the situation of women—historical and contemporary—in Latin America, the Middle East, Russia, East Europe and Eurasia, and South Asia. The training sessions discussed the contributions of notable women to historical and artistic movements, talked about concepts of gender roles and gendered spaces, looked at issues that are driving women's movements today, and examined the greater context in which all of these take place.

In this unit, we have sought to address the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and National Geography Standards that explicitly deal with gender roles and social structures but also standards that address citizenship, processes of historical change, social movements and cultural differences. In addition, this unit draws on primary source readings and images to strengthen students' skills in working with primary source materials. Each case study is laid out in a Document-Based Question (DBQ) format so that students can cite, interpret, and evaluate sources; consider point of view; and use historical evidence to develop and support a thesis.

The unit begins with a PowerPoint that introduces the notion of gender as a key social category and patriarchy as an important organizing structure in many societies and cultures. The unit then examines these concepts within case studies from the four regions. Each case study is meant to encourage students to address questions about gender roles in the different societies, either in a particular historical moment or how they evolve over time. In addition to responding to each case study, students can analyze and compare the different primary source documents within the case studies by considering the following questions and their answers:

- How do women in patriarchal societies experience gender norms and ideals?
- How do women in patriarchal societies create change within the established order of society?

It is our hope that, with *Restoring Women to World Studies*, students will be able to better appreciate how gender functions within different societies at different times; understand how it both shapes individual lives and offers individuals opportunities to shape society; see similarities in women's experiences as well as differences; and appreciate that experiences of gender are influenced by other categories of identity (class, race, ethnicity, etc.) and are not frozen or merely restrictive but changing and challenged by women who respond to traditional understandings of gender roles and hierarchies.

We welcome feedback and comments on the unit and your experience using it in the classroom. Please do not hesitate to contact us at hemispheres@austin.utexas.edu.

This Curriculum Unit Address The Following Standards in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS):

113.22 (Social Studies Grade 6)
(1) History. The student understands that historical events influence contemporary events. The student is expected to: (B) analyze the historical background of selected contemporary societies to evaluate relationships between past conflicts and current conditions.

(2) History. The student understands the contributions of individuals and groups from various cultures to selected historical and contemporary societies. The student is expected to: (A) explain the significance of individuals or groups from selected societies, past and present.

(13) Citizenship. The student understands that the nature of citizenship varies among societies. The student is expected to: (A) describe roles and responsibilities of citizens in selected contemporary societies including the United States; (B) explain how opportunities for citizens to participate in and influence the political process vary among selected contemporary societies; and (C) compare the role of citizens in the United States with the role of citizens from selected democratic and nondemocratic contemporary societies.

(15) Culture. The student understands the similarities and differences within and among cultures in different societies. The student is expected to: (C) analyze the similarities and differences among selected world societies.

(18) Culture. The student understands the relationship that exists between artistic, creative, and literary expressions and the societies that produce them. The student is expected to: (A) explain the relationships that exist between societies and their architecture, art, music, and literature; (C) describe ways in which societal issues influence creative expressions.

113.33 (World History Studies)
(1) History. The student understands traditional historical points of reference in world history. The student is expected to: (A) identify the major eras in world history and describe their defining characteristics; (C) apply absolute and relative chronology through the sequencing of significant individuals, events, and time periods.

(17) Citizenship. The student understands the significance of political choices and decisions made by individuals, groups, and nations throughout history. The student is expected to: (A) evaluate political choices and decisions that individuals, groups, and nations have made in the past, taking into account historical context, and apply this knowledge to the analysis of choices and decisions faced by contemporary societies; and (B) describe the different roles of citizens and noncitizens in historical cultures, especially as the roles pertain to civic participation.

(18) Citizenship. The student understands the historical development of significant legal and political concepts, including ideas about rights, republicanism, constitutionalism, and democracy. The student is expected to: (C) identify examples of political, economic, and social oppression and violations of human rights throughout history, including slavery, the Holocaust, other examples of genocide, and politically-motivated mass murders in Cambodia, China, and the Soviet Union; (D) assess the degree to which human rights and democratic ideals and practices have been advanced throughout the world during the 20th century.

(20) Culture. The student understands the relationship between the arts and the times during which they were created. The student is expected to: (B) analyze examples of how art, architecture, literature, music, and drama reflect the history of cultures in which they are produced.

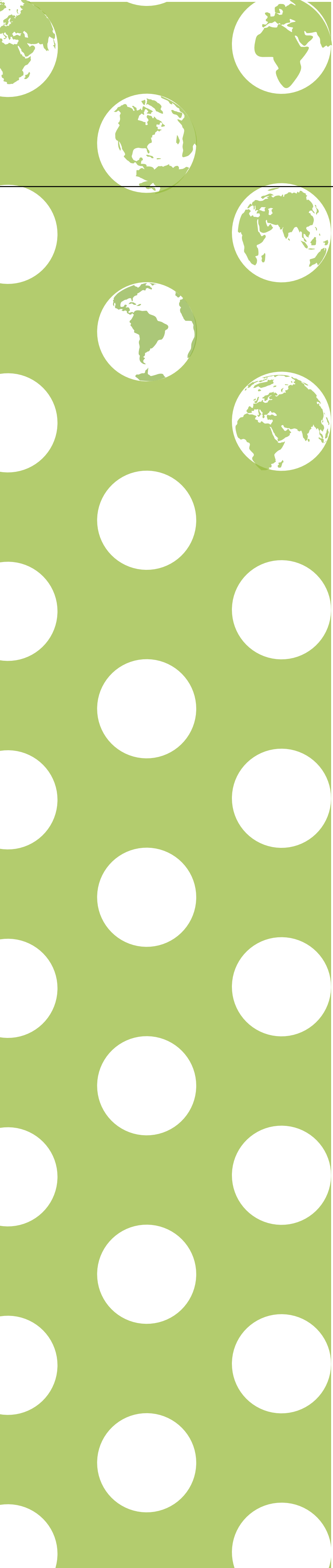
(21) Culture. The student understands the roles of women, children, and families in different historical cultures. The student is expected to: (A) analyze the specific roles of women, children, and families in different historical cultures; and (B) describe the political, economic, and cultural influence of women in different historical cultures.

This Curriculum Unit Addresses the Following Theme in the Course Description for Advanced Placement World History

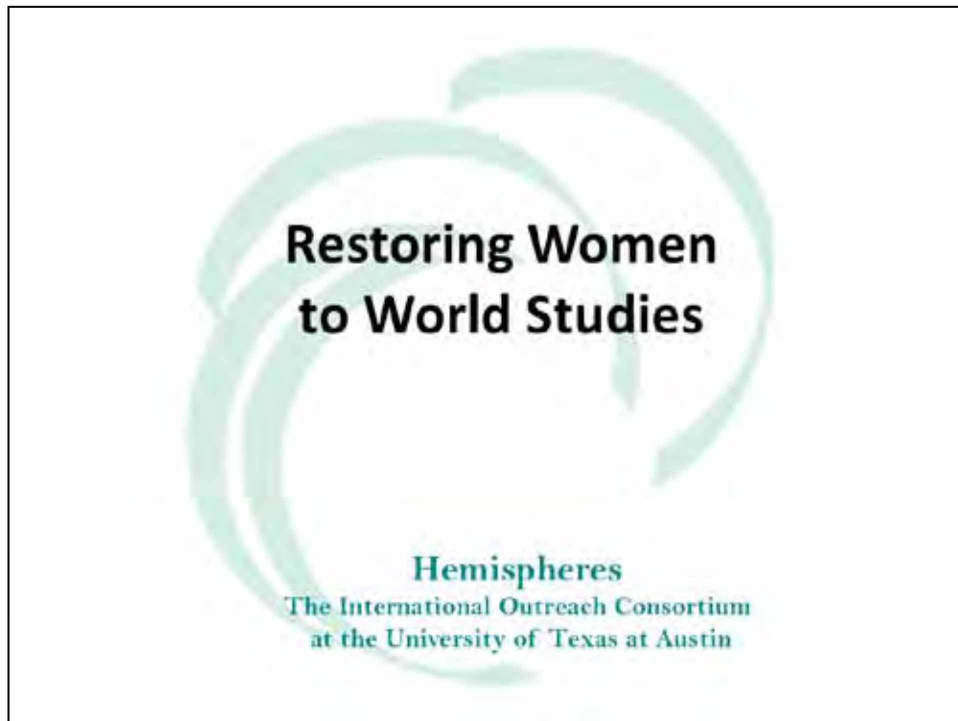
4. Systems of social structure and gender structure (comparing major features within and among societies, and assessing change and continuity)

What students are expected to know:

- **Foundations, 8000 BCE–600 CE:** Classical civilizations: social and gender structures
- **1450-1750:** Gender and empire (including the role of women in households and in politics)
- **1750-1914:** Changes in social and gender structure (tension between work patterns and ideas about gender). Major comparisons: Compare the roles and conditions of women in the upper/middle classes with peasantry/ working class in western Europe.
- **1914-present:** Social reform and social revolution (changing gender roles; family structures; rise of feminism)



Introduction: Restoring Women to World Studies



Introduction

Hemispheres created this unit in response to the need to bring women into the social studies curriculum. It was conceived in response to new AP World History standards that specifically address the experiences of women and how concepts of gender structure and operate within society. We strongly feel, however, that the contents of this unit can be adapted to a variety of social studies courses. We encourage teachers to incorporate the case studies and lessons in the unit throughout the year to address other standards that deal with cultural norms, citizenship, the history of social movements, and social change and continuity more generally.

When deciding on a starting point for the unit, we could have taken many approaches to gender in world studies, however we decided to introduce the topic of gender through the notion of patriarchy, a social structure that is found within many cultures around the world, including our own.

The notes in this presentation will include ways to incorporate use of this PowerPoint into your classroom, and provide discussion topics.

Before proceeding to show the next slide, pose the question to your students "What is Patriarchy?" to elicit discussion before providing a more academic definition. Ask your students for examples of patriarchy in our own society and write a list of them on the board.

Brief Background to the Study of Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a social structure based on the family unit where older men (fathers/grandfathers/uncles) have primary responsibility and authority over other members of the family/household, and by extension the community as a whole. The feminine form of this kind of social structure is called "matriarchy," or a society where women take a leading role, where women are given primary responsibility and authority over the family, and by extension the community as a whole.

Although patriarchy has been the dominant mode of social organization throughout history, many societies have moved towards a more egalitarian form due to the influence of social movements, especially women's rights movements, which have challenged patriarchy as an unjust social system that is oppressive to women.

The women's rights movement of the early 20th century (also known as first-wave feminism) sought to bring political equality to women by giving them the right to vote and hold public office. In the 1960s and 70s, second-wave feminism addressed other issues of social and economic inequality. This period also saw the rise of feminist theory, which brought criticism of patriarchy into academic contexts. These challenges to the patriarchal order produced far-ranging social restructuring in many societies.

Starting from a foundation in the theories of biological evolution developed by Charles Darwin, many 19th-century social scholars formulated a linear theory of cultural evolution through which all societies moved. It was presumed by many scholars at the time that societies moved through a series of developmental stages. According to this logic, they believed that earlier forms of societies would demonstrate matriarchal tendencies, and that these societies would still be present in societies that were less "evolved" and primitive.

Many early anthropologists and sociologists who were critical of patriarchy in their own societies (such as Else Clews Parsons, Margaret Mead, Lewis Henry) went on a quest around the world to seek out this form of social system in their field work. This fits in roughly with what might be termed "first-wave feminism." They were disappointed with the results, however, when they found that, although there are many cultures and societies, some still existing, that demonstrate **matrilineal** traits (lines of descent including names and inheritance through the mothers of children) and/or **matrilocal** characteristics (which determines residence for families, and children of marriages through the mothers of children), it is most often the women's brothers and uncles who end up holding the most power and control in these societies. So a true matriarchal society has yet to be discovered.

Anthropologist Margaret Mead, on matriarchy:

"All the claims so glibly made about societies ruled by women are nonsense. We have no reason to believe that they ever existed. ... men everywhere have been in charge of running the show. ... men have been the leaders in public affairs and the final authorities at home."

'Review of Sex and Temperament in Three Privative Societies'. Redbook (October 1973): 48.

Anthropologists and sociologists now believe that a pure matriarchy probably never existed, and this form of system is now understood to be a hypothetical social system. It is important to note, as well, that social theorists no longer hold an evolutionary perspective of human societies.

Nature versus Nurture?

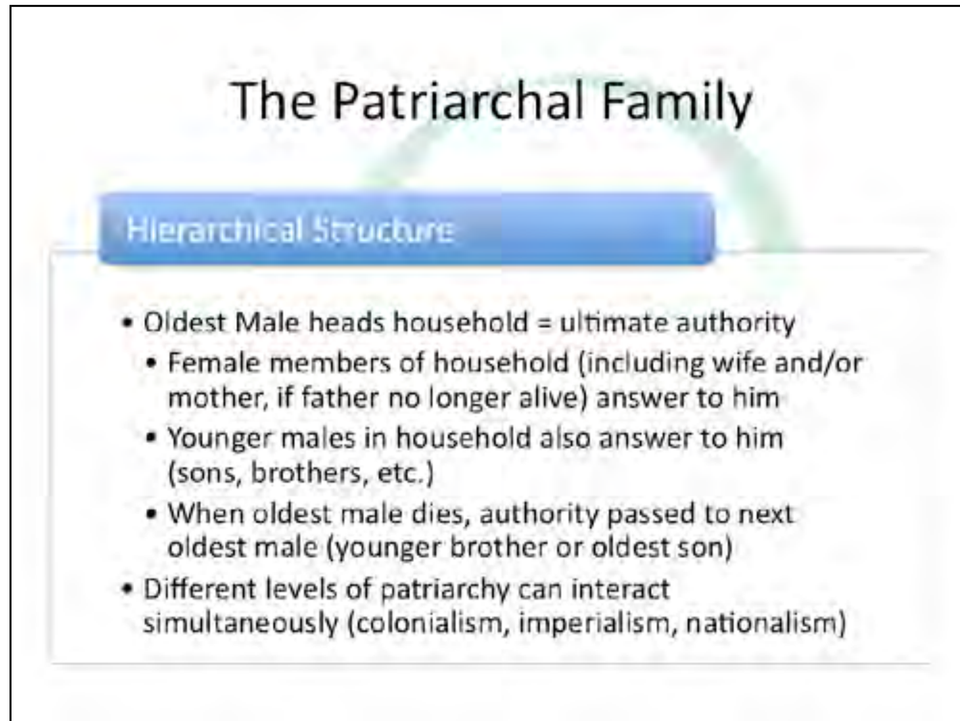
Your students might wonder "Why is this the case?" or "Why isn't there a pure form of matriarchy?"

The final verdict is still out. Some scholars base their answers in biology; either on the role women play in reproduction or the hormonal predisposition of males toward aggression due to testosterone. Others argue against a purely biological explanation. Most sociologists and cultural anthropologists reject predominantly biological explanations of patriarchy and contend that social and cultural conditioning is primarily responsible for establishing male and female gender roles. According to standard sociological theory, patriarchy is the result of sociological constructions that are passed down from generation to generation. In our own society, gender messages conveyed by family, mass media, and other institutions largely favor males having a dominant status. You might have your students research further this "nature versus nurture" question and organize a class debate or discussion on the topic.

In addition to holding a view that there is no pure form of matriarchy and that patriarchy prevails as a key social structure in most societies around the world, we began our examination of gender with two premises: 1) societies and cultures are not static; and 2) the people within them aren't preprogrammed unthinking agents – they act to reproduce, challenge and/or change the social structures that they live within.

These premises lead us examine the following questions in our case studies:

How do women respond to patriarchy?
How do women live their lives within a society that holds patriarchal norms?
How do women confront and challenge, and at times reinforce, patriarchal ideals at particular historic moments and within specific social systems?



What does Patriarchy look like?

The next three slides examine how patriarchy works. In its most basic form, patriarchy is a ranked social structure that gives ultimate power and authority, as well as responsibility, to the oldest male members of the group. I say authority and responsibility because it is important to remember that it isn't only women who are subject to patriarchy. Men (especially younger men) are asked to submit to patriarchal authority as well. And both men and women experience the costs and benefits of this social structure.

The stereotypical feminist perspective of patriarchy is that it is always and only oppressive to women and empowering always and only to all men. This assumption is false. Both men and women experience both negative costs and positive benefits from this type of social system.

Men in patriarchal systems are often required to take on the occupation or businesses of their fathers and are also expected to stay in their ancestral/family home and take care of elder parents and younger siblings. While men may inherit land, while their sisters may not, they can also be viewed as tied to it. Younger men also may not benefit from inheritances, but rather may lose out to older brothers. These may be viewed as restrictions on the choices that men get to make within patriarchal societies or at least as limitations to perceived advantages that patriarchy might offer men.

Also, it is important to note that different kinds of patriarchy come into contact and impact people differently. You will see this interplay in some of the case studies in this unit, particularly where an indigenous form of patriarchy is overlaid by that coming from colonial power which can further impact and adjust gender relations within a culture with mixed results.

The Patriarchal Family

Honor

- Family's public esteem tied to women's virtue (chastity, sexual purity)
- Honor of all family members is linked
- Male head of household ultimately responsible for safeguarding family honor
- Women could lose honor easily and therefore need to be closely watched and guarded (by men)

A key feature of many forms of patriarchy is often a notion of family honor, or the need to protect and preserve the family's or community's public face and prestige. Women are frequently seen to be a particular threat to family honor and it becomes the responsibility of males in the community to watch over females in order to preserve the family/ community honor.

The Patriarchal Society

Public vs. Private Spheres

- Public sphere - outside the home
  - dangerous to women
  - no acceptable place for women
  - seen as men's space
- Private sphere - inside home
  - protected by male patriarch
  - but often managed by women
  - seen as women's space

Separate Spheres Model:

In patriarchal societies it is often perceived that men and women exist in separate "spheres." Women inhabit a sphere comprised of the home, religious roles, and social visits they exchange with each other. Men's sphere is outside the home in the world of industry, commerce, and politics. These separate spheres define the different roles assigned to each. These separate spheres are also referred to as the public and private spheres. Your students may be familiar with this idea, as it has guided our thinking about gender roles within our own society. Some people see this model as continuing to have a strong influence on the assumptions and stereotypes of work and occupations deemed appropriate for men and women, with women taking on the "care-taking" jobs and men having greater access to positions of power and authority. They see its continued effects in the kinds of professions that tend to be employed more or less heavily by women and in the unequal wages or notions of women's commitment to career when they have families. Others argue that this model only has a limited hold in today's society. You may wish to engage your students in a debate about the degree to which the "separate spheres model" continues to influence their perceptions or experiences.

But even in the most rigidly structured patriarchal societies, one might question the degree to which a separate spheres model would actually be feasible. After all, keeping half of the family or population of the community protected within the home comes with a price. The question becomes who can afford to keep women in the home?

Up to this point, we have examined how people experience a patriarchal social system based on their gender – in other words, how men and women might experience patriarchy in similar and different ways. The next two slides introduce a new aspect of social identity into the mix: class standing.

