



THE WORKING CLASS

Reform, Marx and Unions

ACROSS EUROPE — THE SECOND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

- Transition was a challenge for the workers of the Industrial Revolution in countries across Europe.
- While England is the “birthplace” of the revolutions both Belgium and France experienced these changes as well.
- This Second Industrial Revolution was when steel, chemicals, electricity, and petroleum were the keys to making economies even more productive.



GERMANY – A GROWING SUPERPOWER

- Germany was another country that, for example, despite vast resources of coal and iron, did not begin its industrial expansion until after national unity was achieved in 1870.
- Once begun, Germany's industrial production grew so rapidly that by the turn of the century that nation was out producing Britain in steel and had become the world leader in the chemical industries.



REFORMERS

- Many citizens of these countries believed that capitalism was heartless and brutal and demanded a new kind of society.
- Some moderate reformers looked to work within the system for gradual changes. Trade unions were often the method used to achieve these practical goals.
- Other reformers wanted drastic changes. They looked to abolish capitalism and create a socialist system by supporting socialist parties.

IMAGE ANALYSIS

- What is the central message of the poster? How does this poster create this message?
- Terms to know:
- **Proletariat**: workers or working-class people, regarded collectively.
- **Bourgeoisie**: the middle class, the oppressors.

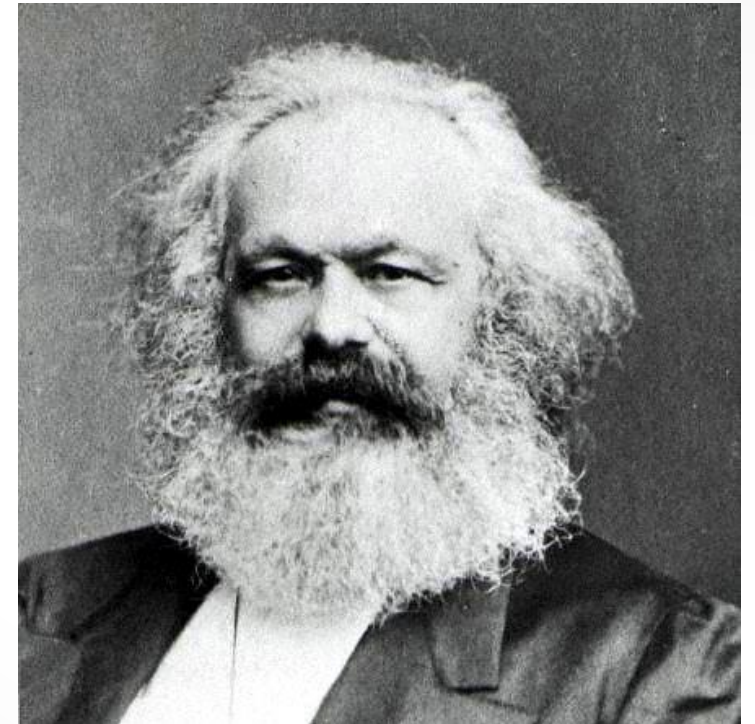


EXCERPT FROM THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

- "... We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class..."
- "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degree, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible..."
- "The proletariat have nothing to lose but their chains. They have the world to win."

KARL MARX (1818-1883)

- **Karl Marx** was a German philosopher, economist, political theorist, sociologist, journalist and revolutionary socialist.
- He also had an incredible beard.
- He believed that all of world history was a “history of class struggles” and that there were always the oppressors and the oppressed.



- Mark believed he saw society as being split between two distinct classes who struggled against each other: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.
- He predicted that the struggle between these groups would finally lead to an open revolution. He predicted the proletariat would violently overthrow the bourgeoisie and form a dictatorship.
- This victory would lead to a classless society where the state itself would wither away.



SOCIALIST PARTIES

- In time, working-class leaders formed socialist parties based on Marx's ideas.
- Most important was the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), which emerged in 1875. The party were fairly successful as they worked inside German parliament to improve conditions of the working class.
- Despite its popularity and success the SPD were unable to make wide sweeping changes due to German constitutional "red tape".

PURE VS REVISIONISTS

- While socialist parties emerged all across Europe many of these Marxists were divided on their goals.
- **Pure Marxists** believed that goals could only be reached by a violent revolution.
- **Revisionist Marxists** rejected violence and insisted that working within the system to achieve reforms was the only path to success.

QUESTION

- What do some workers do now when they are displeased with their employers?



TRADE UNIONS

- Another force working for the evolutionary socialism movement was the trade, or labour, unions.
- Workers organized themselves into a union which worked to be recognized by its employers and looked to improve working conditions.
- The right to **strike** was a part of the union movement and looked to put pressure on the employers to meet demands by stopping work.

UNIONS

In the 1870s unions in Great Britain won the right to strike and by 1914 Britain had nearly 4 million workers in British Trade Unions.

Other countries across Europe had varying degrees of success in helping workers achieve a better life through the labour union movement.

FORCES OF CHANGE

- Use pages 626 – 629 and pg 634 to learn about liberalism, nationalism, and the Revolutions of 1848, which set the stage for National Unification and a growing divide between European powers.

Question:

- Why didn't Great Britain experience a similar revolution that other European countries were experiencing?