

War and witchcraft

Religion



The War of Religion also known as the Huguenots War lasted for about forty years (1562-1592). This war was mainly between the Huguenots and the Catholics of France. Within France a Feudal Rebellion took place between the church, nobles, courts, guilds, towns and provinces; all of which rebelled against the King. A traditional saying " Une foi, un loi, un roi (one faith, one law, one King)" (Newman, 2004) indicates how society, state and religion are all bound within the people's minds. Although religion was the main reason behind the wars, it also was definitely not the only reason. Social and Cultural Issues

Religion affects society in many areas and in such a profound way. It also shapes the moral standards of those individuals in which influences policy makers decisions (Gale Group, 2007). For some societies, sharing a religion makes for a powerful bond socially. However, when these people with different religions try to live with others of different faiths, this can lead to conflict as well war (Gale Group, 2007). The social consensus in Europe for over a millennium was formed through religion. The essential view to order was one faith or how else would have society been held together (Newman, 2004).

Because without the right faith, pleasing God and upholding natural order, disaster was to follow. As well, innovation was also trouble; leaving things the way they were is how they should be and any new ideas could lead to anarchy and ruin (Newman, 2004). So, during this period no one would dare admit that they were an innovator (Newman, 2004). In addition, the Renaissance was thought as rediscovering a much purer period in their

history and Reformation was made not to feel new but a return to the true religion of Christianity (Newman, 2004). Women in the West

For many centuries women were classified as unequal to that of man and considered property. They could hold their own power in a private sphere because a public sphere was for the men only, which had to do with politics, law and markets (Cooper, 2007). Women's private spheres consisted of mother's, family, wives and their households (Cooper, 2007). However, if a woman became a widow she becomes the sole responsibility to her own lands and was granted extensive legal rights and could be received in the public sphere with the exception of sanctioned authority (Cooper, 2007).

The Renaissance, the Reformation, the Age of Discovery and the Age of Information brought about many changes for women. Women became teachers, writers, artist and knights. However, women in small numbers started as early as the Medieval period. But, during the fifteenth century to the eighteenth century, saw an increase in the number of women in the arts. These women often struggled for public support and were not always accepted by the trade. Men placed restrictions on the type of art they could do, including not being able to use a live nude model.

The women who choose to write, became influential when their works were allowed to be published; they wrote books on love, romance and war as well politics. As well, women began to see their own power and beauty as something to be shared and appreciated. The women writers of early periods wrote about poetry and the beauty of women as opposed to the period of the War of Religion in which women began writing their political views and their

rights as women and as equals to men. For example, Moderata Fonte (1515-1582) also known as Modesta Pozza wrote a book named *The Worth of Women* (Sunshine For Women, 2001).

Political Issues The Wars of Religion in France were between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, mostly Huguenots who fought for control of their rights as Protestants and political influences. The majority of Catholic France instigated the war against the Protestants however, the most well known was the Bartholomew's Day Massacre on August 24, 1572. On this day Paris Catholics raised arms against visiting and local Calvinist, which resulted in the death of more than 3, 000 Calvinist.

Because the war expanded for forty years, in between that time there was also a period of peace (Butler, 2007). However, history identifies seven wars during this period with short periods of peace in between them, which has caused confusion in French history (Butler, 2007). In addition, it is well known that religion was the biggest reason for the wars however other factors such as; the noble factions fighting amongst themselves, old feudal provinces lead revolts, which added and exposed the French State's weaknesses (Butler, 2007).

As well, foreign intervention by Spain and England added to the turmoil and violence. Finally, France was lead by a very weak monarch in which allowed these forces to tear apart the country (Butler, 2007). **Number One Social Problem of the 17th Century** The seventeenth century saw many political, social and cultural changes. With the decline of wars, plagues and economic depression; it also brought about the hunt for witches. Witchcraft

trials were considered a common place between 1580 and 1650 that lead to almost 100, 000 trials.

Additionally, this lead to widespread panic of mass hysteria. The majority of witches tortured and executed by burning at the stake were women and in Calvinist areas (Big Site of History, 2010). Historians are not agreed on why an outbreak of witch persecutions would occur in one place rather than another—in Scotland and New England, in Switzerland and France—except to say that where popular magic was commonplace, so was the fear of witches. Trials also usually followed a period of fear about the future and concern over apparent changes in ordered and stable conditions.

Nor were the educated spared—indeed, they were often in the lead when a community sought out a witch. (Big Site of History, 2010) Conclusion

Although religion was a major factor behind the wars, it was not the only reason because of noble factions fighting amongst themselves, old feudal provinces lead revolts to weaken the French and foreign intervention by Spain and England added to the mix of turmoil and destruction and a weak French monarch allowed all these factors to tear apart the country.

Europe for over a millennium had one view; one faith and without it disaster is sure to follow. Women's influence on the west was substantial, in fact they became more aware of their influence in the private and public sphere and lastly, society was plagued not by disease but by witchcraft during the seventeenth century and even though magic was commonplace, witches brought fear and widespread mass hysteria. Although the reasons for the

outbreak are unknown, more than 100, 000 trials and executions were performed on a vast majority of women and in Calvinist areas.