Private Sphere (elite women)

- Offers protection from dangers of public sphere
- Allows patriarchal male to safeguard family honor
- Inappropriate for women to be in public without proper escort
- Limited public appearances (religious rituals, escorted to social events)
- Activities: education, crafts, perhaps courtship (but chaperoned)
- Private space allows elite women/families to maintain honor by keeping transgressions out of the public eye
- Sheltered women become sign of family's elite status

Bringing Class into the Picture:

When we consider class standing, we end up seeing that only families with a certain level of affluence can afford to shelter and sequester their women. Higher class women might be more restricted as a symbol of family honor, or conversely might be granted more access to the outside through educational opportunities, depending on the family's specific values and circumstances. The point is, not all women within the same society will experience patriarchal norms in identical ways. Other aspects of a person's social identity, in addition to gender, will also influence how a person experiences forms of social stratification within a patriarchal framework.

Public Sphere
(lower-class women)

- Housing for urban poor allows no privacy
- Poor women are constantly in public sphere and at risk for losing their honor
- Poor women need to work to supplement family income
- Need to work outside home makes it impossible to safeguard honor completely
- Most household chores also keep women in public sphere
- Despite lack of privacy, poor women establish their own system of honor – also centered on family

Some women have always had to work outside the home to help support families. Women have worked as domestic servants in others' homes, in agricultural labor or in other capacities. Also, the homes that people live in are determined by their economic circumstance. In poorer households, domestic work itself might be more "public." For example, the need to get drinking water from a community source, washing clothes at the river, even bathing may need to take place outside the home.

Our understanding of gender and the influence of a patriarchal system become even more complex as other aspects of identity get added to the mix.

Ask you students to think of other aspects of identity that might influence how patriarchy and gender roles are experienced.

You might suggest that students consider how the following aspects of identity influence a person's experience of gender: age, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, whether one lives in rural or urban areas. All these criteria influence a person's experience system of patriarchy in different ways; all work together to determine where a person is located within society and the position from which they negotiate their standing.

You might encourage your students to think of other social markers, or have them think through specific examples. For example, have them compare the experience of a white woman with that of a male African slave on a plantation in South Carolina before the American Civil War. Or the experience of a Jewish man in Eastern Europe during World War II with that of a patriotic young German mother. A homeless man with that of a lesbian talk show host in contemporary Los Angeles. A newly-married daughter-in-law's position within the household in relation to her mother-in-law's in a farming family in rural India. This exercise poses extreme comparisons, but would quickly demonstrate to your students that it is more than gender that determines a person's experience of patriarchy.

Essential Questions:

How do women in patriarchal societies experience gender norms and ideals?

How do women in patriarchal societies create change within the established order of society?

Some Guiding Questions:

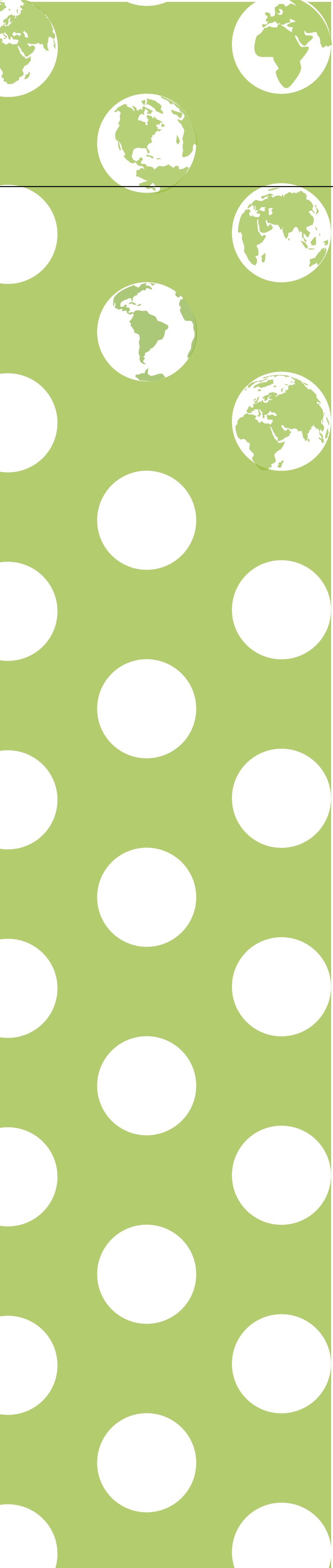
Given that our identities are complex, how do women in different cultural contexts and in different historical moments confront systems of patriarchy. How are women impacted by social relations, and how do they challenge them?

The unit further examines these concepts within case studies from the four regions. The unit features eight case studies. Each is meant to encourage students to address questions about gender roles in the different societies, either at a particular historical moment or how they evolve over time. In addition to responding to each case study, students can analyze and compare the different primary source documents within the case studies by considering the questions on the following slide.

Document-Based Questions

- How are notions of traditional femininity expressed in the case study?
- What kinds of restrictions do women confront? How do women respond to them?
- What can we learn from the case study about the status and roles of women in this society at this historical moment?

It is our hope that, with *Restoring Women to World Studies*, students will gain a better appreciation of how gender functions within different societies at different times; understand how it both shapes individual lives and offers individuals opportunities to shape society; see similarities in women's experiences as well as differences; and appreciate that experiences of gender are influenced by other categories of identity (class, race, ethnicity, etc.) and are not frozen or merely restrictive but changing and challenged by women who respond to understandings of gender roles and hierarchies in many ways.



Classroom Activity: Graffiti Wall—“What are Gender Norms?”

Introductory Activity: Graffiti Wall—"What are gender norms?"

Materials:
butcher paper, various colored markers

Instructions:
To introduce the central concept of the unit, the teacher asks the question "What are the gender norms in our society?" (You may need to inform students that "gender norms" refers to the behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes considered appropriate for males and females in a society.) Have your students brainstorm different kinds of gender norms in our society, or the different things they associate with each gender. List the examples on the board/overhead under columns headed boys/men and girls/women.

Next, use a "graffiti wall" to expand on the discussion. Have six large sheets of butcher paper taped to the walls around the classroom. They should be labeled **Emotions**, **Work**, **Household Chores**, **Recreation (Entertainment/Toys)**, and **Clothing**. Draw a line down the center of each piece of paper and write **masculine** on one side and **feminine** on the other.

Divide the class into groups of 4–5. Each group should have a different colored marker so that you can later attribute various ideas to the correct group.

Assign each group to stand by one of the posters. Direct each group to write as many examples as they can think of, for both genders, which correspond to the topic that heads the piece of paper (household chores, emotions, etc.). You may ask them to consider examples from their own lives or from the media. Give each group 2–3 minutes, then rotate the groups to the next topic. Groups should try not to repeat ideas already listed on the posters. Rotate until each group has completed each topic.

To finish up, have the class reflect on all ideas posted. Posters are shared and students discuss their reactions. Ask students to consider the degree to which the norms listed actually hold true for themselves. You might further the discussion by encouraging your students to think about the gender norms in terms of stereotypes versus lived experiences (i.e. they all "know" what is considered appropriate behavior for boys/men and girls/women, but how do the students actually behave in their own lives?). You might choose from the following list of questions to discuss the ways that your students learn appropriate gender norms.

Ask students:

- Where do we learn these gender roles?
- What people/sources teach us these stereotypes? Entertainment? Sports? Media? (When the students respond "TV" or "movies," ask for specific examples to list.)
- What people influence our learning of gender roles?
- Where else in society do we find these messages? (Ask for specific examples if general comments are made like "TV" or "magazines.")

Extension Activity:
After going through one of the case studies, have each student fill out the graphic organizer on the following page. Remind the students that gender norms may differ from one society to another, and to try to identify norms from within the society covered in the case study, which may not match precisely with gender norms in our society.

Worksheet: Gender Norms and Women's Responses

Make a list of the gender norms or ideals for women as they appear in this case study. Next to each gender norm indicate the source for the example.

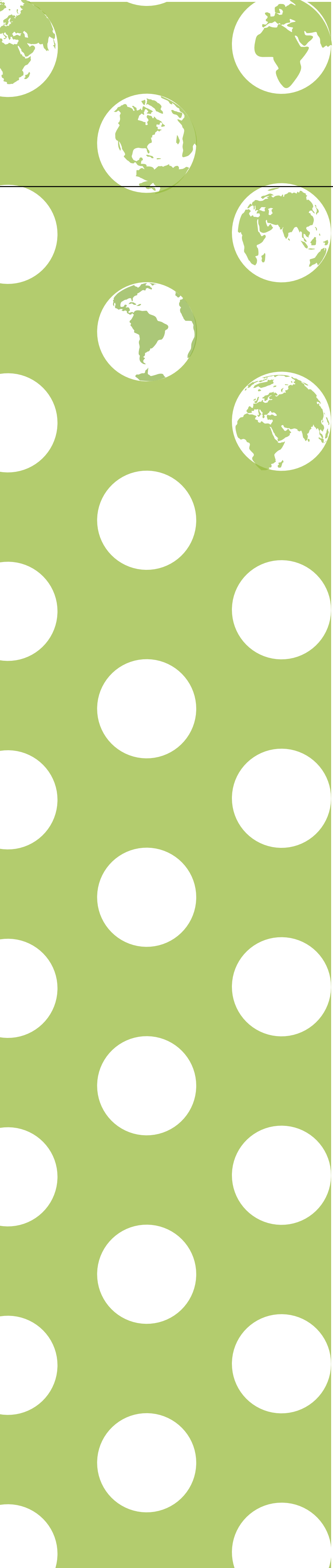
Norm	**Source**

Make a list of ways women respond to the gender norms and roles of their society in the case study. Place a check to indicate whether the reponse reinforces or challenges their society's gender norms. Indicate the source for the example.

Response	**Reinforce**	**Challenge**	**Source**

Use the space below or on the back to write a short paragraph in response to the following questions:

1. Overall, how do women respond to their society's gender norms in this case study?
2. Do they work to reinforce or challenge their society's expectations?
3. How successful are they?



Classroom Activity: Analyzing Images of Women

Introduction: Analyzing Images of Women

This activity, originally published in the Spring 2008 issue of *News from Hemispheres*, presents a classroom strategy that uses photographs as primary sources that can both illustrate and belie the reality of women's lives. In the activity, students initially discuss their personal observations of a photo, followed by a larger class discussion that takes into account the points of view of the photographer (who captured the image, and why?) and viewer (for whom was the photograph taken?), as well as historical-cultural context provided by the teacher.

In the pages that follow, four images focus on women's history; the selected images both reinforce our assumptions and raise new questions about women around the world. We also have provided contextual information and resources for additional research.

We hope that this activity will spark an active discussion about women's history in your classroom.

Image Analysis Activity

Use the following student exercises to analyze images. Students should compare their findings; the class can then discuss the image and its context as a group.

A. Observations

Study the image for two minutes. First, consider any written information that accompanies the image (including title, date, source, comments). Next, form an overall impression of the image and then examine individual items in the image. Divide the image into four sections and study each to see what new details become visible. Draw a graphic organizer (like the one below) to write down your observations. List people, objects, and activities in the image.

People	Objects	Activities

B. Deductions

Based on your observations in the graphic organizer, list three things you might deduce from this image.

C. Questions

What questions does this image raise in your mind? List two.

How might you go about finding answers to your questions?

Image 1: Latin America

Latin America

Photograph of soldaderas during the Mexican Revolution (1910s)

This photograph hints at the societal changes that accompany times of war. Historically, men left home to go to war—they lived on the battlefield, making their home and doing all of their daily tasks (cooking, washing, etc.) in a public space, surrounded by hundreds or thousands of other men. Meanwhile, at home, women lost the male head of household, the one who protected them and who financially supported the family. Because the men were away, women were forced to take on the roles of protector, wage earner, and, eventually, head of household. War changed the roles that men and women played within and outside the home.

In Latin America, beginning with the independence wars of the early nineteenth century, women often joined their husbands in the battlefield camps, both to continue their family life and to perform the daily duties that men were not accustomed to doing. The military did not provide food and other necessities, so women brought food, cooked, washed, sewed, nursed injured soldiers, and so on. They made the military camps a continuation of their home lives: getting married, having children, raising families in the camps. As soldiers were killed, women often attached themselves to other men, to continue living the life to which they had grown accustomed. These women became camp followers, and served in many different functions (nurses, cooks, prostitutes) within the camps.

Some women took on leadership positions in the camps and performed military functions—they served as spies (as women, it was easier for them to gain the trust of the enemy) and as soldiers, picking up weapons and fighting alongside the men. Some became soldiers out of necessity, to protect themselves from other types of violence (pillaging and rape) that accompany war, and some became soldiers out of political conviction, because the cause was that important to them. These *soldaderas* were very common during the Mexican Revolution (roughly 1910–1920), but also have been important in Nicaragua during the Sandinista conflict and in Mexico today with the Zapatistas.

One important thing to consider is the way that war changed the social system: soldiers brought their private lives to the battlefield (inversion of public and private spheres) and women took on roles that had belonged only to men (inversion of the patriarchal system). The reason that these changes were acceptable was that they were only <u>temporary</u>: people understood that life had to change during times of conflict. At the time, making these changes was in the best interest of society: having women transplant home life into the camps was useful to the soldiers. While women were leaving home and some were becoming soldiers, women on the whole continued to play traditional, nurturing roles in the camps and served their husbands much as they did at home. Only later in the twentieth century, with socialist revolutions that intended to transform the social system, was gender equality a major goal—only later was a permanent change in the status of women an important part of the revolution.

For more information on *soldaderas* in the Mexican Revolution:

- Women and the Mexican Revolution, University of Arizona, http://www.ic.arizona.edu/ic/mcbride/ws200/mex.htm
- Las Soldaderas: The Battlefield Heroines of the Mexican Revolution, University of Michigan, http://www.umich.edu/~ac213/student_projects06/joelan/index.html
- "Soldaderas Played Important Role in Revolution," *Borderlands*, El Paso Community College, http://epcc.edu/nwlibrary/borderlands/21_soldaderas.htm

Image 2: Middle East

The Middle East

Photograph of women baking bread in a communal village oven, Özyayla, Nevsehir, Turkey, 2004

The societies of the Middle East have long struggled to maintain a distinct identity in the face of pressures and influences from outside, most recently from Europe and the United States. Perhaps nowhere is this struggle more apparent than in the process of defining and attempting to redefine gender roles for men and women.

Gender roles in the Middle East, especially in Arab, Iranian, and Turkish cultures, have long been well defined, with certain societal expectations set for both men and women. Due to recent events, significant attention has been focused on the political rights of women in the region—Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world where women's suffrage has not yet been granted—and on cultural and societal issues related to women—highlighted by persecution under the Taliban and honor killings in the Levant countries that, while deplorable, also do not reflect the situation for the majority of women in the region.

The roles of women and men in traditional Middle Eastern society, which was shaped not only by the Islamic faith followed by the majority of the population, but also in the tribal origins of the Arab and Turkish peoples, were defined by spatial geography. Men's roles dominated the public sphere: politics, economics, and religion; while women's roles dominated the private sphere: the household, education, and marriage.

Traditionally, the woman's role as wife and mother was more important than any other. In many ways, the woman's role in governing the household was greater than that of her husband. Women controlled the household treasury and were expected to negotiate for the purchase of food and provisions such as cooking fuel. Education was also in the domain of women, who usually made decisions about which children could attend school. The arrangement of marriages was also a woman's task: although the details of the marriage contract would be arranged by the husbands, the wives would decide on the pairing of their children in the first place. In many of the kingdoms and empires of the medieval Middle East, it was not the Sultan or Caliph who wielded the most power; it would be his mother in the harem who often had far reaching influence and was at the center of palace intrigue.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, these norms began to change rapidly. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, a number of reform laws were passed that required women's education and banned wearing of the veil in public places. Several of the Arab countries made similar reforms after World War II to grant women political, economic, and legal rights. In many countries, a dual-income household became a necessity for survival, sending women into the workplace en masse for the first time.

However, the force of centuries of tradition continues to play a strong force in opposition to the economic and political realities of the early twenty-first century. Countries like Egypt that have a large number of women working have seen the number of women graduating from universities increase exponentially. Ironically, increased female participation in the public sphere also has led to a resurgence in the number of women who wear a headscarf, as this is seen as a way for women to establish their chasteness and modesty while out and about, and even has led to a new "Islamic fashion" trend in parts of the Middle East. This trend, which includes high fashion and even the creation of "Islamic sportswear," seeks to affirm traditional values from the region while recognizing the need to change—yet another way in which the societies of the Middle East are trying to maintain a distinct identity of their own.

For more information about women in the Middle East:

- Middle East and Women's History, http://womenshistory.about.com/od/middleeast/Middle_East_and_Womens_History.htm
- Women in the Middle East, Columbia University, http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/mideast/cuvlm/women.html

Image 3: Russia

Russia

Portrait by P.F. Sokolov of Maria Volkonskaya, age 20, and her son Nikolenka, 1826

This painting of a young woman and her infant son embodies the Russian romantic ideal of self-sacrifice. Maria Volkonskaya, pictured here with her son, Nikolenka, is one of several women known as "Decembrist Wives." In December 1825, a group of young army officers challenged the new Tsar with calls for reform and a constitution. The revolt was repressed, the leaders hanged, and more than 120 "conspirators" were exiled to labor in Siberia, a land known for its harsh climate and devastating conditions. Among these exiles were several men of noble families.

In order to spare the wives the fate of their husbands, the court permitted the wives to be considered "widowed" so they could remarry without the stigma of divorce. However, several wives followed their husbands into exile. The idea of noble women, accustomed to being pampered, making lives for themselves in Siberia astonished the Russian aristocracy. The women were discouraged from following their husbands, forbidden from taking their children, stripped of their noble titles, and refused the right to return to western Russia, even if their husbands died.

Despite the many sacrifices she was compelled to make, Maria Volkonskaya was among the first to follow her husband to Siberia. Although she had been married only a year when her husband was first imprisoned, she felt it was her place to be near him. She left Nikolenka, still an infant, with her parents in St. Petersburg and began the arduous overland journey of more than 3,000 miles.

The "noble convicts" worked 16 hours a day in salt or silver mines. The wives found lodging near the prisons and tried to stay in contact with their husbands. In some locations, they were permitted to visit twice a week. The prison wardens recognized the strength and bravery of the women who had given up so much, and for the most part the wives were treated with respect. Although their travel, budgets, and correspondence were monitored and restricted, the wives formed a support system. When Maria learned that Nikolenka had died two years after she left him behind, she found comfort among her friends. The wives also tried to improve the lives of their husbands by providing home-cooked food and by sending petitions to authorities for fair treatment.

Once they had adapted to Siberian conditions, the wives tried to create a life of culture. Their standard of living was very poor compared to their previous lives of luxury, but their cultural lives were still above that of the locals. They had musical evenings and discussion circles, to which they invited local officials. Although their children born in Siberia had no hereditary noble rights, the wives maintained the standards of culture of European society and taught them foreign languages.

After 20 years, the husbands were released from prison, but were still required to live in exile in Siberia. With improved living conditions, the wives turned to charitable efforts. Among Maria Volkonskaya's concrete efforts were funding improvements to a hospital and the construction of a theatre in Irkutsk, but the intangible improvements to the level of culture in Siberia are harder to quantify, though recognized.

The sacrifices of the Decembrist Wives were commemorated in essay and poetry by famous contemporaries such as Alexander Pushkin. They persevered in the face of great hardship to support their husbands and their ideals, and are remembered for their strength, sense of duty, and the good works they did in their communities in exile.

