

"social classes role in
bringing about
change during the
industrial revolution"
a...

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The industrial revolution, a period of transition and innovation, inevitably brought with it changes. Life for both rich and poor was changed. The Industrial Revolution brought about the birth of two classes: The middle class and the working class. In the article “ The Communist Manifesto” (1848) by Karl Marx, it states that “ Marx saw the oppression of the worker by those who owned means of production. “(1) Did the Industrial Revolution benefit both, or yet cause grievance in one and be beneficial to the other.

Where everyone truly aided by the great rise in standard of living? Those are the questions to be asked when contemplating if workers from all classes successfully united to bring about radical change. In my opinion the change that was brought about was far from equal. Yes, everyone was included in the expansion but the lower class lost more than what was gained. Instead of trying to abolish the wage-labor system, it sought to use strikes to gain higher wages, lower working hours, and better working conditions for people.

3) This could be portrayed as classes working to together but in the end no one is benefitting but the middle class. Even though things were a little better, it was still a lot worse. Men, women and children who previously worked in farms and fields were now operating complicated machinery for a single owner or company. Women and children of the working class soon were able to work also. They were taking the jobs of men and doing the labor.

Which gave to the men a choice to either take lower pay or join the many that was unemployed, this caused great problems also. Since workers, especially women and children, were laboring for up to eighteen hours each

day, there was very little family contact, and the only time that one was at home was spent sleeping. People also had to share housing with other families, which further contributed to the breakdown of the family unit. As a result, children received very little education, had stunted growth, and were sickly.

The living conditions were indeed horrible; working families often lived in slums with little sanitation “ There are two classes in society, one increasingly striving to obtain the labor of the other class for as little as possible, and to obtain the largest amount or number of hours of labor; and the members of the other class, being individuals utterly helpless in a content with their employers, naturally resort to combinations to improve their conditions, and, in fact, they are forced conditions which surrounded them to organize self protection. (3) This implies the fact that the working class is striving hard to survive and working hard, yet getting very little out of it. Again, not working together but instead still was benefitting the middle class. Bourgeoisie is a class where the people own means of production in a capitalist society. Proletariat is the class in which there were wage workers, no wealth except for children. These were also known as the “ working class”. “ The bourgeoisie society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms.

It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, and new forms of struggle in a place of the old ones. “(1) Meaning that, the Industrial Revolution only made things worse for those without money, the working class was less beneficial than the middle class who were wealthier than

them. “ With industrialization the middle class rose in status and wealth. Increasingly money became a common denominator in society, and the middle class was in position to benefit from this. “(2) While in contrast the working class did all the work and benefitting very little.

The poor still had ragged clothes, low wages, worked until exhausted physically and mentally, and pushed to the extent of starvation. This unprecedented growth and profit was another social change that occurred during the Industrial Revolution. The laissez-fair approach taken by the government allowed capitalism to flourish. There were little or no government regulations imposed upon factory policies, and this allowed the wealthy, middle-class owners to pursue whichever path was most profitable, regardless of the safety and well being of their workers . “ Middle class were not totally unaware of the consequences of industrialization for society. Doctrines served to justify the position of the middle class to support policies it usually favored, and to rationalize the poor state the working class. (4) Even though the working class was treated badly and very less fortunate, there were still boundaries and rules to get them by. Samuel Smiles believes that self-help is the only answer to problems. “ Labor is not only a necessity, and duty but a blessing. ” How is it possible that the poorer classes could remain healthy and a reasonable expectation of life under such conditions? ... The physical condition of workers shows a progressive deterioration. “ The duty of work is written on the thews and muscles of the limbs, the mechanism of the hands, and the lobes of the brain??? the sum of whose healthy action is satisfaction and enjoyment. “(4) The working class may not

have tangible benefits nor wealth, but yet mental and physical attributes. Working made the stronger and wiser, which enables them to live longer and healthier and also to deal with their struggles. However, the social changes that took place were not all negative.

Most classes eventually benefited in some way from the huge profits that were being made, and by 1820 most workers were making somewhat better wages. The widespread poverty and constant threat of mass starvation lessened, and overall health and material conditions improved. Though the great revolutions lead to many hardships for the working class, it can be said that they benefited from it as the middle class did just not as much. In the end, the Industrialization Revolution brought about radical change, all classes were not necessarily united together but all had input.

The working class contributed all the work under horrible conditions yet the middle class was there to benefit from it all. Everyone got something out of the changes, whether it being good or bad. Things improved and got worse at the same time. The Industrial Revolution marks a major turning point in human history; almost every aspect of daily life was influenced in some way. There were major changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, transportation, and technology.