

## Topic 5.8 — Reactions to the Industrial Economy from 1750 to 1900

### Standards Alignment

AP Theme	Learning Objective	Key Concept
Social Interactions and Organization (SIO) The process by which societies group their members and the norms that govern the interactions between these groups and between individuals influence political, economic, and cultural institutions and organization.	<b>Unit 5: Learning Objective I</b> – Explain the causes and effects of calls for changes in industrial societies from 1750 to 1900.	<b>KC-5.1.V.D</b> In response to the social and economic changes brought about by industrial capitalism, some governments, organizations, and individuals promoted various types of political, social, educational, and urban reforms.
		<b>KC-5.1.V.A</b> In industrialized states, many workers organized themselves, often in labor unions, to improve working conditions, limit hours, and gain higher wages. Workers’ movements and political parties emerged in different areas, promoting alternative visions of society.
		<b>KC-5.3.IV.A.ii</b> Discontent with established power structures encouraged the development of various ideologies, including those espoused by Karl Marx, and the ideas of socialism and communism.
		<b>KC-5.1.V.B</b> In response to the expansion of industrializing states, some governments in Asia and Africa, including the Ottoman Empire and Qing China, sought to reform and modernize their economies and militaries. Reform efforts were often resisted by some members of government or established elite groups.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- Explain why workers and reformers demanded changes in industrial societies.
- Describe how labor unions and political movements responded to industrial conditions.
- Identify how new ideologies such as socialism and communism challenged capitalism.
- Analyze how governments attempted reforms to respond to industrial and imperial pressures.

## Lesson Overview

The Industrial Revolution transformed economies and societies, but it also created serious social challenges. Factory workers often faced long hours, low wages, and unsafe working conditions. Rapid urbanization led to overcrowded cities and poor living environments.

In response to these problems, workers began organizing labor unions and political movements to demand better conditions. Reformers also pushed governments to introduce laws regulating working hours, education, and urban living conditions.

At the same time, new political ideologies developed that criticized industrial capitalism. Thinkers such as **Karl Marx** argued that capitalist societies created inequality between workers and factory owners. These ideas inspired movements advocating socialism and communism. Governments outside Europe also introduced reforms to modernize their states and resist Western influence.

## Essential Vocabulary

- **Labor Union**  
An organization of workers formed to protect their rights and improve working conditions.
- **Socialism**  
An economic system where major industries are controlled by society or the government.
- **Communism**  
A political ideology that calls for a classless society where property is shared collectively.
- **Industrial Reform**  
Government or social efforts to improve conditions in industrial societies.
- **Modernization Reform**  
Changes introduced by governments to strengthen economies, industries, or militaries.

## Background Reading

Industrialization produced dramatic economic growth, but it also created difficult working and living conditions. Many factory workers worked twelve or more hours per day in dangerous environments. Cities grew rapidly, and overcrowded housing and poor sanitation led to serious health problems.

Workers responded by organizing labor unions and political movements. These groups demanded shorter workdays, higher wages, and safer working conditions. In some countries, labor unions also supported political parties that represented working-class interests.

Industrial capitalism also sparked new ideological debates. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels argued that capitalist systems created conflict between wealthy industrialists and workers. They proposed socialism and communism as alternatives. At the same time, governments introduced reforms such as labor laws, public education, and urban planning to address social problems created by industrialization.

Outside Europe, leaders in places such as the **Ottoman Empire and Qing China** attempted reforms to strengthen their states in response to Western industrial power. These efforts often faced resistance from conservative elites who opposed rapid change.

### Primary Sources

#### Primary Source 1

##### **Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels — *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)**

Source: Fordham University Internet History Sourcebook

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1848communistmanifesto.asp>

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. In modern society the struggle exists between the bourgeoisie, who control the means of production, and the proletariat, who sell their labor in order to survive.

The rapid expansion of industry has created enormous wealth, yet this wealth is concentrated in the hands of a small number of industrial capitalists. Workers, meanwhile, experience exploitation as their labor generates profits that they do not share equally.

The working class must therefore unite to challenge the power of industrial capitalists and create a society where economic resources are shared more fairly among all members of society.

#### Source Analysis Questions

1. Identify ONE social group mentioned in the passage.
2. Explain ONE criticism Marx makes about industrial capitalism.
3. Explain ONE historical development that contributed to Marx's ideas.

#### Primary Source 2

##### **Factory Act (United Kingdom, 1833)**

Source: UK Parliament Historical Records

<https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/19thcentury/overview/factoryact/>

No child under nine years of age shall be employed in factories. Children between nine and thirteen years shall not work more than eight hours in any one day.

Employers must ensure that children employed in factories receive education for part of the day. Factory inspectors shall be appointed to ensure that these regulations are followed.

These laws are intended to improve conditions in factories and protect workers from excessive labor demands during the period of industrial expansion.

#### Source Analysis Questions

1. Identify ONE reform described in the passage.
2. Explain ONE reason governments passed factory laws.
3. Describe ONE effect of such reforms on industrial societies.

## Reactions to Industrialization

Type of Reaction	Example	Goal
Labor Movements	Labor unions and worker protests	Improve wages and working conditions
Political Ideologies	Socialism and communism	Challenge capitalist inequality
Government Reforms	Factory laws and education reforms	Improve living and working conditions
State Modernization	Ottoman and Qing reforms	Strengthen states against industrial powers

## Change, Continuity, and Comparison

### Change

- Workers organized labor unions and political movements.
- Governments introduced social reforms and labor laws.
- New ideologies challenged industrial capitalism.

### Continuity

- Social inequality persisted despite reforms.
- Industrial economies continued to expand.

### Comparison

Reform movements in industrialized countries often focused on labor rights, while modernization reforms in Asia and the Middle East focused on strengthening states against foreign influence.

## Key Takeaways

- Industrialization created difficult working and living conditions for many workers.
- Labor unions and political movements demanded reforms.
- Socialism and communism emerged as alternatives to capitalism.
- Governments introduced laws to regulate factories and improve living conditions.
- Some states outside Europe attempted modernization reforms in response to industrial powers.

## Practice Activity

Answer each question in **2–3 sentences**.

- Identify ONE cause of reform movements in industrial societies.
- Explain ONE way workers attempted to improve their conditions.
- Explain ONE ideological response to industrial capitalism.

## Primary Source Citations

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)

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