For more information on the Decembrist wives:

- Decembrists in Irkutsk, http://www.irkutsk.org/fed/dec.html
- Christine Sutherland, *The Princess of Siberia: The Story of Maria Volkonsky and the Decembrist Exiles* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1984)

Image 4: India

South Asia

Photograph of women boiling seawater in India, 1930

Source: Kamat Research Database - Image Donated by Corbis-Bettmann, http://www.kamat.com/database/pictures/corbis/u230945p-a_lores.htm

This image shows women volunteers boiling seawater to violate a ban on salt-making. As part of the larger independence movement, Gandhi called for an end to the British monopoly and tax on salt in January 1930. Roughly a month later, Gandhi announced he would march to a coastal city to manufacture salt illegally.

Gandhi included no women in his original group of marchers, and this drew considerable resentment from many nationalist women. Some wrote to him angrily insisting that he invite women to participate. On the last day of the march, Sarojini Naidu, Gandhi's close friend and a nationalist leader in her own right, insisted on joining him. She was the first woman to be arrested in the salt march. Her presence signaled hundreds of other women to join. Soon thousands of women were breaking the salt law and leading protests all over the country. Eventually the salt protest was made successful by the many women who not only made salt, but also sat openly in marketplaces selling and buying it. This period marked a new level of participation by Indian women in the nationalist movement. It is generally remembered as the first time masses of Indian women participated in the struggle for independence and marked the involvement of women from all walks of life, extending the movement from its upper class enclave.

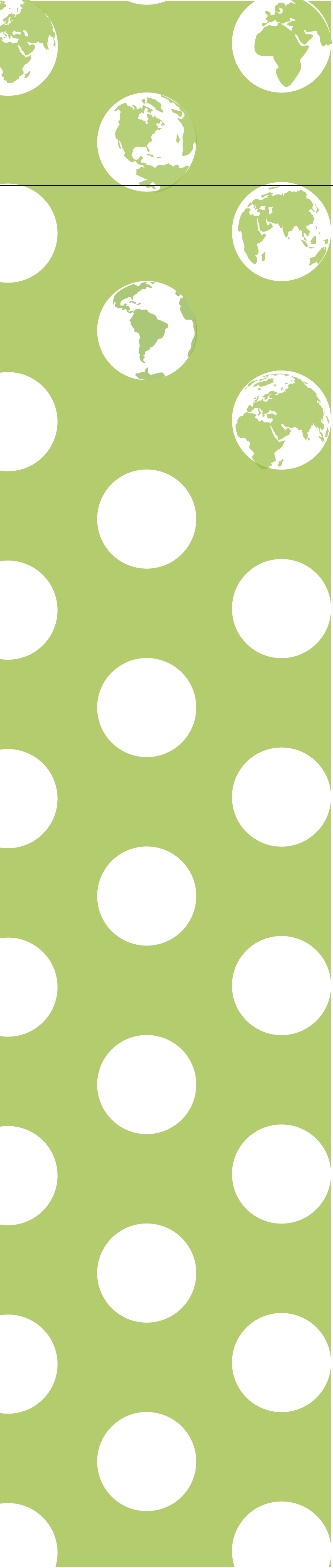
Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, another leading woman in the nationalist movement and Sarojani Naidu's sister-in-law, recalls the impact of women's participation in the salt protests: *On that memorable day thousands of women strode down to the sea like proud warriors. But instead of weapons, they bore pitchers of clay, brass and copper; and instead of uniforms, the simple cotton saris of village India….Women young and old, rich and poor, came tumbling out in their hundreds and thousands shaking off the traditional shackles that had held them so long. Valiantly they went forward without a trace of fear or embarrassment. They stood at street corners with little packets of salt, crying out: "We have broken the salt law and we are free! Who will buy the salt of freedom?" Their cries never went unheeded. Every passer-by stopped, slipped a coin into their hands and held out proudly a tiny pinch of salt* (Kumar 1993, 78).

At the time, ideas on women's participation in the nationalist movement grew out of commonly held cultural beliefs on the nature of Indian women as essentially self-sacrificing and thus ideally suited to nonviolent protest. Emphasizing these feminine qualities and their role as mothers empowered women to find places in the public arena of protest. Gandhi and other nationalist leaders believed women were specifically well-suited to spread a message of nonviolence and to bear the hardships of protest. The emphasis on her essential nature created a new dignity for women in public life, a new confidence and self-view, where women could become agents of change.

By Indian standards, the women in the photograph are dressed modestly with little jewelry and in white saris, which are typically worn by widows or female saints. Two women have their heads covered, another sign of modesty. The women also appear to be surrounded by a group of standing men. Might they be observing or protecting the women from British authorities?

For more information on women's participation in the Indian independence movement:

- Global Studies of South Asia, http://www.historyteacher.net/GlobalStudies/SoAsia_Colonialism.htm
- Women of India, http://www.kamat.com/kalranga/freedom/women.htm
- Female Indian Freedom Fighters, http://www.liveindia.com/freedomfighters/jhansi.html
- Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)
- Radha Kumar, *A History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India, 1800–1990* (London: Verso, 1993)



Islam and Feminism in the Age of the Arab Renaissance

The status of women within Islam is a topic that has attracted significant attention in the West, particularly since the events of September 2001. However, media coverage of the plight of women in Afghanistan does not reflect the far more nuanced and diverse series of readings and debates on women and feminism in the Islamic world that have been ongoing since Islam's very beginnings. This case study examines "Islamic feminism," that is to say, feminism that seeks to use Islam as a justification for women's full participation in society. Feminists point to the Qur'an itself as the basis for the notion that men and women are created equal in the sight of God. Islamic feminists also point to the example set by the wives of the prophet Muhammad, notably Khadija, his first wife, and 'Aisha, his favorite wife at the time of his death.

Khadija was a successful businesswoman significantly older than Muhammad when they were married. Because of her advanced standing in Meccan society, she was able to negotiate the marriage contract on her own terms, essentially gaining both a husband and a business manager through her union with Muhammad. Khadija is also revered as the first person to accept Muhammad's prophethood and become the first convert to Islam. She is regarded as a role model for an independent yet pious woman.

'Aisha bint Abi Bakr was reputed to be Muhammad's favorite wife, in whose arms he died. 'Aisha was the daughter of Abu Bakr, who succeeded Muhammad as the first *caliph*, or leader of the Islamic community. She is known as "the truthful" because of an incident in which she was accused of inappropriate behavior and eventually proved innocent by a divine revelation. After Muhammad's death, 'Aisha became a key player in the politics of early Medina, and led armies into battle during the *fitna* (the civil struggle that eventually led to the schism between Sunni and Shi'a). In the final years of her life, she dedicated herself to recording Muhammad's sayings and actions so as to preserve them as an example to be followed by Muslims. Her contributions to the formation of Islamic society are numerous, and she is often cited as an example of a self-assured woman.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a wave of nationalism ran through the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean. This period of political thinking, cultural reinvigoration, and societal change is known in Arabic as the *nahda*, or renaissance, because it seemed to herald the promise of the Arab world's return as a political power and cultural and scientific leader. The centuries-old rule of the Ottoman Empire was coming to an end, and, invigorated by the promise of the future, the Arab provinces looked both east and west for role models and inspiration. Scholars—frequently men—participated in educational exchanges and lengthy trips to Europe and sparked debate in countries like Egypt and Syria (which encompassed modern day Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the Palestinian territories) about what kind of society they wanted to become.

Traditionally, Mediterranean societies—including the Middle East—were so-called "client-and-patronage" societies in which social mobility and standing was determined by one's relationship with others. Within each niche on the social ladder, there were traditional roles for men (commerce, statecraft, and religion) and women (education, management of the home, and control of domestic finances). In the age of the *nahda*, however, many in the Arab world looked to the new world powers—the countries of Europe—for a new model of civil society based on the European principles of equal access to politics, education, and the marketplace, and a number of women began to demand the right to participate in the process.

In many cases, these women used the language of Islam as a justification for their full participation, stating the case that in Islam's earliest days women held important roles in the Islamic community but were later pushed aside by men. Further, they argued, the Qur'an itself backed their position. As might be expected, this provoked considerable debate on the issue. It was frequently the case that the two opposing points of view would be rooted in religion, using the Qur'an and examples from the life of the Prophet Muhammad and the women in his life to argue both for and against the right of women to participate fully in areas of society that had, to that point, been considered the realm of men.

Source 1: Scholar Asma Barlas on the equality of men and women in Islam, 2002

Taqwa'—which defines the essence of moral personality by orienting us toward God—consists…in our willingness to embrace virtue and refrain from evil by exercising our reason, intellect and knowledge. In no context does the Qur'an suggest that men, either in their biological capacity as males, or in their social capacity as fathers, husbands, or interpreters of sacred knowledge, are better able than women to acquire *taqwa'* or to practice their *din* [faith]. Indeed, the Qur'an is rare among Scriptures in teaching that women and men are able equally to acquire *taqwa'* (moral personality), as evident from innumerable *Ayat* [verses]; for example,

> For Muslim men and women—
> For believing men and women,
> For devout men and women,
> For true men and women,
> For men and women who are
> Patient and constant, for men
> And women who humble themselves,
> For men and women who give
> In charity, for men and women
> Who fast (and deny themselves).
> For men and women who
> Guard their chastity, and
> For men and women who
> Engage much in God's praise—
> For them has God prepared
> Forgiveness and great reward.
> The Qur'an (33:35)

Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 143.

Source 2: Examination of a 13th-century Muslim biographer reconciling the conflict between gender and religious authority

'Aisha was Muhammad's favorite wife, and the daughter of Abu Bakr, who became Muhammad's successor as the first caliph of Islam. The "handmaiden" is Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya, a ninth century female mystic of great significance, particularly in Shi'ite Islam.

The conflict between gender and religious prestige was emphasized, inadvertantly, by the biographer 'Attar (d. 1229). In his biography of Islamic saints, 'Attar describes a female mystic named Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya (d. 801), a woman whom he places among the ranks of men: "If anyone were to ask me, 'Why did you mention her among the ranks of men?' I would reply, '[Muhammad]', chief of all prophets, used to say [God] does not look on outward appearance." ...

Such an perception expresses an ideal nullification of any gender restrictions faced by Muslim female mystics:

> If it is permissible to take two-thirds of the religion from 'Aisha, the truthful, then it is also permissible to receive religious instruction from one of her handmaidens. When a woman [walks] on the path of God like a man, then it is not possible to call her a woman.

Although he categorically states that Allah considers irrelevant the differences between male and female believers, 'Attar demonstrates that while God may not note such differences, male authors certainly did. In 'Attar's estimation, it is not possible to call Rabi'a a woman because she transcends his definition of the female gender ....

D.A. Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past: The Legacy of 'A'isha bint Abi Bakr* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 58–59.

Comprehension Exercises:

1. Summarize the viewpoint expressed in source 1. How do you think that a feminist reading this passage from the Qur'an would interpret it?
2. Who was Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya? Why is she important? Why does 'Attar place her "among the ranks of men"?
3. What do you think Spellberg means when she says that "while God may not note such differences, male authors certainly did"?
4. Based on your reading of the text, do you think that 'Attar would have agreed with Asma Barlas's interpretation of the Qur'an on the subject of men and women? Explain your opinion citing the sources.

Source 3: Excerpt from a manifesto by Ghada Samman, "Our Constitution—We the Liberated Women," 1961

Ghada Samman (1942–) published this manifesto in Syria as part of a lengthy written debate with a cleric, Shaikh Ali al-Tantawi, who accused her of being representative of "a woman whom our society rejects." Hama is a city in central Syria reputed for being conservative.

Yesterday I read a protest in some newspaper signed by some sisters in Hama (these women had refused suffrage). They were protesting the acquisition of the right to live and to fight and the honor of responsibility and struggle. What can I say?

Millions of women have moaned, aeons of sadness have settled in our hearts like a heavy fog. Generations have longed to participate in humanity along with men. Now the authorities honor us and invite us to practice our humanity. They grant us the honor of duties and responsibilities. So, shall we refuse? What can I say? Some sisters from Hama are refusing the call of the country so as to escape responsibility while shouting "Islam."

Islam is women's honor. They escape from our country's battles out of weakness and resignation, shouting "Islam." 'Aisha fought when it became necessary. They are afraid of mixing with men and of what people will suspect. 'Aisha was suspected once. God honored 'Aisha with a verse that revealed her innocence and that of all women who dare to be human in a society that insists that women remain colorful mummy/slaves whose existence revolves around the household, make-up and stupid stories....

As for our Hama sisters and the treachery of among the ranks of us, women of this country, this is the treachery of the eyelashes to the eye, of the fingernail to the finger, of the hand to the arm. What can I say? What can half of me say if I choose for the other half to be paralysed when the enemy is all around? ...

Let us pray.

For those who accuse Islam of denigrating them, whereas it is Islam that delivered us from the deserts where we were being buried like cadavers. ...Islam forbade us to be dolls decorating tables and playthings for the god of petrol, and butterflies around the colored lamps of vanities. ...

For those who refuse winter's toil and summer's harvest. They have condemned themselves to the suicide of silence and defeatism. Today suicide is the ultimate cowardice because our lives are not ours alone—they belong to our past, to our destiny and to the future of our country, and we are compelled to live.

Ghada Samman, "Our Constitution—We the Liberated Woman," trans. Miriam Cooke, in *Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writing*, eds. Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 139.

Source 4: Photograph published in *Al-Lata'if al-Musawwara* newspaper of women at a nationalist rally, 1919

"An Egyptian lady standing in her carriage raises her hand to greet the people and to acclaim the nation and Egypt."

Photograph by the Ramses Company, April 8, 1919. *Al-Lata'if al-Musawwara*, April 21, 1919, 4.

Source 5: Excerpt from a speech by Huda Shaarawi, president of the Egyptian Feminist Union, opening the Arab Feminist Conference, Cairo, 1944

The advanced nations, after careful examination into the matter, have come to believe in the equality of sexes in all rights even though their religious and secular laws have not reached the level Islam has reached in terms of justice toward the woman. Islam has given her the right to vote for the ruler and has allowed her to give opinions on questions of jurisprudence and religion.

The woman, given by the Creator the right to vote for the successor of the Prophet, is deprived of the right to vote for a deputy in a circuit or district election by a (male) being created by God. At the same time, this right is enjoyed by a man who might have less education and experience than the woman. And she is the mother who has given birth to the man and has raised him and guided him.

The *Sharia* gave her the right to education, to take part in the *hijra* (referring to the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his flight from Mecca to Medina), and to fight in the ranks of warriors and has made her equal to the man in all rights and responsibilities, even in the crimes that either sex can commit. However, the man who alone distributes rights, has kept for himself the right to legislate and rule, generously turning over to his partner his own share of responsibilities and sanctions without seeking her opinion about the division.

The woman today demands to regain her share of rights that have been taken from her and gives back to the man the responsibilities and sanctions he has given to her. Gentlemen, this is justice…

Huda Shaarawi, "Pan Arab Feminism," trans. Ali Badran and Margot Badran, in *Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writing*, eds. Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 338–339.

<u>Comprehension Exercises:</u>

5. On what basis do Ghada Samman (source 3) and Huda Shaarawi (source 5) claim equal rights for women? Cite examples of the language each uses to support her postition.
6. How do you think that Ghada Samman and Huda Shaarawi might respond to 'Attar (source 2)? Why?
7. Analyze the photo in source 4. How are the women dressed? How might you expect women participating prominantly in a nationalist rally to dress?

Source 6: From "The Status of Women in Islam," by Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawy, Egyptian cleric, 1998

Yusuf al-Qaradawy is an Egyptian cleric who is important within the Muslim Brotherhood, a political organization that advocates a stronger role for Islam within the Egyptian government, including rewriting the constitution according to the Brotherhood's conservative interpretation of Islamic law. Dr. Qaradawy is also a popular television personality whose evening talk show on religious themes is one of the most popular television programs in the Middle East.

Islam has always appreciated the femininity of the woman and regarded her as playing a role integral to that of the man, and similarly regarded the man as playing a role integral to that of the woman. Neither is a foe, adversary or a competitor to the other. Rather, each is a help to the other in attaining the relative perfection of his or her person and one's whole sex. … Men and women are, so to speak, like a can and its lid, a unity that comprises the thing and its counterpart; one does not exist without the other. …

What all this comes to is that the woman is different from the man, for she complements him and he her. A thing does not complement itself. The Qur'an emphasizes that difference: " And the male is not like the female." [Surah 3:36] They are as unlike as positive and negative. …

On the basis of the instinctive nature of the woman and the need for a healthy and proper atmosphere for her relationship with the man, Islam has set its codes for the woman as well as all the other relevant codes, instructions and rules. To guard her femininity and acknowledge its needs so as not to repress it, is what Islam is after. It tries to create a barrier between the woman and degradation, to protect her from the human wolves and predators who chase her into their lairs, devour her and discard the despoiled remains. ...

The encounter of men and women is not prohibited in itself. Quite the contrary, it is allowable or even required if done in pursuit of a noble cause like gaining knowledge or performing good acts in which the joint efforts of both men and women are necessary.

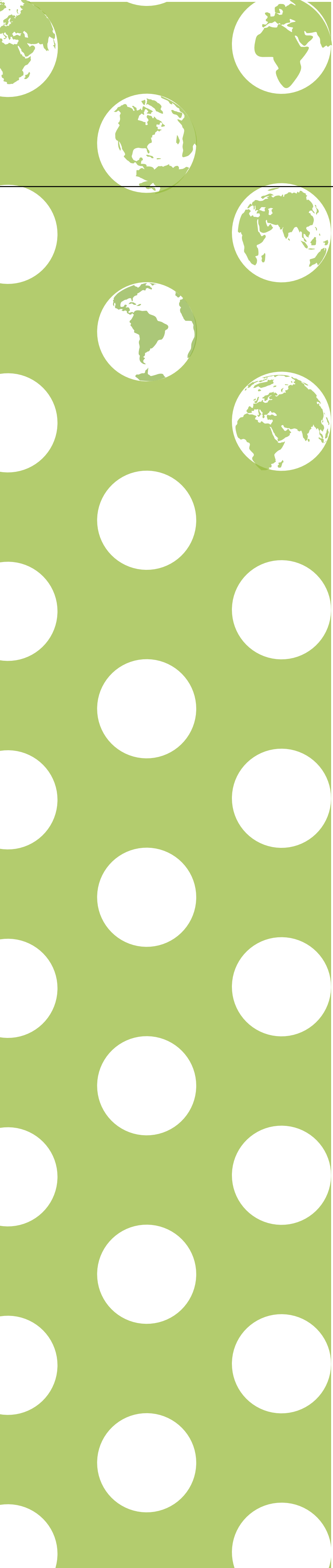
This is the position of Islam on man-woman relations, and their common involvement on charitable and righteous lines is what we call legitimate mixing; yet "intellectual imperialism" has managed to create in our countries people who turn a deaf ear to the ruling of Allah and His Messenger. These people call on us to give the woman free rein to assert herself, promote her personality, enjoy her life and her femininity. They want her to mix with men freely, experience them closely where they would be together and alone, travel with them, go to cinemas or dance till midnight together. She is supposed to find the "right man" from all those she has known. In this way, it is said, life is supposed to be more secure and have greater stability in the face adversity.

These people who may well be thinking of themselves as unblemished seraphs, tell us not to worry about the man or woman as a result of this "decent" communication, innocent friendship and upright contact. The frequency of their contact will pacify desire. The two sexes will supposedly find satisfaction in the mere look, conversation or, in the extreme, dancing together, which is only a form of elevating artistic impression. Sensual pleasure would have no place. It is a clean vent for energy, nothing more. This is said to be what the advanced West did after they rid themselves of complexes and privation.

Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *The Status of Women in Islam*, (n.p., n.d), http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/Q_WI/default.htm (accessed September 30, 2008).

Comprehension Exercises:

8. Briefly summarize Yusuf al-Qaradawi's stance on the status of women. How is it similar to the position advocated by Asma Barlas (source 1), Ghada Samman (source 3) and Huda Shaarawi (source 5)? How is it different?
9. How do you think Huda Shaarawi and Ghada Samman might respond to Dr. Qaradawi?
10. Based on your analysis of all of the sources, what, if any, are the points on which the authors agree? On what points do they differ?
11. Based on your response to question 8, how easy or difficult do you think it might be to formulate a "definitive" answer about "what Islam says" on the status of women? Explain your answer citing evidence from the sources where necessary.



Black Women's Work and Social Progress in Brazil

Sugar plantations, which require tremendous amounts of labor, arose early in the Portuguese colony of Brazil. With the plantation system came the labor force upon which Brazil's economy was based: slavery. From 1530–1850, approximately 4,000,000 slaves were brought from Africa to work in Brazil. With the slave system, Brazil's social classes were established: masses of black slaves and, eventually, poor free workers were ruled by a few elite, white families who controlled the economy, politics, and culture of the country.

Throughout the slave trade years, Brazilian colonists were able to count on a constant and ample supply of fresh labor from Africa, and so were not focused on increasing the slave population through reproduction. Also, since the men were stronger and able to serve in more jobs than women, little effort was made to balance the sexes among the slaves: 3–5 times more men were imported than women. The female slaves who did arrive in Brazil were given very different duties than were the men. Women cooked in plantation kitchens, served as wet-nurses and babysitters for the masters' children, worked as domestic servants in city homes, and sold food on the streets to earn extra money. Female slaves, who tended to live in greater intimacy with the master and his family, were granted freedom twice as often as were men. Once freed, these women continued to work in the public sphere as laundresses, maids, cooks, or street vendors.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the majority of working women were employed as domestic servants, seamstresses, and street vendors—the types of jobs held by lower class, black women. At the dawn of the twentieth century, when elite women were advocating for women's education, lower class women began to fight to get their needs met by taking an active role in workers' strikes for fair wages and safe working conditions. While suffrage, granted to women in 1932, did not change much for working class women (who still could not vote because they were not literate), their struggles for social and political rights offered them an avenue for organization and leadership. During the 1940s, poor women began to form women's unions to elevate their educational, professional, and economic status; unions offered literacy courses for low-income women. Women also took leadership roles in the fight for housing. In Brazil, people in the lowest classes had been squatting on unused land for decades; after seizing land in "invasions," they built their modest houses with scrap materials. In the late 1940s, police were entering squatter districts and destroying people's homes; women confronted the police to save their homes. As a result, women moved into powerful roles in the land-squatters' unions.

Black women also gained important leadership positions in social and religious circles. Candomblé, a religion centered in the northeastern city of Salvador da Bahia, is a syncretic religion, which means that it combines elements from two religious traditions—in this case, Yoruba traditions from West Africa and Catholicism. In Salvador, women are in the most powerful roles in Candomblé: they serve as the *mãe-de-santo* ("mother of the saint," or high priestess) of their communities. Candomblé does not have a leadership structure higher than the individual community/church (no bishops or popes), so each *mãe-de-santo* oversees her own community and has complete authority within the community. Women's leadership in Candomblé goes back to slave times, when slave women had considerably more freedom of movement than did the men. This allowed them to carry on religious traditions that they had brought with them from Africa, and also to pay for religious ceremonies with money earned from outside work. Even after abolition, many households were headed by women who supported their families with their own wages. Black Brazilian women have always been self-reliant economically and this self-reliance, in combination with women's position in Candomblé, has given black women a great amount of religious and social authority.

Currently, more than 70 percent of women in the labor force are employed by the services sector; of these, most are employed as domestic servants and many are employed outside of the formal economy (they are paid under the table, usually with substandard wages). These jobs are still done, overwhelmingly, by black women. As middle-class and elite women have entered the work force on a more regular basis, they continue to rely on poor women to cook for them, clean their homes, and care for their children. In many ways, the work of black Brazilian women has changed very little since slavery. Despite their meager incomes, however, black women have achieved leadership roles in their families, churches, and communities. The work may be humble, but black women's achievements in Brazil are noteworthy.

Source 1: French painter Jean-Baptiste Debret's "Between them, sellers and buyers constituted their own clientele," early 19th century

J.M. Rugendas, *Voyage pittoresque au Brésil* (Paris: Engelmann, 1835), part 2, plate 18.

Source 2: French photographer Pierre Verger's photograph of the Água de Meninos market, Salvador, Brazil, 1950s

Pierre Verger, *O Olhar viajante de Pierre Fatumbi Verger* (Salvador: Fundação Pierre Verger, 2002), 99.

Comprehension Exercises:

1. Describe what is happening in each image. What are the differences? What are the similarities?
2. Based on these images, how do you think black women's lives in Brazil have changed over time? Explain your answer citing evidence from the images and from background information that has been presented.

Source 3: Firsthand account of laundress work in the 1950s, recounted in 1988

Since Brazil's early colonial days, black women—first as slaves and then as free workers—hand-washed the clothes of the rich using rivers and lakes to complete their task. Because of technological advancements, the profession declined, but washerwomen performed an essential role in Brazilian society until late into the twentieth century.

[Auntie] washed clothes and ironed them for a living, and we helped her with that work, and that's how we got by. She used a heavy old iron with a lid that opened and that you filled up with burning charcoal. It was hard work, and your arms would ache dragging that iron across men's shirts and pants and women's dresses. You had to be very careful not to burn a hole or to rip anything, or the patroa would really give it to [Auntie]. Sometimes Tonieta and I would dry the clothes by hanging them on barbed wire, and it would leave a tiny hole in a shirt, or some rust would come off onto a white blouse. We would get walloped by Auntie whenever that happened! We had to starch and iron little girls' underpants with lace trim and crochet on them, while we were often naked under our skirts! Tonieta would sometimes try the little lace clothes on herself, but I would laugh at the children who had to be dressed like that—God deliver me!

Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 465.

Source 4: Excerpt from popular musician Lenine's song, "Lavadeira do Rio" (Washerwoman of the River), 2001

Ah! Lavadeira do rio
Muito lençol pra lavar
Fica faltando uma saia
Quando o sabão se acabar
Mas corra pra beira da praia
Veja a espuma brilhar
Ouça o barulho bravio
Das ondas que batem na beira do mar
Ê, ô, o vento soprou
Ê, ô, a folha caiu

Ah! Washerwoman of the river
Many sheets to wash
One more skirt to go
When the soap runs out
But she runs to the water's edge
And sees the surf shine
She hears the wild racket
Of the waves that beat the shore
Ah, oh, the wind blew
Ah, oh, the leaf fell

Lenine, "Lavadeira do Rio," *Falange cannibal*, Sony BMG, 2001.

Source 5: Contemporary photos of *lavadeiras* (laundresses) at work

Raphael Cordeiro, "Lavadeira," 2008, Olhares Fotografia Online, http://olhares.aeiou.pt/lavadeira/foto1698086.html.

Diego Sá, "A Lavadeira," 2006, Olhares Fotografia Online, http://olhares.aeiou.pt/a_lavadeira/foto906042.html.

Comprehension Exercises:

3. Compare the song lyrics to the firsthand account and images. Does the reality fit the description conveyed by the songwriter?
4. How much do you think the life of a washerwoman has changed over the centuries? Explain your answer using the documents and background information provided.

Source 6: Excerpt from "In Brazil, High and Low Mourn a Cult Priestess," *New York Times*, 1986

They had kept going all night and, at dawn, women in white lace and cotton were still chanting and moving in a slow dance. The men, crouched on the temple floor, tapped a soft and sad rhythm on hollow gourds. But the drums remained silent.

In the temple of Alto do Gantois and throughout this most African of Brazilian cities, mourning has continued for weeks over the death of a 92-year-old priestess, by some accounts the most revered woman in Brazil. The secret death rites, offerings and nightly gatherings are for "Mother Menininha," the leading figure of this country's version of African spiritism, known as Candomblé.

Such was the prestige and following of Maria Escolástica da Conçeicão Nazaré—her official name—that when she died on Aug. 13, the Mayor of Salvador declared three days of mourning. Two Cabinet ministers, the state governor and city officials attended the wake and tens of thousands watched as her coffin rode on a fire engine through the streets.

"She was the last of the old, very respected priestesses," said Pierre Verger, a specialist in West African and Afro-Brazilian culture. "With her, a whole generation has gone." …

Brazil's own version of the faith of the Yoruba people, like Haiti's voodoo, arrived on the slave ships from the region that is now Nigeria and Benin. Its rites and liturgy changed here, but survived, particularly along the coast of Bahia State, where tens of thousands of slaves were put to work on enormous sugar and tobacco fields.

Feared and branded as devil worship, the ceremonies, dances, possessions and animal sacrifices were outlawed and their practitioners persecuted for almost four centuries. Police harassment of cults continued until two decades ago.

Some older residents who remember those harsh times said Mother Menininha played a key role in persuading authorities to stop the police raids and the smashing of ritual objects. "Menininha always said the police are welcome, but only as our guests," said Camafeu do Oxossi, a 71-year-old musician and lifelong friend. "So she invited the authorities for meals and began to cure their sicknesses." Now, he added, "like everyone else, many politicians and police ask for advice when they have troubles or look for success."

To many people here, the presence of senior Government officials at the priestess's funeral epitomized the dramatic change of attitude toward the cults and a recognition of their growing following. Candomblé and Umbanda, an offshoot, have grown quickly in recent years among black and white, poor and rich….

For women, there is an additional appeal. In contrast to mainstream Roman Catholicism, where the priestly role is reserved for men, either sex can "summon the spirits" and conduct cult ceremonies. "Women founded the oldest and most important cult houses," Mr. Verger said.

Marlise Simons, "In Brazil, High and Low Mourn a Cult Priestess," *New York Times*, October 13, 1986, sec. Y9.

Comprehension Exercises:

5. Which details in the article show that Mother Menininha was an important figure? Which details explain why she was important?
6. How does this article contrast with the image of black Brazilian women that was presented in the other documents? Does this contrast surprise you? Explain your answer using the documents and background information provided.

Additional Resources (all available from the LLILAS Outreach Lending Library):

Faria, Lázaro. *Cidade das mulheres* [*City of Women*]. Salvador: Casa de Cinema da Bahia, 2005. DVD. In Portuguese with English subtitles.

Girot, Suzanne. *Girl Beat: Power of the Drum*. New York: Cinema Guild, 2003. DVD. In Portuguese with English subtitles.

Jesus, Carolina Maria de. *Child of the Dark: The Diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus.* Trans. David St. Clair. New York: Signet Classic, 2003.

Landes, Ruth. *The City of Women*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994.

BBC, Religion and Ethnics: Candomblé, http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/candomble/.

Madre = Resistencia: Mothers of the Disappeared in Chile and Argentina

In Latin America, the 1970s were a difficult period during which military regimes ruled many countries. As democratically elected governments faced increasing economic problems (e.g., falling prices for primary exports, growing unemployment) and intensifying social unrest, the military stepped in to take control. In Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, the military's efforts to keep control of their countries led to "dirty wars," in which they violently repressed those who opposed them. Elections were cancelled, free speech was suppressed, and citizens lived in fear of government reprisals. Perceived enemies of the regimes were taken from their homes, often in the middle of the night, for questioning; after being tortured, some were released to spread the word, but many were never seen again. Within these states of fear, mothers rose up: in Chile and Argentina, mothers of the "disappeared" (*desaparecidos*) pressured their governments to find out what happened to their children.

In Chile, socialist president Salvador Allende, elected in 1970, implemented policies (price freezes, wage increases) that were popular with the masses, but caused high inflation and unrest among the elite. People took to the streets, both to protest and to support Allende's government. In 1973, in the midst of the Cold War, the military staged a coup to oust Allende and save their nation from Communism. General Augusto Pinochet assumed power, which he held until 1989, and began a repressive regime that attempted to silence all opposition.

During Pinochet's rule, at a time when challenging him was not only dangerous but almost suicidal, groups of women organized to oppose his dictatorship. They were mothers of the disappeared who wanted answers about their missing sons; nearly 10,000 people—mostly men—were taken and never seen again during the Pinochet dictatorship. These women used their traditional roles as mothers to protest the government. The government encouraged women to be domestic and passive, and they supported socially-accepted gender roles for women; mothers could mourn their children, protect their families, and even protest the regime without facing the punishment that their children faced.

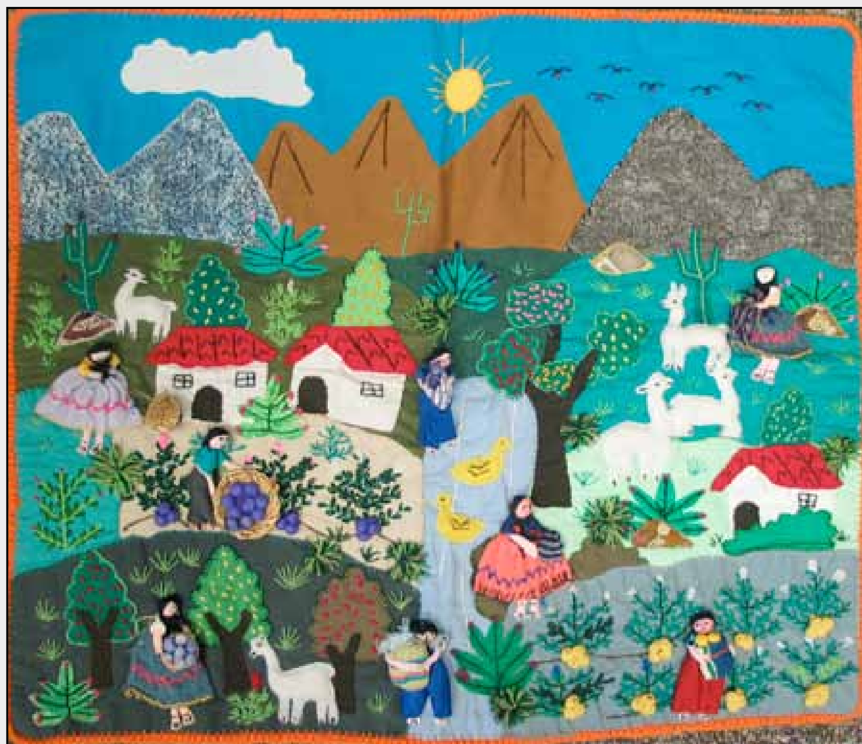
Mothers in Chile organized sewing workshops to create *arpilleras*, traditional Chilean tapestries, that told their stories. The *arpilleras* often depicted their lost children, or scenes of government violence; they served as a call for justice. The Catholic Church supported the production of the *arpilleras*, and helped smuggle them out of Chile to be sold and exhibited abroad. The creation of *arpilleras* served as a method of collective grieving, as women gathered to sew and share their stories. Most importantly, they served as testimony to the violence and repression imposed by Pinochet. Where others were not allowed to voice their opposition, the government was not able to silence the mothers, whose work brought international attention to the human rights abuses in Chile.

In Argentina, Juan Perón returned to the presidency in 1973 after almost two decades in exile following his expulsion from office. When he died in 1974, his wife Isabel, who has been vice president, assumed the presidency with disastrous results. Isabel, a former nightclub dancer, was out of her element: the economy was a mess and inflation was rampant, guerrillas attacked the police and military, and the middle class was afraid. In 1976, the military stepped in to take control of the situation. Thus began what came to be known as the "Dirty War" in Argentina: the military's "war against subversion" included arrest, detention, torture, murder, and the disappearance of 10,000–30,000 Argentineans between 1976–1983.

In 1977, mothers, who had met in government offices where they begged for answers as to the whereabouts of their children, formed a support group and began to organize weekly marches in Buenos Aires's Plaza de Mayo, in front of government buildings. These women were mostly housewives, with no political experience. They marched in silence, carrying photos of their missing children and wearing white kerchiefs on their heads. As with Chile, these women were still functioning in accepted gender roles as guardians of their families. The government could do little to stop them without calling further attention to their abuses. However, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, as they became known, still faced persecution: some were harassed, and three mothers were disappeared.

The silent marches brought worldwide attention to the atrocities being committed in Argentina. The mothers won several peace prizes and became an internationally recognized human rights group. It is believed that the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo helped bring about the end of the dictatorship, and they continue to fight today to bring to justice those who were responsible for the atrocities committed during the Dirty War.

Source 1: Traditional *arpillera* from Peru, 1990s



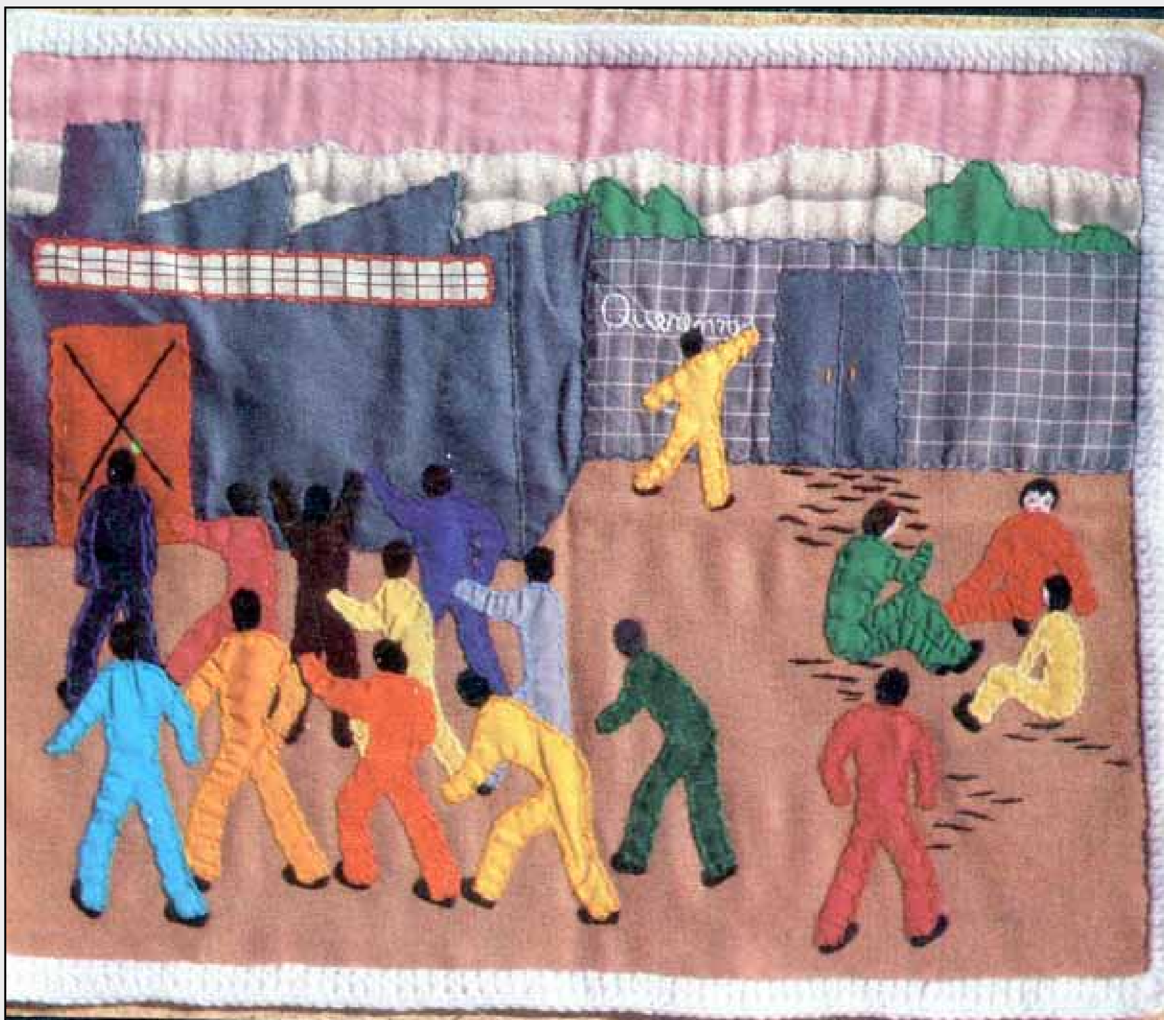
Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas at Austin, *Outreach Lending Library*.

