**THE GROWING AND CHANGING INDUSTRIAL WORLD**

**Directions:** Almost from the beginning, reform movements rose in response to the negative impact of industrialization. These reforms included improving the workplace and extending the right to vote to working-class men. The same impulse toward reform, along with the ideals of the French Revolution, also helped to end slavery and promote new rights for women and children. Examine the texts, images, and other documents below and answer the accompanying questions.

**INTERVIEW WITH ELIZABETH BENTLEY**

In 1815 the British Parliament sent out researchers to interview child workers and learn more about factory conditions. Here is an excerpt from an interview with a young woman who had worked in a textile mill.

Q: What were the hours of labour when you were not so thronged [busy]?
A: From six in the morning till seven at night.

Q: What time was allowed for meals?
A: Forty minutes at noon.

Q: Had you any time to get your breakfast or drinking?
A: No, we had to get it as we could.

Q: Do you consider doffing a laborious employment?
A: Yes.

Q: Explain what you had to do.
A: When the frames are full, they have to stop the frames, and take the flyers off, and take the full bobbins off, and carry them to the roller, and then put empty ones on, and set the frame going again.

Q: Does that keep you constantly on your feet?
A: Yes, there are so many frames and they run so quick.

Q: Your labour is very excessive?
A: Yes, you have not time for anything.

Q: Suppose you flagged [slowed down] a little, or were late, what would they do?

Q: And they are in the habit of strapping those who are last in doffing?
A: Yes.

Q: Constantly?
A: Yes.

**SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 1832**

John Charles Spencer was a member of the British Parliament’s House of Commons. Although he supported some reforms for child workers, he was against a proposed law to limit their work day to 10 hours. Here he addresses Michael Sadler, a fellow member who proposed the law, in a speech.

“I am of the opinion that the effect . . . must necessarily be a fall in the rate of wages, or, what is more probable, that children would cease to be employed at all in manufactories. Now I appeal to the honourable member whether a measure which would prevent children from obtaining any employment in factories would not be more injurious than beneficial to the labouring classes? As long as we have a manufacturing population in the kingdom it will be impossible to render their occupation as wholesome as that of agricultural labourers, or persons engaged in out-door labour. this is an evil that cannot be remedied. It is too late now to argue about
the unwholesome nature of manufacturing employment. We have got a manufacturing population, and it must be employed. any measure which shall have the effect of diminishing the means of employment to labourers engaged in manufactures will produce extensive misery.”

**SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 1836**
The excerpt below is from a submission from the Manchester’s Factory Children Committee to the House of Commons in 1836

“We respect our masters, and are willing to work for our support, and that of our parents, but we want time for more rest, a little play, and to learn to read and write. We do not think it right that we should know nothing but work and suffering, from Monday morning to Saturday night, to make others rich. Do, good gentlemen, inquire carefully into our concern.”

**QUESTIONS**
1. According to the interview, what were working conditions like for child laborers in textile mills?
2. What evidence is there that the British Parliament had some concern over the plight of child laborers?
3. How does MP John Charles Spencer defend child labor practices? What arguments does he make?
4. According to the last document, what do the children want? Are they asking Parliament to ban child labor?

**THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY**
William Wilberforce, a highly religious man, was a member of Parliament who led the fight for abolition—the end of the slave trade and slavery in the British Empire. Parliament passed a bill to end the slave trade in the British West Indies in 1807. After he retired from Parliament in 1825, Wilberforce continued his fight to free the slaves. Britain finally abolished slavery in its empire in 1833.

British antislavery activists had mixed motives. Some, such as the abolitionist Wilberforce, were morally against slavery. Others viewed slave
labor as an economic threat. Furthermore, a new class of industrialists developed who supported cheap labor rather than slave labor. They soon gained power in Parliament.

