

## PATTERNS OF THOUGHT

The Industrial Revolution created problems wherever it spread. In Great Britain and other countries of Western Europe, the growth of manufacturing led to the establishment of a working class that was overworked and underpaid. Often women and children had to work from sunrise until sunset to help support their families. Some children were as young as six years old. Workers lived crowded together in cities that lacked sufficient housing, adequate water and sanitation systems, and police and fire protection.

Different people had different ideas on how to solve the many problems brought about by the Industrial Revolution. These people and their ideas are summarized below:

### Liberals

- They opposed the notion that governments should regulate business practices. They believed in "laissez-faire," a hands-off policy by the government toward business.
- Liberal opinion was based on economist Adam Smith's views in "The Wealth of Nations." Smith said that a businessman could make a maximum profit when operating his business as he saw fit, and that this would lead to increased production and a greater amount of goods available to consumers. Noninterference, therefore, was good for both businessmen and the community.
- According to the liberals, there were bound to be poor people in society even if governments enacted reforms. Thus, there was no point, said the liberals, in government regulation of business because more harm than good would result.
- Liberal-minded factory owners also agreed with opinions expressed by T.R. Malthus in his "Essay on the Principle of Population." Malthus insisted that the working man should blame himself -- not the factory owner -- for his poor living conditions. Working class families made the mistake of having more children than they could support, and as a result were responsible for their own poverty. Overpopulation, reasoned Malthus, was also the cause of unemployment. Large families meant that there were more job seekers than there were jobs.

### Democratic Liberals

- Some liberals turned against a laissez-faire policy and urged government reforms to help long suffering workers.
- Democratic liberals favored higher wages, a reduction in working hours, safer conditions in factories, the formation of labor unions, and the granting of voting rights to workers.

### Utopian Socialists

- A Frenchman named Charles Fourier wanted to create a "Utopia," or perfect society. He hoped to organize a series of small communities, called "phalanxes," where no one would be rich and no one poor. He wanted to eliminate the pressures and problems of an industrial society. People would do a variety of work to reduce boredom. The most undesirable jobs would be given to children since they were less likely to complain. Tasty meals would be served, fine clothes worn, and entertainment provided. Fourier believed that emphasis should be put on the enjoyment of life.
- Another Utopian socialist was Robert Owen. He believed that people brought up amidst goodness and decency would turn out to be people of fine character. Owen purchased a mill near Glasgow, Scotland, where he employed workers under the best of conditions. In the mill town, he improved housing, established low-priced stores, and founded schools. In later years, Owen went to the United States and attempted to start a model community at New Harmony, Indiana. Both the community in Scotland and the one in America eventually failed.

## Marxists

- Karl Marx was the leading socialist thinker of his time. He and Friedrich Engels wrote the "Communist Manifesto," which today forms the basis of communist thought.
- Marx saw history as a struggle between "capitalists" (owners of businesses and industries) and the "proletariat" (wage earners). Marx said that capitalists had always controlled the government and used it to their advantage. The working class, with no political power, had a miserable existence.
- Eventually, warned Marx, the proletariat would rise up and overthrow the capitalists in a violent communist revolution. Socialism would become the new form of government. Factories, mines, railroads, and banks would be owned by the government. In this way, said Marx, wealth and other benefits of industrialization could be more evenly divided among all people. Unemployment, poverty, hunger, and slave-like working conditions would be eliminated.

(1) Match the people and terms in column 1 with the descriptions in column 2.

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| 1. _____ Charles Fourier | a. urged communist revolutions                                   |
| 2. _____ proletariat     | b. wage earners  |
| 3. _____ Robert Owen     | c. criticized by Karl Marx                                       |
| 4. _____ capitalists     | d. democratic-liberals favored organizing them                   |
| 5. _____ laissez-faire   | e. said overpopulation was the cause of workers' problems        |
| 6. _____ Adam Smith      | f. government ownership of business and industry                 |
| 7. _____ socialism       | g. his New Harmony community failed                              |
| 8. _____ Karl Marx       | h. expressed liberal economic opinion in "The Wealth of Nations" |
| 9. _____ T.R. Malthus    | i. a government policy of non-interference in business           |
| 10. _____ labor unions   | j. wanted to establish a series of phalanxes                     |

(2) Do the following opinions belong to liberals, democratic liberals, Utopian socialists, or Marxists?

- (a) \_\_\_\_\_ "Throughout history, capitalists have taken advantage of the proletariat."
- (b) \_\_\_\_\_ "Small communities properly organized can offer citizens ideal working and living conditions."
- (c) \_\_\_\_\_ "When the government does not interfere with business, the result is increased profits for businessmen, the hiring of more workers, and the production of more goods for consumers."
- (d) \_\_\_\_\_ "Government must accept the fact that there are bound to be rich people and poor people in society, and that nothing can be done about it without causing more harm than good."
- (e) \_\_\_\_\_ "Workers can achieve their goals only through violent revolution in which the wealthy are ousted from power."
- (f) \_\_\_\_\_ "Poverty and unemployment are the results of overpopulation brought on by factory workers themselves."
- (g) \_\_\_\_\_ "Capitalism should be maintained, but reforms must be made to help workers."