Comprehension Exercise:

1. Does this look like a craft that would be done by women or men? Explain your answer by both using details from the image and discussing what you think of as traditional activities for men and women.

Source 2: *Arpilleras* created by Chilean women's collectives, 1973–1985

Three arpilleras: detail from Todas las formas de lucha (All Types of Struggle), candelight solidarity vigil at church, and political prisoners.



Adriana Goñi Godoy, 2007, Picasa Web album, http://picasaweb.google.com/adrianagonigodoy/Arpilleras19731985#.

<u>Comprehension Exercises:</u>

2. How is the first *arpillera* (Source 1) different than the others (Source 2)? How is it similar?
3. What message were the women who made the *arpilleras* in Source 2 trying to get across? Use details from the images to support your answer.

Source 3: Illustration of a traditional *cueca*, the national dance of Chile, and *arpillera* of the *cueca sola*, 1973–1985

During the dictatorship, mothers and wives of the disappeared would dance the cueca sola—alone, without the traditional partner—as a way of protesting the government. The arpillera reads: absence is endless, and I plead for awareness.

Encyclopædia Britannica, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic-art/145917/5099/Cueca.
Adriana Goñi Godoy, 2007, Picasa Web album, http://picasaweb.google.com/adrianagonigodoy/Arpilleras19731985#.

Source 4: Excerpt from Sting's song, "They Dance Alone (Cueca Solo)," 1987

Why are there women here dancing on their own?
Why is there this sadness in their eyes?
Why are the soldiers here
Their faces fixed like stone?
I can't see what it is that they despise…

It's the only form of protest they're allowed
I've seen their silent faces scream so loud
If they were to speak these words they'd go missing too
Another woman on a torture table what else can they do

They're dancing with the missing
They're dancing with the dead
They dance with the invisible ones
Their anguish is unsaid
They're dancing with their fathers
They're dancing with their sons
They're dancing with their husbands
They dance alone
They dance alone

Sting, "They Dance Alone (Cueca Solo)," *Nothing Like the Sun*, A&M, 1987.

<u>Comprehension Exercises:</u>

4. Why do you think the *cueca sola* was seen as a form of protest? Why do you think it was necessary to protest in this unspoken way? Support your answer using evidence from the documents.
5. Considering all four sources, do you think that the mothers of the disappeared were successful in bringing attention to the horrors of the Chilean dictatorship? Why or why not?

Source 5: Photographs of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, 1977 and 2005

The sign in the 2005 photo reads: 30,000 Detained—Disappeared—PRESENT.

© Associated Press, November 21, 1977.
2005, La Gran Época, http://lagranepoca.com.

Source 6: First-hand account of the initial organization of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in 1977, published in 2002

Toward the end of September 1977, we are already more than fifty women, and our feelings grow closer with our growing numbers. Every time there are more of us. Every time we feel stronger and less afraid. Every time we feel safer together. But every time there are more children missing. At the benches on the side of the Plaza [de Mayo] we feel defiant, almost invincible for a few minutes. The truth is, they [the police, the authorities] don't know what to do with us. If there is anything left in their hearts, it is the line from all those macho tangos about "my poor old lady." That keeps us safe for the moment. They think that we are crazed by grief, that we'll last until we get tired of standing there with all our varicose veins or until one of us has a heart attack.

Hebe de Bonafini and Matilde Sanchez, "The Madwomen at the Plaza de Mayo," *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Gabriela Nouzeilles and Graciel Montaldo (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 434.

Comprehension Exercises:

6. How do the women *visually* convey their role as mothers? Looking at the images, how effective do you think their protest tactic was? Why?
7. Why do you think that the government left the women alone? Support your answer citing evidence from the documents.

Source 7: Excerpt from U2's song, "Mothers of the Disappeared," 1987

Midnight, our sons and daughters
Were cut down and taken from us
Hear their heartbeat
We hear their heartbeat

In the wind, we hear their laughter
In the rain, we see their tears
Hear their heartbeat
We hear their heartbeat

U2, "Mothers of the Disappeared," *The Joshua Tree*, Island, 1987.

Comprehension Exercise:

8. Considering all of the information from this case study, why do you think that mothers in both Chile and Argentina received attention from international music icons? What effect do you think the songs had on their struggles? Explain your answer.

Additional Resources (all available from the LLILAS Outreach Lending Library):

Johnson, Andrew. *Threads of Hope*. Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities and Sciences, Princeton, NJ, 1996.

Puenzo, Luis. *The Official Story*. Buenos Aires: Almi Pictures, 1995. VHS. In Spanish with English subtitles.

York, Steve. *Chile: Defeat of a Dictator* (Episode 3 of *A Force More Powerful*). Washington, DC: York Zimmerman, 2000.

Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, http://www.abuelas.org.ar/english/history.htm. In English.

Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo, http://www.madres.org/. In Spanish.

Women in the Indian Independence Movement: The Salt Protests of 1930

As part of the larger independence movement, Gandhi called for an end to the British monopoly and tax on salt in January 1930. Roughly a month later, Gandhi announced he would march to Dandi, a coastal city, to illegally manufacture salt. On the famous Dandi march through the villages of Gujarat, Gandhi started off with 70 peaceful, non-violent protesters (*satyagraha*). Along the way, people from villages and towns spontaneously joined the group. When the procession reached Dandi, thousands of people were walking with Gandhi. Among them were many women.

Gandhi included no women in his original group of 70 *satyagraha* and this drew considerable resentment from many female freedom fighters. Some wrote to him passionately urging him to invite women to participate. On the last day of the march, Sarojini Naidu, Gandhi's close friend and a nationalist leader in her own right, insisted on joining him. Sarojini Naidu was among the most visible leaders (male or female) of pre-independent India. As president of the Indian National Congress and the first woman governor of free India, she was a fervent advocate for India, avidly mobilizing support for the Indian independence movement. She was also the first woman to be arrested in the salt march. Her presence signaled thousands of other women to join the protest. Some of the women who joined the salt march were wealthy elite women from cities, but the majority were ordinary village women. After the march to Dandi, thousands of women were breaking the salt law and leading protests all over the country. In fact, it is generally understood that the salt protest was made so successful precisely because of the many women who not only made salt, but who also sat openly in markets selling and buying it. This time marked a new level of participation by Indian women in the nationalist movement. The event is generally remembered as the first time masses of Indian women participated in the struggle for independence and marked the involvement of women from all walks of life, extending the movement out of its upper class enclave.

At first, Gandhi's choice of salt as a symbol of protest had amused and bewildered many people—British officials, as well as members of his own Congress Party. But Gandhi recognized the symbolic power of salt and the significance of the seemingly trivial but essential details of daily living, which were often relegated to the domestic sphere of women. Salt is one of the cheapest commodities and an item that every woman buys and uses routinely almost without thought. Making salt, in defiance of British laws, became a way for Indian women to declare independence in a very personal way and in their own daily life. The action also revolutionized an understanding of the kitchen as linked to the nation; and of private, domestic space as linked to the public, political realm. This protest movement galvanized such large numbers of women into action precisely because the action, though simple, touched the everyday life of all Indian women.

The role of women in the salt protests fits into a larger understanding of the role of women in India's fight for freedom from British rule. At this time, ideas on women's participation in the nationalist movement grew out of commonly held cultural beliefs on the nature of Indian women as essentially self-sacrificing and thus ideally suited to non-violent protest. Emphasizing these feminine qualities and their role as mothers, specifically as mothers of the nation, empowered women to find places in the public arena of protest. Gandhi and other nationalist leaders believed women were specifically well-suited to spread a message of non-violence and to bear the hardships of protest. The emphasis on the essential nature of the Indian woman created a new place for women in public life, a new self-view, where women could become agents of change in public spaces.

Source 1: Letter Sarojini Naidu wrote to her daughter Leilamani Naidu, March 4, 1921

Only remember that you are an Indian girl and that puts upon you a heavier burden than if you were an English girl born to a heritage of freedom. Remember that you have to help India to be free and the children of tomorrow to be free-born citizens of a free land, therefore—if you are true to your country's need you must recognise the responsibility of your Indian womanhood. Nothing in your speech or action should cause the progress of Indian women to suffer, nothing in yourself should give room for wretched reactionary slave-minds to say, "This comes of giving too much education and freedom to our women." Think over it my darling. You are not free—one is—in the sense of being a law unto yourself in defiance of all existing tradition in our country—for freedom is the heaviest bondage in one sense—since it entails duties, responsibilities and opportunities from which slaves are immune... Noblesse oblige! and the ampler the liberty the narrower the right to do as one pleases. And you my friend of delight...you must shine as a foremost gem in the crown of India's freedom....You have in you all the seeds of true greatness: be great my little child, fulfill yourself nobly in accordance with all the profound and beautiful impulses and ideals of your nature...but always remembering that you are the symbol of India.

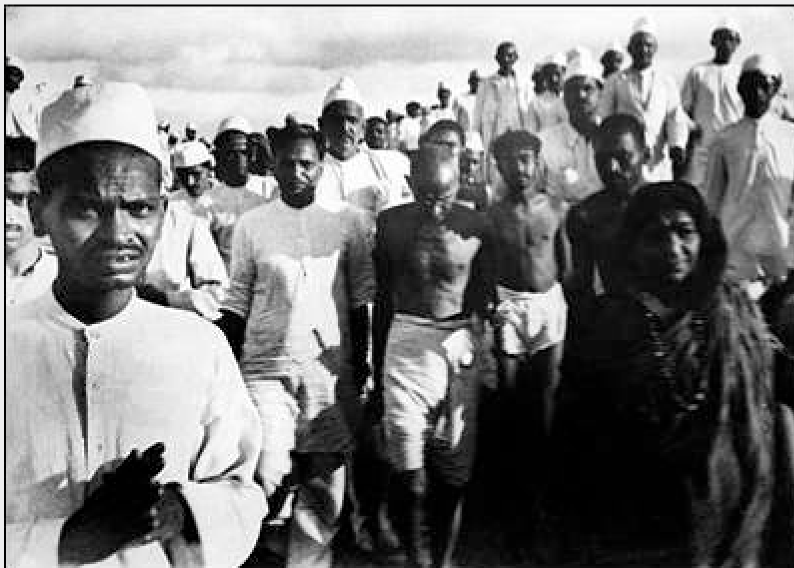
Sarojini Naidu, *Selected letters, 1890s to 1940s*, ed. Makarand Paranjpe (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1996), 156–157.

Source 2: Gandhi on women and *satyagraha*

I have suggested…that woman is the incarnation of *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. Who but woman, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure? She shows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derives joy in the suffering involved…Let her transfer that love to the whole of humanity…And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. It is given her to teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for that nectar. She can become the leader in *satyagraha* which does not require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith.

M.K. Gandhi, *Women and Social Justice* (Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 1954), 26–27.

Source 3: Sarojini Naidu (lower right) accompanying Gandhi at end of march to Dandi, 1930



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Gandhi_Salt_March.jpg

Comprehension Exercises:

1. Compare Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu's view of Indian women. How are they similar? How do they differ?
2. Do Gandhi and Naidu think that Indian independence will change the roles of Indian women? If so, how will women's roles change?
3. List qualities of women that make them suited or not suited for political protest. Support your answer with examples from the documents.

Source 4: Interview with Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, nationalist leader, participant in salt protests and sister-in-law of Sarojini Naidu

Even though only a few women were chosen officially to take part in the salt *satyagraha* with which the Indian revolution opened on the morning of April 6, 1930, by sunset of that first day it had turned into a mass movement and swept the country.

On that memorable day thousands of women strode down to the sea like proud warriors. But instead of weapons, they bore pitchers of clay, brass and copper; and instead of uniforms, the simple cotton saris of village India.

…Women young and old, rich and poor, came tumbling out in their hundreds and thousands, shaking off the traditional shackles that had held them so long.

Valiantly they went forwards without a trace of fear or embarrassment. They stood at street corners with little packets of salt, crying out: "we have broken the Salt Laws and we are free! Who will buy the salt of freedom?" Their cries never went unheeded. Every passer-by stopped, slipped a coin into their hands and held out proudly a tiny pinch of salt.

Radha Kumar, *A History of Doing* (New Delhi: Zubaan, 1993), 78.

Source 5: From lecture of woman writer and columnist Dr. Shakuntala Narasimhan, who describes Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

When Gandhiji announced his *satyagraha*, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was one of the two women (along with Avantikabai Gokhale) chosen for inclusion in the front line unit of seven volunteers at Bombay. The volunteers arrived at the beach, a sea of humanity...and began to boil seawater in small pans to make salt. She made small packets of the salt thus made and sold it to collect money for the *aatyagraha* movement. She went to the share market and auctioned her packets to the highest bidders. She then came up with a cheeky idea. She went inside the (High) court premises and held up a packet of salt and asked a startled magistrate if he would not buy "the salt freedom" and even the freedom movement. That was Kamaladevi; defiant and daring, but always with a touch of cheeky humour. (Unfortunately) there are no records of what the magistrate's response was.

Shakuntala Narasimhan, "Kamaladevi—The Romantic Rebel," *Vihangama, The Newsletter of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts,* http://www.ignca.nic.in/nl002806.htm.

Source 6: Manufacturing contraband salt at the beach in Madras

Anil Dharker, *The Romance of Salt* (New Delhi: Lotus Collection Roli Books, 2005), insert.

Source 7: Women bringing brine to salt pans in Vile Parle Camp, Bombay during the civil disobedience movement, 1930

Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 133.

Source 8: Women at salt march, April 1930

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Salt_March_meal_preparation.jpg

Comprehension Exercises:

4. Describe different classes or categories of women that participated in the independence movement.
5. Describe the attributes of the women from photographs in this section and the previous one. What are they wearing? What are they doing? How do their appearance and actions differ from those of the men in the photographs? Describe differences among the women pictured as well.
6. Which group of women does nationalist leader Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay focus on most in her account? Why do you think she concentrates her attention on this group?

Source 9: Excerpt from the autobiography of Bombay governor Frederick Sykes, 1942

Most remarkable of all was the attitude of the women. Many Indian ladies of good family and high intellectual attainments volunteered to assist in picketing and salt-making. Congress [The Congress Party of M.K. Gandhi] has no scruples in making use of them, knowing well the embarrassment which they would cause to the authorities.

Sir Frederick Sykes, *From Many Angles: An Autobiography* (London: George Harrap, 1942), 392.

Source 10: Government of India Official Report, 1930

…[T]housands of them, many being of good family and high educational attainments, suddenly emerged from the seclusion of their homes and in some instances from *purdah*, in order to join Congress demonstrations and assist in picketing; and their presence on these occasions made the work the police were required to perform particularly unpleasant.

India in 1930-31: A Statement Prepared for Presentation in Parliament (Calcutta: Government of India Central Publishing Branch, 1932), 73.

Comprehension Exercises:

7. How do British officials react to women's participation in the 1930s Salt Protests? Describe what they say citing the documents.
8. Describe different classes or categories of women that participate in the movement. What group of women are the British most concerned with in their accounts?
9. How do the British accounts differ from Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay's description of the salt protests in the previous section? List differences citing the documents. What might account for the differences?

Additional Resources:

Chattopadhyay, Kamaladevi. *Inner Recesses, Outer Spaces: Memoirs*. New Delhi: Navrang, 1986.

Dalton, Dennis. *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

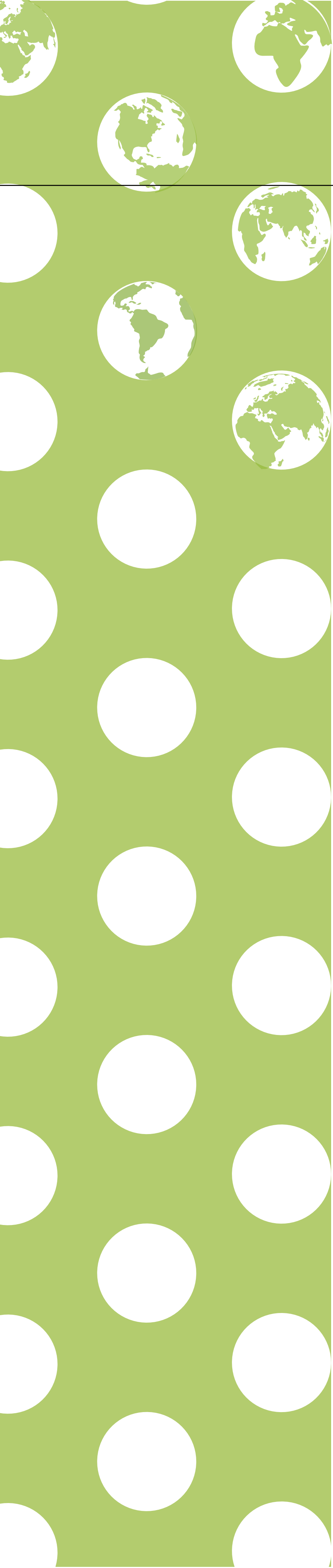
Forbes, Geraldine. *Women in Modern India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Kumar, Radha. *A History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India 1800-1990*. London: Verso, 1993.

Mahatma Gandhi Foundation—The Salt March: 75 Years, http://www.saltmarch.org.in/index.html.

Naidu, Sarojini. *Selected letters, 1890s to 1940s*. Edited by Makarand Paranjpe. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1996.

Narasimhan, Sakuntala. *Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay: the romantic rebel*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1999.



Pioneers in Pre-state Israel: The Women of the First *Aliyah*

The history of the modern state of Israel has its origins in a political movement called Zionism that began in Europe in the late nineteenth century. The advocates of Zionism believed that European society would never fully accept Jews as equals, and they felt that the ultimate solution to this problem would be for Jews from around the world to come together to create their own country. Several locations around the world were considered for the Jewish homeland: Uganda, Madagascar, and the Patagonia region of Argentina. However, for many the only choice worth considering was Palestine—*Eretz Israel*—the historical homeland of the Jewish people.

Soon after the Zionist movement became popularized, some Jews decided to immigrate to Palestine, even though the final selection of the Jewish homeland had not been made (and would not be made until after World War I). This first wave of immigrants, arriving between 1882 and 1903, is referred to in Zionist history as "The First *Aliyah*."

