

# Factory system

Government



On the whole I agree with this statement. Most factory owners did not take into the account the needs of their workers. However, there were some exceptions, sir Titus salt for example. To begin with I shall look at the factory system in general and the appalling living and working conditions it imposed on its workers.

In the factory towns houses were squeezed into the centres of towns or around the factories. Landlords crammed as many people into houses as they could. The water supply was another problem. Sewage and rubbish was left in the backyard, piled up in the street or thrown into open drains, which ran down the roads. Even where there were drains and sewage pipes, they normally ran into the local rivers - where people collected their water.

Most factory owners built the house quickly which made them not safe and also built them closely together witch meant diseases, people having to share toilets which caused dirty water. People had to buy fresh water from carts and rich people.

" Sixty thousand of the population had no running water except from wells and rain water"

(From the commercial directory of Leeds - 1834)

The dirty water caused lots of disease such as cholera. Cholera was a disease that arrived from the continent. It could kill a person very quickly. People only used to live to 19 on an average due to disease.

The reason for this was that people worked at least 9 hours a day and only had four hours sleep. Most people were too tired to eat after they came

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home from work. Most people only got paid fifteen shillings, which is equal to fifteen pence per week. If they wanted to work over time they only got a further three pence. Many people went to live in the towns so that they could find work in the factories. Before this they had worked in their homes.

Factory life was very different.

Children were often beaten black and blue with a strap or kicked in the ribs. If you got injured. For example lost your finger in a machine you wouldn't have got any wages. Girls who had long hair often had their hair chopped off as a punishment for bad work. The power loom would of would of made a terrible noise this causing harm/ear acre for the factory workers most of the time they was nothing to stop the workers from breathing in the dust from the machines.

" My eldest. The cog caught her finger and screwed it off below the knuckle"

(Samuel Coulson, Father of two girls, giving evidence to the committee - 1832)

The factory owners only paid their workers very little amount of money or even none at all when they were off due to sickness, they may have even lost there jobs and became paupers. Those people who were fit were made to go to the workhouse often families were separated. The food was poor and they had to wear a uniform.

There were 129 steam factories in Bradford and Bradford had become the world centre of the worsted industry. Worsted is a fine woollen cloth used to make women's dresses and men's suits. The town often attracted tens of

thousands of migrants - mainly young men and women who wanted to work in the mills, they came from all over the British Isles. The town was unable to cope with them. No one took responsibility for a long time. There were terrible problems of drunkenness, violence and crime. The pollution of the atmosphere in Bradford was dreadful. When the magistrates tried to introduce the workhouse system to Bradford in 1836 they had to flee to Leeds as the mob tried to take control of the town.

This map shows that there was only a little built up area in Bradford about 1800

But in 1879 they were much more houses built more closely together and more people were living in them.

The rapid growth of population caused terrible problems because there were no rules or regulations about building houses.

Here I include a source from the Bradford Observer June 5th 1845.

Thompson's buildings - this locality is situated on an eminence at the foot of which runs a filthy beck, or stream, impregnated with the refuse of dye houses, manufactories, and dwellings contiguous to it. The streets are narrow and filthy, and the general arrangement of the dwellings unfavourable to health. The inhabitants uniformly complain of ill health. In 12 cases taken on rotation, the figures showed that the dwellings are inhabited by ninety-five persons, having only twenty four beds, or eight to one bedroom, the average size of which is seventeen feet by fifteen.

Case 7: Family 9 , rooms and beds 2, house workers 5.

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Case 8: Same numbers of family, beds, and rooms as last; house workers 4.

Case 9: Family 6; rooms and beds 2, house workers 4.

Case 10: Family 10, rooms and beds 2; house workers 5.

Case 11: Family 7; rooms 2; bed 1; house workers 4.

Case 12: Family 11; rooms 3 beds 2, house workers 5.

Case 13: Family 8; rooms, beds, and workers 2; females, charcoal.

Case 14: Family 12, rooms 2, beds 3, workers 4; females 2; coals.

Case 15: Family 7; rooms and beds 2; workers 4; female 1.

Case 16: Family 10; rooms 2, beds 3; workers 4.

Case 18: Family 4; room and bed; workers 2; female 1.

This meant that they would be more pollution; they would be more sewage in the streets, which would attract rats and other vermin.

The pollution was so bad that the canal was called " STINK RIVER". A survey in 1845 revealed that between 8 and 12 people lived in two rooms on average. This, along with poor sanitation, badly built (jerry built) houses caused the life expectation in Bradford to be the lowest in Yorkshire - only 20 years of age.

They were exceptions though my first example is Robert Owen 1771 - 1858.

Between the years 1815 to 1820 they was distress and a lot of unemployment. Parliaments were Luke warm about the new idea, but the setting up of villages of co-operation remained the basic aim of socialists and the co-operative movement up to the middle of the nineteenth century. One of the most dramatic events in Robert Owens life was the forming of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union in 1834. Though the settlements were a failure, the co-operative movements inspired Robert Owen, spread rapidly through Britain between 1826 and 1835, when some two hundred and fifty Co-operative societies were formed. They set up stores for the sale of high quality goods at reasonable prices and formed producers' co-operatives to help the unemployed. It was the co-operative retail shop, which gave the movement its greatest success.

Here I include the map of Robert Owens successful mill, New Lanark.

Owen gave socialism all its basic ideas. He laid the foundations of the co-operative movement and left his mark on trade unionism. He was a pioneer in a factory reform and progressive education, and few men have played such a large part in social reform.

Now I go on to look at my second example, Sir Titus Salt.

Sir Titus Salt was born at Morley in 1803. He first worked for his father as a wool merchant. He later set up his own spinning plant in Bradford in 1834. By this time he had married Caroline Whitlon, The daughter of a rich Lincolnshire sheep farmer.

He first carried out a social survey among his workers to see what size house they needed. It had not previously occurred to anyone that a worker with ten children needed more rooms in his house than a worker with one child.

Sir Titus Salt chose a site adjoining the Leeds Liverpool canal, the River Aire and the newly made railway station, So he had ideal transport facilities for his trading. It was a massive mill, he chose innovative architects, and agreed to their suggestion of Italianite style. There was space, light and warmth in his new mill. The location was superb, in a green and pleasant are. The mill opened in 1853 on Titus Salts 50th birthday.

He then created an entire village of houses, park, school, library, recreation and a learning institute and an outdoor sport facility. The streets were named after his children and family. He called this village " Saltaire".

Titus employed a large number of workers in combing, spinning and weaving his cloth. He had business connections throughout Europe and America and yet " For in his making his thousands he never forgot, the thousands who helped him to make them"

Titus had simple but good education, and would have liked to become a doctor, but could not stand the sight of blood, so that ambition was quashed, although it did show that young Titus was aware of health and disease. His family were Congregationalists, and religion was very influential in their upbringing.

On the whole I agree that the factory system took little account of the needs of its workers but there were exceptions, sir Titus Salt and Robert Owen were one of these exceptions.