



EARLY SOCIALISM AND THE WORKING CLASS

INDUSTRIALISM

- While Industrialism gave some a higher standard of living, but struggling workers turned to trade unions or socialism to improve their lives.
- During the Industrial Revolution the working class faced wretched working conditions.
- Work hours ranged from 12 to 16 hours a day, 6 days a week.

COAL MINE

- Coal mines were harsh and dangerous, with explosions, cave-ins, and gas fumes (“bad air”) just being a part of the job.
- Cramped conditions and constant dampness led to workers’ deformed bodies and ruined lungs.



- Betty Wardle, interviewed by the parliamentary commission on women in mines in 1842, illustrates the incredible challenges of being a mother and a worker in coal mines:
- Q: Have you ever worked in a coal pit?
Wardle: Ay, I have worked in a pit since I was six years old
Q: Have you any children?
Wardle: Yes. I have had four children; two of them were born while I worked in the pits.
Q: Did you work in the pits while you were in the family way [pregnant]?
Wardle: Ay, to be sure. I had a child born in the pits, and I brought it up the pitshaft in my skirt. (Frader 88)

QUESTION TO CONSIDER

- What role, if any, do you think the government should take to improve the lives of working-class families?
- Consider this question from the perspective of families during the revolution and then consider it from today's perspective.

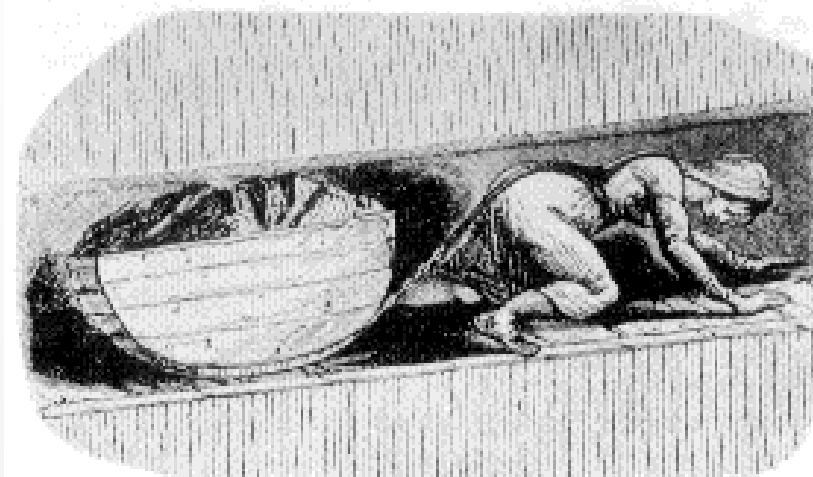
THE INCREASE IN COAL PRODUCTION

Year	Million of tonnes
1700	2.7
1750	4.7
1800	10
1850	50
1900	250

THE MINER'S REPORT

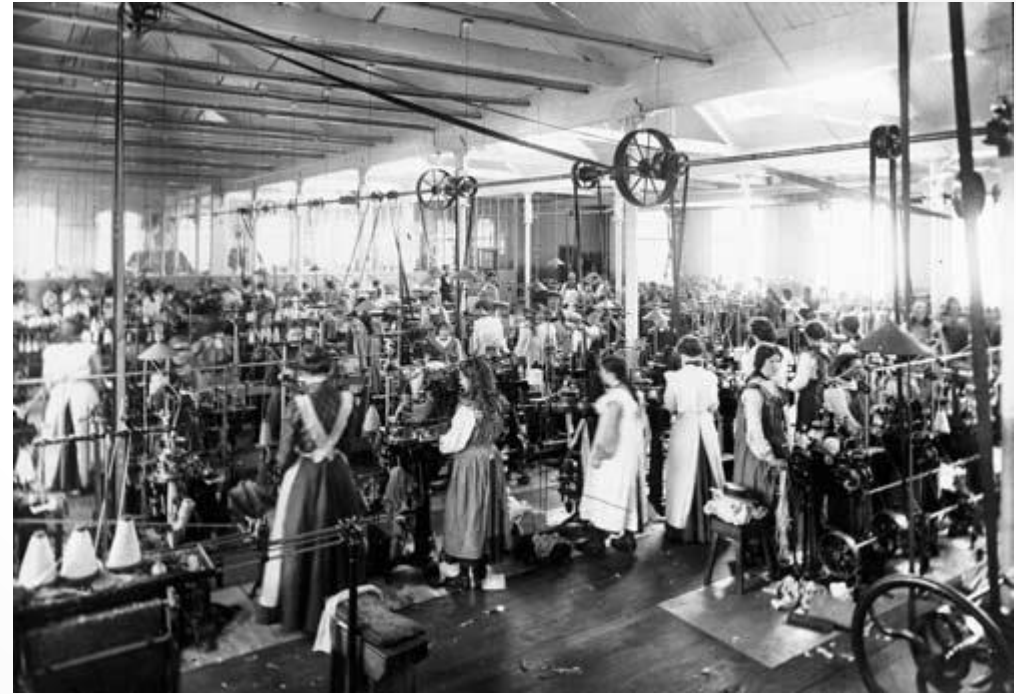
In 1842, Parliament published a report about the state of coal mining – the [Mines Report](#) – and its contents shocked the nation.

- Under 5 worked 12 hours a day
- Older girls carried coal far too heavy from their frames



COTTON FACTORIES

- As bad as mines sounded the cotton factories were even worse.
- One report noted, “in the cotton-spinning work, these creatures are kept, 14 hours each day, locked up, summer and winter, in a heat of 80 to 84 degrees.
- Michael [Sadler](#) headed a report that eventually led Parliament to pass the Factory Act of 1833 protecting children working in these factories.





EARLY SOCIALISM

- Transitioning to factory work was not easy for the citizens of newly industrialized nations.
- Family life was disrupted from the “cottage industry” life as they were separated from the country, hours were long and their pay was low.



SOCIALISM

- Many reformers opposed such a socially destructive capitalistic system and advocated socialism.
- In this economic system, society-usually in the form of government-owns and controls some means of production such as factories and utilities.
- Public ownership of businesses and means of production, it was believed, would allow wealth to be distributed equally to everyone.

AGREE OR DISAGREE — EXPLAIN WHY

1. Property and the means of production (factories) should be owned by businesses and individuals.
2. When individuals follow their own self interest, progress will result.
3. The government must act to protect workers since employers often take advantage of them.
4. The government should own property and the means of production.

AGREE OR DISAGREE

5. The government should not interfere in the economy because the rules of the market-place (the world of business) benefit everyone.

6. Goods should be distributed according to each person's needs.

7. Competition among businesses is good.

8. Progress results when producers of goods cooperate for the benefit of all.

READING ACTIVITY

- Use the following handout to learn about socialism and capitalism.
- Answer the attached questions and be ready to share with the class.

UTOPIA

- Early socialist wrote books about the ideal society that might be created.
- In these **hypothetical** societies, workers could use their abilities and everyone's needs would be met.



New Harmony, Indiana

ROBERT OWEN

- Robert Owen was a British cotton manufacturer who believed that humans would show their natural “goodness” if they lived in a cooperative environment.
- Owen transformed the squalid town factory town of New Lanark (Scotland) into a flourishing community.



NEW LANARK, SCOTLAND