The earliest immigrants to Palestine—often referred to as "Pioneers" (*Halutzot*)—were mostly Orthodox Jews from Eastern Europe. The Orthodox Jewish society of Eastern Europe was highly patriarchal and gender segregated. Women were traditionally expected to confine themselves to domestic work, focusing on their roles as wives and mothers. Few women were educated beyond the first few years of primary school. The male heads of household had complete control over decisions involving the family, and frequently the decision to immigrate to Palestine would be made by the male community leaders, who expected their family members to follow unquestioningly.

The pioneers were motivated not only by political restrictions placed on Jews in their home countries—forced relocation to urban areas, and exclusion from a range of occupations which reduced many communities to poverty—but also by a movement of secularization within Jewish society in Europe to which they objected. The Enlightenment movement in Europe (the *Haskala*) was eroding the traditional power structure within the Orthodox community. Secular education began replacing religious education, and women's education became a priority for the first time in many communities. In many traditional homes, this was viewed as an affront to religious values, particularly by the male leaders of conservative communities. The combined force of political oppression and an erosion of traditional social values spurred Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe.

These first *Halutzot* founded new settlements that would eventually be known as the *Yishuv* ("settlement"). Unlike later waves of immigrants, these first pioneers did not arrive in Palestine with the intention of establishing a new society, but rather to create enclaves in which they could re-establish the traditional Orthodox way of life to which they were accustomed. They continued to speak their native languages rather than adopt Hebrew as the new national tongue, as immigrants later did.

Within many of these first *yishuvot*, women were expected to maintain the same social roles that they had in Eastern Europe: wives and mothers. However, the demands of establishing a new life on the yishuv often necessitated a broader role for women, who were generally reluctant to then limit themselves to more traditional roles afterwards. Women began demanding greater participation, especially toward the end of the First *Aliyah* as more settlers began to arrive who embodied a more socialist ideal of equal participation for all.

It was the experience of these first female *halutza* that inspired the settlers of the Second *Aliyah* to seek an expanded role and opportunities for women. The influence of women would grow significantly over the course of the early half of the twentieth century. When the State of Israel was established in 1947, women would be given equal political rights, and were expected to serve in the military. Israel has, in its short history, had two female prime ministers, and one of the highest representations of women in political offices.

While modern Israeli women might not recognize the experience of the first *halutza* as one that they can identify with, the experience of those women, and the reactions to it, has a direct impact on the status of women in Israel today.

Source 1: Excerpt from a short story by Hemeda Ben-Yehuda, 1903
Hemeda Ben-Yehuda was one of the first (and only) female authors producing literature during the time of the First Aliyah. This short story depicts two male settlers who are looking for possible ways to increase the Jewish population of Palestine.

How can we expect anything of our women … if we do not dedicate ourselves to their education … and we cannot deny that in our villages, we have left the women completely alone. Which of us has ever taught his wife anything or even read to her! No wonder that by the time she is married a few years and has become the mother of two or three children, not only hasn't she made any progress … but she has turned into nothing but a servant, forgetting even what she knew before … Did we ever try to improve her situation? Did we arrange any sort of communal shelter for the children, where a mother could safely leave her child (in order) to attend meetings, to read, to listen, to speak, to develop, to learn? It is we, we who are to blame.

Hemeda Ben-Yehuda, "The Farm of the Rekhabites," *Hashkafa* 3 (1903): 21–23.

Source 2: From a short story by Nehamah Pukhachewsky
Nehama Pukhachewsky arrived in Palestine in 1889, and was one of the first to dedicate herself to the renaissance of women in settlement life. Sarah Zarhi, the title character of this short story, has given up a career in teaching to focus on housework and agriculture, conforming to the Zionist belief in the dignity of labor and its importance to the movement.

How will this all end? … It is not the hardship of a life of toil which leads to failure, because she is willing to make do with very little and ungrudgingly accepts whatever comes her way. There is only one thing she cannot overcome: the treatment of women—Slave and Woman, it is all one and the same. Except that the slave has found some liberators, while woman has found none. Woman, woman! What a shameful name to bear … for what purpose did nature endow her with this quality of submitting to a fate more bitter than gall? Why must she hang her head and bear her burden in silence?

Nehamah Pukhachewsky, "Sarah Zarhi," *Life in the Village* (Tel Aviv: Hedim, 1930), 97, 116

Source 3: "From the diary of Zipporah Drori, a farmer"—excerpt from a short story by Nehamah Pukhachewsky

Many of the leading figures of our settlement assembled for a general meeting and I decided to go to the meeting place. The people's representatives were gathered to discuss a burning issue and to pass judgment on it … I became very stimulated by the discussion and put my name on the list to reply, but when my turn came, they would not allow me to speak. Their reason was that I was only a guest at the meeting and not an official participant. Grievously offended, I wondered: have I no status whatever in this group into which I force my way and demand the right to discuss its issues? Cannot a poor, wretched soul like me contribute anything to this 'complicated mechanism' that is 'the settlement of our land'? Yet, on the other hand … a woman has no rights whatsoever, so by what authority does she push herself into the group to express her opinion? That is nothing but impudence on her part! A woman's place is in the kitchen, behind the stove and not among the chosen delegates of the people!

Nehamah Pukhachewsky, "Zipporah Drori," *Life in the Village* (Tel Aviv: Hedim, 1930), 185–186.

Source 4: From the memoirs of a Yemenite Jew, 1909

My mother worked at farmhouses doing laundry. My brother, Shalom, was born shortly after we came, but my mother continued working while I had to take care of him. Shalom died when he was three months old, and I was sent to work. My job was to rock a baby's cradle and to clean the mistress' house. When my work was not satisfactory I was hit. I was so young and short that, in order to reach the sink to wash dishes, I had to stand on two crates. My pay was a meal!

If the baby cried, I was ordered to take him for a stroll. I soon learned to pinch the baby so that I could spend more time outdoors. But, I was caught, dismissed from my job and hit by my parents. This stigmatized me as a bad worker and I could not find another job. I sat dejected on the steps of Rehovot's nursery school. The teachers took pity on me, invited me indoors, paid my tuition and provided me with a knapsack. This was the only year in my life that I was fortunate enough to spend in a formal education program. …

In Ben Shemen, I helped the teacher's wife in household chores, and in return I was secretly taught to read and write (my father objected)…. On the other hand, my mother was more sympathetic, but she had to be careful because my father ruled with an upper hand …

My boyfriend, Kalman, came to Ben Shemen in 1918 and we were soon romantically involved. He learned agriculture abroad and worked in the experimental station. In the evenings, he was in charge of the library. He secretly loaned me books to read that we later discussed. We had to meet secretly because I was afraid of my father. Kalman met him occasionally while working and found an opportunity to tell him of our love and his desire to marry me. This happened after my father heard from Yemenite friends that I rejected their company. My father did not answer Kalman, but when he returned home he beat me severely. I was sick for three days. My mother warned me of my father's wrath, but I informed her candidly that I was leaving home …

A few friends told my father that Kalman and I would be married and he is invited to the ceremony. He was very angry and said that he would prefer to attend my funeral. On my wedding evening, my father and a few members of my family sat "shiva" in mourning. …

Shoshanna Bassin. "Memoirs," in *The People of the Second Aliyah*, vol. 3, ed. Nahman Tamir (Tel Aviv: Mifaley Tarbut Vehinuch, 1971), 325–331.

Comprehension Exercises:

1. What is the tone of each of these passages? Cite examples of language from the text that supports your answer.
2. How do the women portrayed in each passage view their roles in the new society of the *yishuv*? How would each woman prefer her role to change?
3. Three of these passages are from literature. Compare and contrast them with the memoir. What might be idealized? How closely do they seem to reflect reality?

Source 5: From an Essay by Yael Gordon, one of the leading women pioneers of the Second *Aliyah*

We want equality and emancipation for women, which will enable them to fulfill their roles both as mothers and as effective individuals in society. This must be our aim, especially in this young society being formed in Palestine out of the desire of the [Jewish] people to preserve its character and its "self" through work and creation. The young Jewish women who came here want not only to fulfill their national roles as daughters of our nation, but also to find themselves, the "self" of the woman-person, who has no more fitting place in the world in which to find the roots of her soul and to give it expression than in the workers' sector of our land.

Deborah S. Bernstein, *The Struggle for Equality, Urban Women Workers in Prestate Israeli Society* (New York: Praeger, 1987), 35.

Source 6: Excerpts from the diary of "R.," a young *Halutza* of the second *Aliyah* (1925–1937)

We had to leave Russia not because of personal persecution by the authorities, but because we could see no possibility of Zionist action within this frame of life. We did not escape to Eretz Israel, we were looking for ways to train Jewish youth in the diaspora before they came here. Many of the comrades stayed abroad, myself included. The decision to go to Israel, even after several years, was still not an easy one. As for myself, I knew that my own restless, active soul could only find an outlet in Eretz Israel. I had felt that the special conditions here would help me in the fulfillment of my positive qualities, and I broke out. My friends understood this and tried to help me. My life at the time had a personal dimension which delayed my departure for a while. Already when I was in Russia, my hot blooded woman's temperament was awakened. Yes, I had loved, and it was a great and powerful love! …

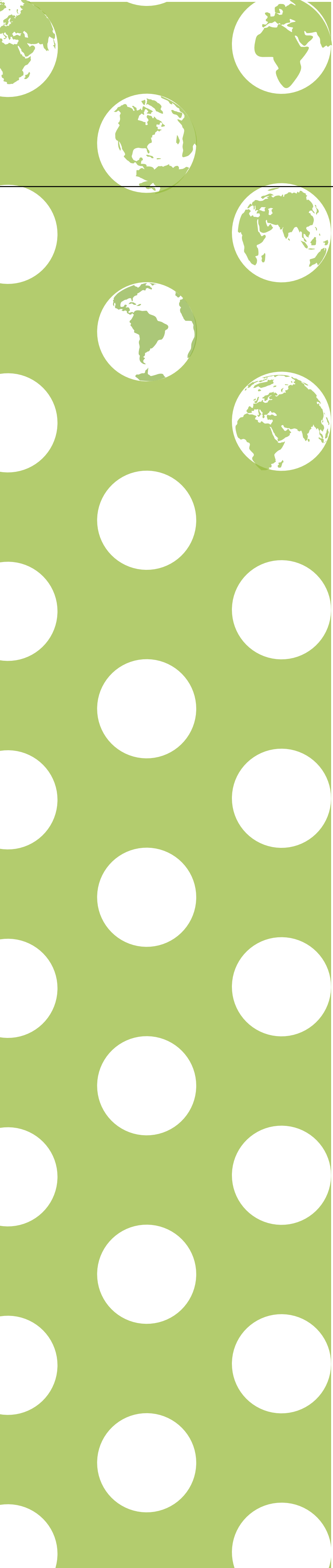
It is now a year since I came here. Eretz Israel has been kind to me. I have met with good working conditions, and grown stronger in body and mind. I have been feeling the ground under my feet, the immediate link with the Workers' Movement. I began my new life under no compulsion, without stress. My love for Eretz Israel is what I imagine the love of a daughter to her mother to be. …

I have enlisted with my whole heart to the establishment of a new enterprise of the Women Workers' Movement. I have become alive with the Movement and with my friends. I feel the acute situation of the woman worker here, her weakness and her helplessness and the subsequent lack of activity. I would like to help, to have some influence to train the woman, so that she should have an independent economic position in life.

Deborah S. Bernsetin and Musia Lipman, "Fragments of Life: From the Diaries of Two Young Women," in *Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel* ed. Deborah S. Bernstein (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 159–161.

Comprehension Exercises:

4. How does the tone of sources 5 and 6 differ from the tone of the first four sources? Cite language from both sets of sources to support your answer.
5. How much appears to have changed in practice for women in the *yishuv* from the time of the First *Aliyah*?
6. What is different about the attitude of these women of the Second *Aliyah* from the first wave of pioneers?
7. How have the women of the Second *Aliyah* learned from the experiences of their predecessors?



Women's Work or Women's Rights? Russia after the Revolution

Among the lofty ideals of the Russian Revolution of 1917 was the idea of equality for women. Previously, under Tsarist rule, women were always subservient to men: first to their fathers, then to their husbands. This tradition was most clearly displayed at a traditional Russian wedding where the father passed a whip to the groom to symbolize the transfer of power from father to husband. Women's domain was the home, which for high-born women might mean directing the servants, but for low-born women meant doing the work themselves. Toward the end of the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution brought more women out of the home and into the workforce, however they often filled the most menial and unskilled positions. Furthermore, women retained all their domestic responsibilities, causing a "double burden"—work outside the home followed by chores inside the home. Lenin himself spoke several times of housework as "household slavery."

The new Russian leaders sought to alleviate both these burdens. In an effort to make women politically and legally equal to men, they gave women the right to vote in 1917, three years earlier than in the United States. By asserting the equality of women, they sought to allow women into all levels of industry. To alleviate the burden of housework, Communist leaders called for the creation of communal kitchens, week-long nurseries to care for children, and publicly-run laundries so that women could be transformed "from the 'wife of a person' into a person."[1] They felt that, thus freed from household responsibilities, women would be free to improve themselves through social clubs, adult education, and political activism.

Unfortunately, these great societal changes didn't catch on. Propaganda posters in the 1920s lauded the advancements made by women, yet in the 1930s they were still attempting to draw women out of the kitchens. While some articles heralded women doing men's work, others mentioned that women nonetheless wanted to remain feminine and fashionable.

After World War II, with the population decimated due to war casualties, Stalin wanted to increase the birth rate and women were once more praised for their roles as wives and mothers. Financial rewards were given to families with three or more children, and "Hero Mothers" who bore ten or more children were honored with a medal. Through the decades, whether through personal preferences or societal pressures, the emphasis continued to alternate between supporting women's mental and physical qualities, or their feminine and maternal roles.

While creating equal roles for women, the early revolutionaries had taken into account a woman's maternal needs and provided by law for mandated maternity leave, physical protection from overwork (such as banning women from night shifts), and deeming certain jobs as too dangerous for women. These laws were meant to protect women from physical harm to preserve their childbearing capabilities. However, a side result of this was that women were excluded from certain fields and restricted from certain levels of responsibility. Women tended to monopolize those fields deemed acceptable—light industry, teachers, and medicine. While a majority of Soviet doctors were women, doctors were not accorded the same prestige nor did they command the magnificent salaries that they do in the West. In the late 1980s, the average doctor's salary was roughly comparable to that of the average industrial worker. To this day, medical doctors are among the lowest paid jobs in Russia.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, women have been particularly affected by the changes in political structure and the approach to a market society. Accustomed to the "safety net" of a regulated Soviet society where jobs were guaranteed, women were shocked to discover that if they took time off for maternity or lost their jobs, they could not return to work or find a new job. As rising unemployment has swept the country, women are the first laid off and the last to be hired. According to Human Rights Watch, in the early 1990s more than two-thirds of the unemployed were women. Some Russian officials suggest that this trend toward unemployment once again benefits women by relieving them of the "double burden" by allowing them to stay home and focus on their families. But the growing number of women living below the poverty line, dependent upon ex-husbands or their own parents for survival, belies the "benefit."

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1 *Petrogradskaya Pravda* in "The Utopianism of the Zhenotdel," Barbara Evans Clements, *Slavic Review* 51: 3 (Autumn 1992), 487.

Source 1: Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Russian revolutionary leader, in a speech delivered at the Fourth Moscow City Conference of Non-Party Working Women, 1919

You all know that even when women have full rights, they still remain fatally downtrodden because all housework is left to them. In most cases housework is the most unproductive, the most barbarous and the most arduous work a woman can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote the development of the woman.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *The Tasks of the Working Women's Movement in the Soviet Republic,* Lenin Internet Archive, http://eprints.cddc.vt.edu/marxists/archive/lenin/works/1919/sep/23a.htm (accessed 25 August, 2008).

Source: 2: Propaganda poster "What the October Revolution Has Given to Working and Peasant Women," 1920

The woman worker points towards a library, a cafeteria, a maternity hospital, a daycare center, a workers' club, and an adult education center.

Artist Unknown, *The Bolshevik Poster*, ed. Stephen White (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 111.

Source 3: Soviet propaganda poster celebrates March 8, International Women's Day, 1932
Poster text: "The 8th of March is the day of rebellion against kitchen slavery by working women! Down with the oppression and narrow-mindedness of household work!" In the background is a communal kitchen/cafeteria.

Artist: B. Deykin. A.F. Shklyarik, N.N. Alekseev, and N.A. Snopkova, *600 Posters* (Moscow: Kontact-Kultura, 2004), 35.

Comprehension Exercises:

1. What do the sources reveal about traditional roles for women in pre-revolutionary Russia?
2. Based on these sources, how did the Russian revolution seek to change traditional gender roles? Explain your answer citing evidence from the documents.
3. Is the same sort of ideal for women illustrated in both posters? Do they accurately portray the situation for all Soviet women? How can you tell? Cite specific evidence from the documents to support your answer.

Source 4: *New York Times* article, "Russian Women Take Readily to Men's Jobs," 1932

Women are invading every walk of life in Russia as a result of the Communist party's drive to "get the women out of the kitchens." The drive was launched by Lenin who said: "Every cook should know how to run the government."

For the encouragement of those still lingering over the cookstove the daily papers run pictures of women working side by side with men in different lines of industry. Today's C*ommunist Youth Pravda* features prominently a picture of four husky girls in red scarfs and short skirts carrying miners' lamps. They are members of a "shock brigade" in one of the coal mines.

A legend above the picture reads: "Women work in the USSR at the time of the fifteenth anniversary of the revolution." Below it is explained that before the revolution the women were held down and exploited and that when allowed to work they got the meanest jobs and the lowest wages.

Under the piecework system they still earn less than men, but they can do almost any kind of work that they want to. There are women bricklayers, motormen, soldiers and militiamen; women military air pilots and thousands of women factory workers. American specialists in the Stalingrad tractor plant said that the women learned how to run the complicated machines more quickly than the men and were less inclined to loaf.

Only in the top ranks of the government is there a decided preponderance of men over women. Men hold most of the high positions, although Mme. Kolontai is famous as the only woman Ambassador in the world. Premier Molotoff's wife is the head of the cosmetics trust.

Figures announced today give the number of women workers employed in industry in 1913 as 635,000 as against 1,449,000 in 1931. Women employed in other work in 1931, exclusive of agriculture, numbered 5,859,000. Thus, the total number of women in non-agricultural work last year was 7,308,000, which is more than one-third of the total number of workers, which is placed at 18,000,000.

"Russian Women Take Readily to Men's Jobs," *New York Times,* November 27, 1932, sec. E4.

Comprehension Exercises:

1. What do you think Lenin meant when he said, "Every cook should know how to run the government"?
2. List the different occupations mentioned in the article that Russian women engage in in 1932. Are these jobs traditionally considered masculine or feminine?
3. As of 1932, is there a realm of work that is still not open to women in Russia? Explain your answer citing evidence from the documents.
4. What are the similarities and differences between the poster images (sources 2 and 3) and the photographs in Source 4?

Source 5: Percentage of women that predominate in particular professions in the Soviet Union, 1970

Profession	Percentage that are Women
Nurses	99
Typists	99
Day-care personnel	98
Pediatricians	98
Secretaries	95
Librarians	95
Cashiers	94
Clothing industry	88
Laboratory personnel	85
Midwives	83
Telephone operators	83
Managerial personnel in institutions	82
Computer operators	77
Doctors	74
Workers in food industries	74
Teachers	72
Textile workers	72

Carola Hansson and Karen Liden, *Moscow Women: Thirteen Interviews by Carola Hansson and Karen Liden,* trans. Gerry Bothmer, George Blecher and Lone Blecher (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 27

Source 6: Interview with a 23-year-old woman in Moscow who lives with her husband and newborn daughter, 1983

…[W]hen they leave school many girls have great plans; they want to reach out, become something, accomplish something. But once they have a family, many settle for what they have. They may want something else, but out of fatigue or a lack of choice most of them adjust to the limited possibilities offered them. Here there are very few part-time jobs, which is a shame. One has to choose between working full time and staying at home. Of course women who stay home have more time, but their horizons become narrower and they become very introverted. So even if women have certain goals from the beginning, they eventually have to give up much of what they were striving for.