In the United States the movement to fulfill the promise of the Declaration of Independence by ending slavery grew in the early 1800s. The enslavement of African people finally ended in the United States when the Union won the Civil War in 1865. Then, enslavement persisted in the Americas only in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Brazil. In Puerto Rico, slavery was ended in 1873. Spain finally abolished slavery in its Cuban colony in 1886. Not until 1888 did Brazil’s huge enslaved population win freedom. *(Source: Linda B. Black, Roger Beck, et al., World History: Patterns of Interaction, McDougal Littell)*

**QUESTIONS**

5. What do you think motivated the decision by Britain to end the slave trade, and later abolish slavery?

6. Did the Industrial Revolution make slavery unnecessary, or even economically counterproductive?

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**THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS**

The Industrial Revolution proved a mixed blessing for women. On the one hand, factory work offered higher wages than work done at home. Women spinners in Manchester, for example, earned much more money than women who stayed home to spin cotton thread. On the other hand, women factory workers usually made only one-third as much money as men did.

Women led reform movements to address this and other pressing social issues. During the mid-1800s, for example, women formed unions in the trades where they dominated. In Britain, some women served as safety inspectors in factories where other women worked. In the United States, college-educated women like Jane Addams ran settlement houses. These community centers served the poor residents of slum neighborhoods.

In both the United States and Britain, women who had rallied for the abolition of slavery began to wonder why their own rights should be denied on the basis of gender. The movement for women’s rights began in the United States as early as 1848. Women activists around the world joined to found the International Council for Women in 1888. Delegates and observers from 27 countries attended the council’s 1899 meeting. *(Source: Linda B. Black, Roger Beck, et al., World History: Patterns of Interaction, McDougal Littell)*

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**EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION ON WOMEN**

- Women Who Went from Cottage Industries to Factory Work
  - Earned low wages in low-skill jobs
  - Separated from their families
  - No real improvement in their status

- Other Working-Class Women
  - Found jobs as cooks, maids, and child-care workers because more families could afford to hire them
  - Found some new educational and cultural opportunities in cities
  - Overall improvement for many women

- Middle-Class Women
  - Freed from chores because many could afford to hire domestic help
  - Began to attend college and get jobs as teachers and nurses
  - Those who did work often criticized by people who said that they should not work outside the home
  - Most affected by idea of separate spheres
QUESTIONS

7. Did women benefit from the Industrial Revolution? Did some women benefit more than others? Explain.

8. How did the abolition movement influence the Women’s rights movement?

LUDDITES AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Cottage Workers’ Unrest One group of people faced a particular challenge caused by the factory system. These were the weavers and other cottage industry workers still trying to earn their living by making goods at home. Their handmade goods were more expensive than factory-made items, so they had a hard time selling them. Facing ruin, some of these workers turned to violence. One night in 1811, masked workers attacked a textile factory in Nottingham, England. The incident marked the beginning of the Luddite movement. The Luddites, named after a General Ned Ludd who probably did not exist, opposed machines that were “hurtful to the commonality”—in other words, that put them out of work. Luddites burned factories and smashed machines but tried to avoid injuring people. During 1812 the movement quickly spread to other cities. Several Luddites were caught and hanged, though, and the Luddite movement ended quickly.

Changing Labor Conditions The severe treatment of the Luddites illustrates that the British government did not want to get involved in factory problems. Government leaders did not see regulating business as their job. Many citizens thought that if the government helped poor people too much, they would lose their incentive to work harder. As a result, the government did not pass laws relating to work hours, safety, or child labor. Because the government took no action, in the early 1800s British workers started to organize. They formed the first labor unions, which are organizations representing workers’ interests. To urge employers to raise wages and improve conditions, unions in Britain organized strikes, or work stoppages. At first, Parliament banned unions and strikes, fearing social and economic trouble. Slowly, pressure from the public and unions brought change. Hearings in Parliament in 1832 produced the Sadler Report, which described abuses in the factories. Eventually Britain passed laws that limited work hours for adults and children. Another law required child workers to be at least nine years old. In 1871 Parliament legalized labor unions. American workers also organized. In the United States, the first nationwide labor unions developed in the mid-1800s.

(Source: Susan Ramirez, et al., World History: Human Legacy, Holt)

9. How did the actions of the Luddites impact the development of the Labor Movement?

10. What successes were achieved by the Labor Movement, and what made these successes possible?