Men's goals are more centered on prestige and a good salary. In my family, for instance, both Mama and Papa wanted to get their doctorates. But then I arrived, and only one of them could devote themselves to research. Mama thought she could do hers later. But Papa didn't finish until recently. That's why Mama never had the chance to do research, although she wanted to very much, and had plans and ideas. But she didn't have the time.

Carola Hansson and Karen Liden, *Moscow Women: Thirteen Interviews by Carola Hansson and Karen Liden*, trans. Gerry Bothmer, George Blecher, and Lone Blecher (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 60–61.

Source 7: Human Rights Watch report on "State Discrimination Against Women in Russia," 1995

Economic and political changes in Russia have left many Russians staggering under the burdens of rising unemployment, high rates of inflation, disappearing social services and the encroaching threats of corruption and organized crime. Women in particular are suffering the consequences of such change: they face widespread employment discrimination that is practiced, condoned and tolerated by the government.…

Far from attacking sex discrimination, the government actively participates in discriminatory actions and fails to enforce laws that prohibit sex discrimination. When asked about the problem of women's unemployment in February 1993, Russia's labor minister, Gennady Melikyan, responded, "Why should we employ women when men are out of work? It's better that men work and women take care of children and do housework. I don't think women should work when men are doing nothing." …

Labor legislation, held over from the Soviet era, continues to restrict women's participation in the workforce. Soviet and Russian legislation historically prohibited women from working in particularly unhealthy or strenuous posts, such as underground jobs, or in positions that interfered with their responsibilities as mothers, such as night or weekend jobs. The Soviet legislature justified such limits on women's labor as necessary to protect women's ability to have and to raise children. …

In addition to the restrictions on where and when women can work, Russian law extends—as did Soviet law—numerous protections and benefits to pregnant and nursing women as well as women with small children. Such parental benefits are extended only to women because Russian government policies reflect society's expectation that women are and should be primarily responsible for child care. Men are prohibited by statute from taking advantage of these benefits unless they are raising children alone. Much of this protective legislation prevents women from competing on an equal basis in the labor market and perpetuates the stereotype of women as unreliable and expensive workers.…[M]any employers use the cost of such gender-specific regulations to rationalize pressuring women to leave the workplace. …

In fact, some government officials applaud the consequences of women's unemployment as creating more jobs for men and encouraging women to have more babies and reverse negative population growth. Official statements encourage women to leave work and stay at home with their children as a way of alleviating the "double burden" of working at their jobs and in their homes. As a Moscow women's rights activist has observed, "The new catch-phrase is: 'Let's return women to their natural destiny.'"

Human Rights Watch, http://www.hrw.org/reports/1995/Russia2a.htm.

Comprehension Exercises:

5. In what sort of career fields do women predominate in 1970? How does this differ from the information projected in 1932? Support your answer by citing evidence from the documents.
6. What kinds of problems do Russian women confront in Source 6 and Source 7? In your opinion, have Russian women's roles changed since the revolution? Explain your answer citing specific evidence from the documents.
7. Compare the opinion of housework given by Russian labor minister Gennady Melikyan in Source 7 with the one given by revolutionary leader Lenin in Source 1. How do they differ?
8. How has the perception of "women's work" changed in Russia from the earliest post-revolution years? Explain your answer using the documents.

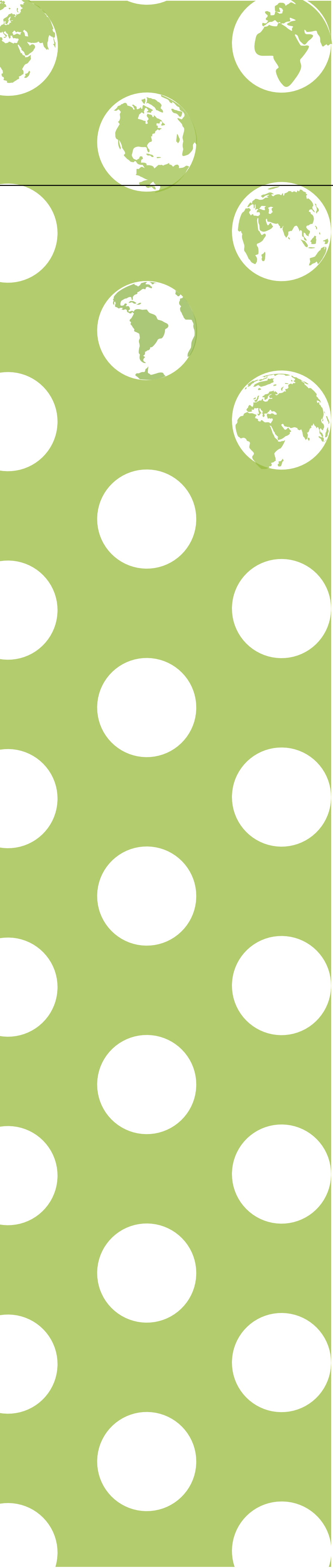
Additional Resources:

Bourke-White, Margaret. "Silk Stockings in the Five-Year Plan: Despite the Soviet Drive and the New Order of Things, Russia's Women Are Still Feminine." *New York Times,* February 14, 1932.

Du Plessix Gray, Francine. *Soviet Women: Walking the Tightrope.* New York: Doubleday, 1989.

Kollontai, Alexandra. "Working Woman and Mother," in *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, trans. Alix Holt. London: Allison & Busby, 1977.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cedaw.htm.



Juki Girls: Clothing, Factory Work, and Changing Gender Roles in Sri Lanka

The development of the textile industry is an important step in the industrialization process of many developing countries. The availability of raw materials and a large unemployed labor force combine to make the textile and garment industry attractive for developing countries both as a substitute for imports and as a major source of international trade. In Sri Lanka, the sector is important to the national economy in terms of output, employment, and export earnings, and its role in an export-led development strategy. With the expansion of this industry, however, came an increase in cultural concerns about changes in gender roles in Sri Lankan society.

"Juki girls" is a derogatory nickname given to urban female factory workers in the garment industry in Sri Lanka. The term comes from the Japanese industrial sewing machines commonly used in Sri Lankan factories. The term associates women not only with machines, but with a foreign brand, which implies that the workers are foreign or somehow less "Sri Lankan" than women who do not work in the factories. The term expresses the anxiety that many Sri Lankans feel about young women working outside their village homes, away from their families, and in an urban industrial setting.

With the growth of industrialism, the search for cheap labor persists as a way of maximizing profits. The history of the development of capitalist industries reveals that textiles, garments, food processing and, more recently, electronics have traditionally utilized female labor. Since the cost of female labor has always been lower than that of males, particularly in the third world, industrialists have preferred female labor in order to increase their profits. Cheap manual labor remained one of the primary concerns of multinational enterprises, which affected their decisions about the physical location of industries as well. As a result, countries with cheap labor, a high level of unemployment, and sufficient natural resources have been chosen by multinationals, particularly those in labor-intensive industries.

The garment industry in Sri Lanka expanded rapidly after the liberalization of the economy in 1977. Since 1986 the production in the textile and garment sector has more than doubled. During the 1990s the garment industry grew 18.5 percent per year. This expansion led to the replacement of tea by garments as the nation's largest export. The textile and garment sector accounts for about 30 percent of the country's total export earnings, making the industry the largest source of foreign exchange. The textile industry is also the largest employer in Sri Lanka.

In the garment sector, particularly in the export processing zones (EPZ), more than 90 percent of the workforce is female. Though women constitute the majority of workers in export processing zones, employers typically allow them to stay only until they are married. As a result, only 10 percent of the workforce in the EPZs is married. Most of the workers are young, with an entering age between 18 and 25, and employed in a factory for the first time in their lives. The women hope to have well-paid lasting employment in the free-trade zone but, as a rule, their hopes are not fulfilled.

In addition, the workforce of the garment industry consists primarily of women from villages who do not have families in the areas of employment, which means the women need housing in order to work. Many of the women are housed in private accommodations close to the free trade zone: cooking and washing facilities are insufficient and in poor condition, and often forty women have to share one toilet, kitchen, and well.

Almost all the workers are boarded in close proximity to the factories due to the unreliability of public transportation. As a result, the area within a five-mile radius of most factories is covered in boarding houses. Most boarding houses are built solely for the purpose of renting out to the garment factory workforce, and are often no better than sheds, consisting of a 10x9 foot room that houses ten or more female workers. Often the rooms have inadequate ventilation and sunlight.

Even though the minimum salary is 1000 Sri Lanka Rupees (about $9) per month, the take-home salary of many workers is about Rs. 850. The problem is more acute with probationary employees whose take home pay is 700. From this salary, between 100–125 is paid to the boarding houses and about 500 is spent on daily expenses and food. For many workers, what is left, especially in the probationary period, is insufficient to even clothe themselves decently. In fact many workers bring rice and coconut from their parental homes to supplement their food supplies. Extreme poverty and malnutrition are quite evident and what they wear at boarding houses is no better than rags.

With economic liberalization and growing numbers of women entering the workforce, especially in factories, there has been a corresponding increase in worry about changing gender roles and societal concern about a potentially crumbling rural and urban divide. The village is seen as a place of cultural traditions and values and the city as a place of new ways of thinking about gender, a loosening of morals, and the decline of traditional values. The public visibility of factory girls indicates to many Sri Lankans that these women, who have crossed the rural/urban divide by leaving their villages for employment, symbolize the end of Sri Lankan traditions. Since shortly after the EPZ was established there has been considerable moral fear about "good girls" going "bad," which is made worse by media reports on prostitution, premarital sex, rape, abortion, and sexual harassment in association with EPZs and urban women factory workers. These concerns have lead to factory girls being cast as key symbols of the problems of modernization.

Source 1: Excerpt from "Sari vs. Skirt in Sri Lanka," *BBC News*, December 13, 1999

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (BBC) Increasing numbers of female workers in Sri Lanka are demanding the right to stop wearing saris and to be allowed to wear western dress, which they claim is more practical. The formal dress code in hospitals and some offices is now skirts, dresses or trousers, but only after a long battle by employees. Women in banks, those employed by the national airline and members of parliament still have to wear saris….

In the crowded corridors of the hospitals, only the patients wear saris. Nurses and administrative staff campaigned long and hard to replace the sari with a simple cotton dress. They said the six-meter sari took too long to put on and slowed them down. "I work in an important area, it's a separate ward for mothers and new born babies and sometimes there are complications," says Gunasili Hettierachi, who has been a nursing attendant for six years. "When that happens I have to run, I have find the doctor or bring blood from the bloodbank. So it's much better for me to wear a frock than a sari," Ms Hettierachi says.

But not all women have a choice. In the world of politics, dominated by men, views on dress are more conservative. While male politicians wear suits, the President Chandrika Kumaratunga, and her mother, the prime minister, are never seen in western dress. According to the rules, in parliament all female Members of Parliament must wear saris. Deputy Women's Affairs Minister Nirupama Rajapakse says any change would be seen as an attack on the culture. "I wonder whether any woman is bold enough to change the dress and get to parliament," she says. "It might be interpreted differently in the media saying you want to change the national dress," she says.

Female politicians are not alone. Air hostesses and those working in government offices and banks still have no choice. The editor of women's magazine Satyn, Naomini Ratnayake Weerasooriya, says men are to blame. "Women find wearing a suit is practical and better, but Sri Lankan men seem to be very traditional and prefer women in saris," she says. "I've experienced when you wear a sari to a meeting, men will take you seriously, and when you wear a suit, they might see you as trying to be too westernized," she says.

However, in the rural areas, fashions are changing fast. This is due to the huge number of young women employed in the garment industry. Nirupama Rajapakse says that young women in her constituency are influenced by the western clothes that they spend all day putting together. "The girls now are becoming more stylish because most are employed in the garment sector ... they are more trendy than me," she says….

While one section of women continue the fight against the sari, others are keen to maintain what they see as their cultural heritage. But one thing is sure - clothes in Sri Lanka will always be much more than just a fashion statement.

Susanna Price, "Sari vs. Skirt in Sri Lanka," *BBC News* (December 13, 1999), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/563504.stm.

Source 2: Poem by garment factory worker, published 2008

Little sister
You came to the city from the village,
Why did you change?
You cut your hair short
Started wearing trousers and short dresses —
You were the most innocent girl in the village
What happened to you after coming to the city?
We can't correct the city
But we can keep in mind to
Protect the village [customs].

Sandya Hewamanne, "'City of Whores': Nationalism, Development, and Global Garment Workers in Sri Lanka," *Social Text* 26, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 40.

Comprehension Exercises:

1. What are the different attitudes towards women's clothing expressed in these two documents? What connections do they make between place and style of clothing? Use examples from the documents to support your answer.
2. How does the newspaper article differ from the poem in its expression of attitudes towards women's dress? In what ways are they similar?

Source 3: Excerpt from "Battered jeans earn big bucks for Sri Lanka," AFP news article, August 13, 2007

AVISSAWELLA, Sri Lanka (AFP) The denims look tattered and frayed, but shoppers in Europe and the United States are prepared to pay good money for "distressed" jeans and Sri Lanka is cashing in.

In the industrial town of Avissawella east of the capital Colombo, it takes workers around 13 minutes to cut and sew basic five-pocket denims. They then spend another four days torturing the pants by dying, bleaching, and sandpapering them to get a "distressed" look. "Each garment is dyed or dipped around 16 and sometimes as many as 30 times to achieve the proper torn, tattered look," explains Indrajith Kumarasiri, chief executive of Sri Lanka's Brandix Denim. "We earn more money by making denims look dirty and torn, the classic clean look doesn't bring us much," Kumarasiri told AFP during a visit to the 10-million dollar plant, which can make over three million pairs of jeans a year. Basic denim jeans cost around six dollars to make, but the shabbier "premium" ones cost twice as much. "In many ways, premium denims are replacing the little black dress as the wear-anywhere fashion staple," he said.

Overseas buyers such as Levis, Gap and Pierre Cardin are now regular buyers of premium jeans from Sri Lanka where they can be made for as little as 12 dollars a pair, and often sell for over 100 dollars.…

Sri Lanka's three-billion dollar garment industry accounts for more than half its annual seven billion dollars of export earnings, and it provides jobs for nearly one million people.…

Brandix, Sri Lanka's biggest exporter with annual sales in excess of 320 million dollars, and MAS Holdings, are also expanding overseas. In an attempt to get an advantage over the competition, Sri Lanka is trying to position itself as an ethical manufacturer in the hope of getting greater access to the US and European markets at lower duty rates. "We have high labor standards. We don't employ child labor, we provide rural employment and we empower women," said Suresh Mirchandani, chief executive of Favorite Garments….

AFP, "Battered jeans earn big bucks for Sri Lanka," *The Daily Star* (August 13, 2007), http://www.thedailystar.net/2007/08/13/d70813050569.htm.

Source 4: Excerpt from interview with garment factory worker, published 2008

I just loved everything about Katunayake. I loved working in the factory. I liked all my new friends. Just walking to work and back one learns a lot. Those days everything looked rosy to me. I felt adventurous as if I was finally living life and not just looking at it. I have to tell you about the other residents in my boardinghouse. They never left me alone. Included me in everything they did. I liked to spend time with them at the boardinghouse. Those days I just counted my fingers to the day I got my salary. The first thing I did was to go shopping and buy things that all the other girls here seemed to own, you know, dresses, shoes, colorful hair braids, perfumes, and, of course, gold rings. I just love to collect gold rings. I have two more at home…But after about one year of this buying frenzy, I started helping my parents more. I bought school supplies for both my brothers every year. I gave money so that my father could add two more rooms to our house. They really appreciated this help. Now that I have been working here for six years, I have all my jewelry and I also bought some furniture for my dowry.

Sandya Hewamanne, *Stitching Identities in a Free Trade Zone: Gender and Politics in Sri Lanka* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 2008), 163–164.

Source 5: Poem by Mainke, a garment factory worker, 1990s

Life
I awake early morning at 4.30 a.m.
I have to kindle the fire
Having washed my face, I gulp down some tea
I leave for work early morning.

I start work at 7 a.m.
The supervisor demands the production
I regret my inability to meet this target
She scolds us for this.

At 10.30 a.m. we get a sip of tea.
The tea contains no flavor, no sweetness
We drink it to quench our hunger
We tolerate these because we are poor.

I came to Katunayake because I was without work
I came to the Free Trade Zone to work
I worked at Star Garments
Now I am tired and disgusted with the job.

The other day I fell sick.
But I was not allowed to leave the factory
I know that one day I will have to work
- even through sickness.
I will surely fall dead, at Star Garments.

I work throughout the month
I am paid Rs. 800 for the month
An attendance bonus of Rs. 72 is paid
We are paid with no further allowances.

At 7 a.m. I sit at the machine
By 8 a.m. the supervisor is already at my side
She asks me what my production is
I tell her only the amount I can give

I often get a pain in my chest
The supervisor asks me to go to the sick room
I can stay there around quarter of an hour
I come back again and sit at the machine.

My mother does not know how much I suffer.
Only I know how much I suffer.
I leave in the morning and come back at night.
I suffer with the pain in my body.

We are not given any leave.
Leave is allowed only in emergencies.
That leave is also granted after much argument.
We who are poor are made to suffer so much.

My mother who fed me with her own milk.
My father who worked so hard to bring us up.
My teacher who gave me the knowledge.
To them I pay my respects.

Reinhold Plate, "Women Working in the Free Trade Zone—The Textile and Garment Industry," in *Sri Lankan Women Textile Workers Demand Justice: On the Situation of the Textile and Garment Industry in the Countries of the South* (Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 1992), 35–36.

Comprehension Exercises:

3. Make a list of the different opinions expressed about garment factories as an industry and as a place of work.
4. What are the different benefits and problems of garment factory work? How does it help or harm Sri Lankan society? How does it help or harm the female workers? Cite specific examples from the documents to support your answer.

Source 6: Photographs of women working in garment factories in Sri Lanka, 2000s

Lakruwan Wanniarachchi, "The World of Blue Jeans" Photo Essay, *Time*, http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1679983_1479020,00.html.

Tamil Guardian, http://www.tamilguardian.com/files/Image/garments.jpg.

Comprehension Exercises:

5. How do the photographs visually portray work in a garment factor and the female workers? Do the photographs offer new information about women's factory work or reinforce information already provided in earlier documents? Explain your answer citing the documents.

Source 7: Interview with boarding house owner, published 2008

My girls are very good. I won't take each and every girl who comes here asking to stay. I will only take girls who are accompanied by their parents. Girls who come with that elder brother and this elder brother…I won't accept them. There are boardinghouses that are appropriate for such women. I only take girls who come right from the village; uncorrupted, innocent ones. Then I look after them like my own daughters. Ask anyone around here, my girls come home at decent hours. They would even fight with factory managers saying that they can't work overtime because boardinghouse auntie will throw them out if they are late. No unrelated men can visit them here. They live here with me for years, and I have arranged marriages and settled some of them, too.

Sandya Hewamanne, *Stitching Identities in a Free Trade Zone: Gender and Politics in Sri Lanka* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 50.

Source 8: Photograph of garment factory worker in boarding house, 2008

IFP, "Bad management causing closures in Sri Lanka, say unions," *OneWorld South Asia* (March 30, 2009), http://southasia.oneworld.net/todaysheadlines/bad-management-causing-closures-in-sri-lanka-say-unions.

<u>Comprehension Exercises:</u>

6. What are the concerns expressed by the woman who runs boarding house? Is her attitude toward the workers similar or different from attitudes expressed in earlier documents? Support your answer with evidence from the documents.
7. Compare the photograph to the quote by the woman who runs a boarding house. How are the portrayals similar? How are they different?
8. Overall, what is your opinion of factory work and the changes it has brought to Sri Lanka society and women's lives in Sri Lanka? Use examples from the documents to support your answer.

Additional Resources

Balakrishnan, Radhika. *The Hidden Assembly Line: Gender Dynamics of Subcontracted Work in Global Economy.* Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2002.

Collins, Jane L. *Threads: Gender, Labor, and Power in the Global Apparel Industry.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

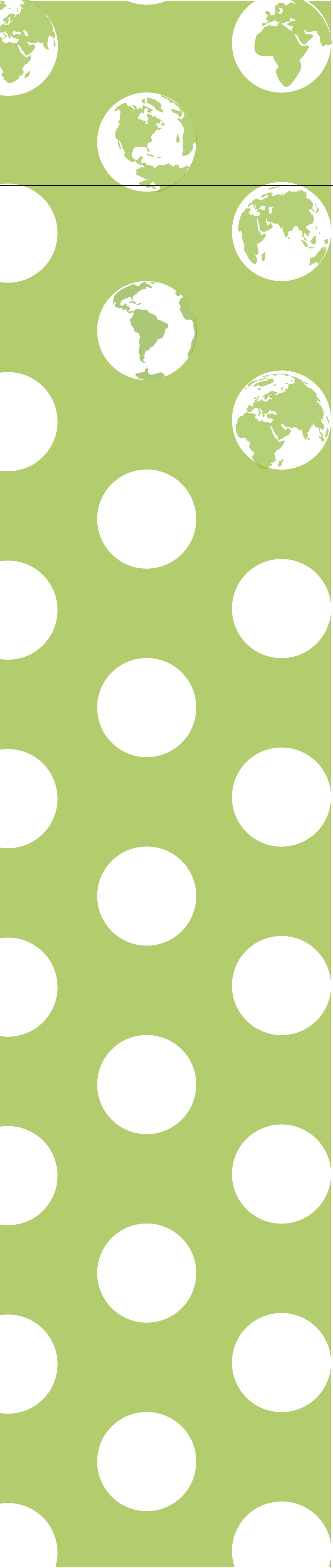
Fuentes, Annette and Barbara Ehrenreich. *Women in the Global Factory.* Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1983.

Gray, Lorraine W. *The Global Assembly Line*. Harriman, NY: New Day Films, 1986. VHS.

The Hidden Face of Globalization. Pittsburgh, PA; The National Labor Committee, 2003.

Lynch, Caitlin. *Juki Girls, Good Girls: Gender and Cultural Politics in Sri Lanka's Global Garment Industry.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007.

Sweating for a T-shirt. Portland, OR: Global Exchange, 1998. VHS or DVD.



Women in Black—Belgrade: Making Their Silence Heard

Dressed in black and holding signs, the Women in Black call attention to their causes: the end of injustice, war, and violence. What is different about this protest is that there is no chanting of slogans, no shouting to make themselves heard. The women stand in silence, and yet their message is clear. Women in Black is an international movement which began in 1988 in Israel to protest the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. A group of women chose a busy traffic intersection and arrived at the same time every day, wearing black and holding signs saying "Stop the Occupation." Their silent persistence caught the attention of the media and, as word spread, other women took up the cause. Since that time, groups have sprung up around the world, some in support of the original protest and many to confront their own regional conflicts.

The Women in Black movement in Yugoslavia began in Belgrade in 1991 under the rule of Slobodan Milošević. Milošević's attempts to strengthen Serbian majority rule of the multi-ethnic Yugoslavia led instead to its breakup along ethnic lines. As Croatians vied for independence from Yugoslavia, Serbs within Croatia struggled to keep their territory part of Serbia and a bitter civil war began, spreading throughout the Balkans as Macedonia and then Bosnia and Herzegovina declared their own independence. It was at this time that Serbian women in the capital city of Belgrade began to gather in silent vigil. Every Wednesday women would assemble on Republic Square to protest for demilitarization and an end to the conflict. They supported the cause of conscientious objectors who did not want to fight in a war in which they did not believe, and they organized humanitarian aid for refugees.

In 1995, a massacre provoked even more protests. In the town of Srebrenica, considered a "safe haven" for Bosnian refugees, thousands of Bosniak men and boys were killed by the Serbian military. News of that event was suppressed and denied by the Serbian government. But Women in Black–Belgrade took to the streets regularly to bring attention to the atrocity and to protest the action as "Not in Our Name." A decade later, in 2005, a videotape exposed the truth and challenged the government's denials.

Although Women in Black always plan peaceful and silent protests, they still create controversy and arouse anger in their opponents. Serb nationalists consider that Serbians should not promote the independence or rights of any other nationality. Members of Women in Black are often harassed by observers in the street, and their organization has repeatedly been investigated by the police on trumped up charges. The founder of Women in Black–Belgrade was accused of running a prostitution ring, which prompted further police investigations. When Women in Black–Belgrade took a stand to support Kosovo's bid for independence, the Belgrade daily newspaper *Kurir* declared that they faced jail time for treason against the constitution.

Despite the difficulties that members face at home, international organizations recognize and praise the consistent efforts of these protesters. In 2000, the global organization of Women in Black was among the recipients of the UN's Millennium Peace Prize for Women, and the founder of the Belgrade chapter, Staša Zajović, accepted on their behalf. Staša Zajović herself has been nominated for many awards for her untiring work. In 2005, she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize as part of the 1,000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize campaign. She has twice been nominated for "Person of the Year" by *Danas* Newspaper in Belgrade, and she is a member of the Advisory Group of UNIFEM, the United Nations agency for women.

Women in Black–Belgrade, along with Women in Black chapters around the world, continue to provide a forum where women can bring their message to the public through non-violent means, and to confront injustice wherever they find it.

Source 1: Photographs of Women in Black protests in Belgrade

Janet Rabin, "Commemoration of Siege of Sarajevo," May 30–June 1, 2008, Flickr Photo Sharing, http://www.flickr.com/photos/tenajan/2556567737/in/set-72157605475361203/.
Biliana Rakocevic, "The Oldest Women in Black activist, Belgrade," April 2007, http://photo.net/photodb/folder?folder_id=478343.

Source 2: Excerpts from a Declaration by Women in Black–Belgrade, on the fifth anniversary of their weekly gatherings to protest the war, October 1996

We know that despair and pain need to be changed into political action. With our bodies, we declare our bitterness and hostility against all those who want and wage war. During the gatherings, we remain silent, sometimes whispering encouragement and support to each other when passers by insult us or anger us. We have continued in this way every Wednesday, carrying placards and distributing tracts. Our numbers at these gatherings have varied from few to many, with different women coming to them. Each woman, alone, individually, would not have been able to last it out. Together we have persevered.

We have not stopped the war, but neither have we given in to powerlessness and resignation.

Odile Albert, "The Women in Black: 'We are still in the streets of Belgrade,'" *DPH: Dialogues, Proposals, Stories for Global Citizenship* (September 1996), http://base.d-p-h.info/en/fiches/premierdph/fiche-premierdph-5556.html.

Source 3: Lepa Mladjenovic, 50, a counselor for female victims of male violence and a member of Women in Black–Belgrade, explains the "infuriating silent technique" of the vigils, 2005.

It is a very loud silence…It mocks the silence that is imposed on women. And because our silence is so loud, it is a rebellion against the way that women are politically and socially silenced.

Eetta Prince-Gibson, "Silent Screams," *Jerualem Post*, August 23, 2005: 16.

Comprehension Exercises:

1. Describe the appearance of the women in Source 1. Can you tell anything about their social status or occupations?
2. In your own words, restate why the Women in Black protest the way that they do (Sources 2 and 3). Does their approach seem reasonable to you? Why or why not?
3. How do you think that silent protests are received by the general public? In your opinion, is this method effective? Explain your answer citing the sources.
4. Why would opponents to Women in Black accuse them of running a prostitution ring? How do the accusations against Women in Black conflict with the way they present themselves in these documents?

Source 4: Newspaper article describing the vigil to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, 2005

The Women in Black protest "Lest We Forget" in Belgrade's Republic square last night, commemorating the 10th anniversary of the crime against the Srebrenica Bosniaks, was disrupted briefly when a tear-gas canister was tossed into a group of non-governmental organization activists. The tear-gas was thrown by extremists who had first been chanting "Knife, wire, Srebrenica" [the words rhyming in Serbian] and "Nataša Kandić is a whore". The police, who had three cordons protecting the rally, took into custody nine youths with shaved heads. The rally was attended by NGO activists from Italy, Israel, the United States, Germany and Serbia, including Nataša Kandić of the Humanitarian Law Centre, Sonja Biserko of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Biljana Kovačević-Vučo of the Yugoslav Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, and Borka Pavićević of the Centre for Cultural Decontamination.

"Suzavab na Srebrenicu (Tear-gas against Srebrenica)," *Danas*, July 11, 2005, 1.

Source 5: Personal report by members of Women in Black–Denmark, who took part in the vigil commemorating the Srebrenica massacre, 2005

Belgrade: SREBRENICA 1995–2005 "Never Again" in seven different languages. We just came back from the great vigil for the 10th anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica organized by Women in Black. About 200 activists were standing in silence from across Serbia, Italy, Germany, USA, as well as supporters from various other countries. We formed a semi-circle on the main square in Belgrade with messages "Let us not forget", "Ten years since the genocide in Srebrenica", "Women in Black for Peace and Human Rights" and made a peace sign on the ground with candles, and - "Never Again" in seven different languages. After around 20 minutes, about 25 nationalist neo-Nazi counter-protesters began shouting "Knife, Wire, Srebrenica", "Serbia for Serbs", with gestures 'Hail Hitler', insulting us. At one moment someone threw a tear gas bomb into the center of our circle, which exploded and the gas blew towards one side of the circle of demonstrators. While the activists on the other side continued standing, those toward which smoke blew were forced to move back and ran towards the theater, followed by the counter-protestors. Within 10 minutes, special police forces arrived in order to protect us. As our activists who had to run came back and reformed the semi-circle, the whole time counter-protestors continued to provoke. The vigil ended by laying down the white roses on the square's monument by the side of the banner "Let us not forget—Srebrenica—1995–2005—Women in Black". As we prepared to leave, the counter-protestors were shouting, "There will be a reprise", "No one can save you", and "We know where you live". One group of the activists were accompanied by police back to the Women in Black office, guarded by the police all night.

In Solidarity, Tamara Belenzada and Dana Johnson, Women in Black

Tamara Belenzada and Dana Johnson, "Belgrade: Srebrenica 1995–2005—'Never Again' in seven different languages," *Kvinder i Sort Danmark* (July 11, 2005), http://www.kvinderisort.dk/belgrade.html.

Source 6: Description of the 2005 rally from the Web site of "Blood and Honor Serbia," a militant Serbian nationalist organization

The 10th anniversary of the alleged massacre in Srebrenica has been marked by the lesbo-pacifist organization "Zene u Crnom" (or, "Women in Black" in Serbian) that organized a demonstration at Belgrade's Square of the Republic. This shameful spectacle honored the Muslim "victims" who died during battles for the liberation of that Serbian city. In addition to its exaggeration of the number of Muslim victims, the mentioned pro-Zionist organization directly participates in this organized anti-Serb campaign. Around 50 Serbian patriots gathered to protest this shameful demonstration. Aside from yelling patriotic slogans and general disagreement, Combat 18 [a paramilitary group] "greeted" this gathering by throwing tear gas at degenerates. Although the demonstration was stopped, the members of the ZOG [Zionist Occupied Government] police who had a significant presence made sure that the demonstration would last until its end, and arrested several patriots for no reason.

"News," Blood and Honour Serbia, http://web.archive.org/web/20071124170606/www.bhserbia.org/news.htm.

Source 7: Mahatma Gandhi, famed Indian civil rights leader, on non-violent protest, 1936

Non-violent resistance implies the very opposite of weakness. Defiance combined with non-retaliatory acceptance of repression from one's opponents is active, not passive. It requires strength, and there is nothing automatic or intuitive about the resoluteness required for using non-violent methods in political struggle and the quest for Truth.

<u>Comprehension Exercises:</u>

5. How do the reports of the Srebrenica commemoration (Sources 4, 5, 6) differ? Which report do you think is the most accurate? Most neutral? Or do you think that each report reflects an aspect of the rally? Explain your answer citing the documents.
6. Review the photos in Source 1. How do statements from Source 6 compare and/or contrast with these images? Explain your answer citing the sources.
7. To what extent do the different groups at the Srebrenica commemoration reflect Gandhi's approach to protest? According to Gandhi, which group has the harder task: the Women in Black or Blood and Honor Serbia? Explain your answer citing the documents.

Source 8: Description of the relationship between Serbian members of Women in Black and Bosnian widows, 2008

Belgrade, Serbia: More than 30 people from the Women in Black Network from Serbia traveled to Srebrenica last week to mark the 13th anniversary of the brutal 1995 massacre committed by their countrymen.

Holding signs which said "Solidarity" and "Never Forget Srebrenica," Women in Black joined the Women of Srebrenica Civic Association of Tuzla and more than 40,000 others to mourn the 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys killed and to rebury 307 recently-identified victims.

Janet Rabin, an Advocacy Project Peace Fellow volunteering with Women in Black this summer, traveled with the group to Potočari, Bosnia, for the ceremony and was struck by the warm relationship between the Serbian and Bosnian women. These friendships, and Women in Black's efforts, are building blocks of trust and bold first steps toward reconciliation in a region deeply scarred by ethnic conflict.

"These two groups have been working together, and mourning together, for years," Ms Rabin said. "In the midst of so much tragedy I could not comprehend, the small gestures of kindness and friendship between these women was a glimpse of something familiar, and more importantly, something hopeful."

"Serbian Women Condemn War Crimes Committee 'In Their Name'," *The Advocacy Project* (July 17, 2008), http://www.advocacynet.org/blogs/index.php/2008/07/17/serbian-women-condemn-war-crimes-committ?blog=145.

Source 9: Description of "A Feminist Approach" to confronting the past by Janet Rabin, Advocacy Project Peace Fellow working with Women in Black–Belgrade in 2008.

One of Women in Black's main philosophies and practices is "Confronting the Past—A Feminist Approach." I got another first-hand lesson about what this means a few weeks ago. A day after the world learned that Radovan Karadžić had been apprehended, I got on a bus with the Women in Black to go to Prijedor, a region in the northwestern part of Bosnia, in Republika Srpska. We were going to a memorial service for the victims of an "unrecognized genocide."

While we were there, we stayed with a Bosnian Women's association. They had first come together as a mutual assistance organization when they were living as refugees in Croatia. When the women returned home, they continued their service to the community. After the memorial service, when we returned soaking wet, our hosts gave us warm, dry sweaters and stockings to change into. As we drank some of the most delicious Turkish-style coffee I've ever had, the women talked. As usual, I understood only a tiny percentage of what was being said; but I could tell that the Bosnian women were talking, and the Serbian women were listening. As our hosts' eyes filled with tears, I knew that they were talking about their lost friends and relatives, whose pictures adorned the walls of the dining room across the hall. I was witnessing the feminist approach to confronting the past in action.

To me this is the most important aspect of Women in Black's activism. They condemn all war crimes committed by everyone. And they do it not only through political actions and publications, but also on a personal, relational level. It is no longer a division between nations or ethnicities, but a division between people who desire peace, and those who have sought to destroy it. A division between civilians, women, children, elderly people—and those who persecuted them. I see this as a much more reasonable way of categorizing people. This is not the sort of relativization that leads to saying "Well, all sides committed atrocities, so what can be done about it?" And it is equally not the sort of logic of victimization that ascribes all the guilt to the others. A civilian is a civilian, not a Serb, Croat, or Bosniak. People are made innocent or guilty by their actions, not their ethnicity. Embodying this and living it on a personal level, as the Women in Black and their partners in the Balkans do, is one of the hardest and also one of the most critical steps toward reconciliation and peace.

Janet Rabin, "Confronting the Past Part II: Prijedor," *The Advocacy Project* (August 5, 2008), http://www.advocacynet.org/blogs/index.php/2008/08/05/confronting_the_past_part_ii_prijedor_an?blog=118.

Source 10: Photograph from a visit by Women in Black–Belgrade to Srebrenica on the anniversary of the massacre, and statement by the photographer, 2006

Bosnian and Serbian Friendship
After all that Massacre in Srebrenica, the Mothers of Srebrenica have no hate for Serbian Women, they are still FRIENDS and they support each other in this Tragedy! Biliana

Biliana Rakocevic, "Still Friends!," 2005, http://photo.net/photodb/photo?photo_id=4680657.

Source 11: American Civil Rights activist Martin Luther King, Jr. on non-violent protest, 1964

Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals.

Comprehension Exercises:

8. What do you think Martin Luther King, Jr. is trying to say about non-violent protest? How is it both a weapon and also a source of healing? How does his statement relate to Source 10?
9. How are the actions of members of Women in Black affecting the relationship between Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia? Explain your answer citing the documents.
10. Discuss the statement "People are made innocent or guilty by their actions, not their ethnicity" in Source 9. Use the documents from this case study to support your response.

Additional Resources

Women in Black, http://www.womeninblack.org/.

A Force More Powerful, http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org/.

The International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/.

Srebrenica: A Cry from the Grave, http://www.pbs.org/wnet/cryfromthegrave/.

Blog of AP Peace Fellow Janet Rabin during her time with Women in Black–Belgrade, http://www.advocacynet.org/blogs/index.php/2008/07/17/serbian-women-condemn-war-crimes-committ?blog=145.

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The International Outreach Consortium at the University of Texas at Austin

Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies
Natalie Arsenault, Outreach Director
(512) 232–2404
(512) 471–3090 FAX
The University of Texas at Austin
SRH 1.310
1 University Station D0800
Austin, TX 78712
E-mail: n.arsenault@mail.utexas.edu

Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies
Allegra Azulay, Outreach Coordinator
(512) 471–7782
(512) 471–3368 FAX
The University of Texas at Austin
GRG 106
1 University Station A1600
Austin, TX 78712
E-mail: aazulay@mail.utexas.edu

Center for Middle Eastern Studies
Christopher Rose, Assistant Director
(512) 471–3582
(512) 471–7834 FAX
The University of Texas at Austin
WMB 6.102
1 University Station F9400
Austin, TX 78712
E-mail: csrose@austin.utexas.edu

South Asia Institute
Rachel Meyer, Outreach Coordinator
(512) 475–6038
(512) 471–3336 FAX
The University of Texas at Austin
WCH 4.134
1 University Station G9300
Austin, TX 78712
E-mail: outreach@uts.cc.utexas.edu

http://www.utexas.edu/cola/orgs/hemispheres/
hemispheres@austin.utexas.edu