Chapter 28

The Industrialization of the West, 1750-1914

OUTLINE

I. Introduction

After 1750, the West underwent a series of dramatic transformations in politics, intellectual development, and industrialization. The latter revolution altered basic social and cultural patterns, enhanced Europe’s position in the world, saw the rise of new powers, and found European culture exported to settler colonies such as the United States and Australia.

II. The Age of Revolution

A. Introduction

From 1775 to 1848, the West experienced political revolutions against a background of intellectual change, commercial development, and population pressures, encouraging the rise of liberalism and nationalism.

B. Forces of Change

The Enlightenment was one challenge to regimes that failed to enact reforms. A second source of instability was the dramatic population increase that set in after 1730, a result of improved nutrition and a lower rate of infant mortality. Unlike previous epochs, the population increase of the 18th century produced more positive responses. Upper-class families attempted to secure their positions, and the social hierarchy became more rigid. Business families attempted to increase their margins of profit, sometimes by the addition of more technology. At the lowest level, the poor were driven off the land to seek new means of employment, thus sparking protest. Social patterns changed in response to new economic conditions.

C. The American Revolution

The first political upheaval occurred when the British colonies of North America sought their independence after 1775. Colonists objected to new taxes imposed on the colonies after 1763 and to limitations placed on development of the western frontier. Following the Declaration of Independence of 1776, colonists set up a provisional government and proceeded to fight a war against British forces. After forcing the British to come to terms, the colonists established a new constitutional structure in 1789 based on Enlightenment principles.

D. Crisis in France in 1789

Following the American example, reformers seeking change along Enlightenment lines
attacked the inefficiency and autocracy of the French monarchy. Resistance to the
government arose in all levels of French society. Cries for reform were met with adamant
resistance on the part of the monarchy and the French nobility. In 1789, Louis XVI called a
meeting of the traditional parliament to consider tax reform, but reformers seized control of
the meeting. Reformers issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man as a statement of
principle. Shortly thereafter, a group of Parisian citizens seized the royal armory at the
Bastille. Peasants began to rebel in the countryside in opposition to aristocratic authority. A
new constitution established individual rights, assaulted the position of the Church, and
granted limited voting rights to the adult male population.

E. The French Revolution: Radical and Authoritarian Phases

Faced with opposition from conservatives at home and abroad, the revolutionary movement in
Paris passed to more radical leaders. The new leadership executed Louis XVI, abolished the
monarchy, and established the Reign of Terror to secure the revolutionary movement. A new
constitution proclaimed universal male suffrage, military conscription, and social reform. The
armies of the new republic began to press back its foreign enemies and to seize new territories.
Eventually, the radical leadership of the republic fell to a more moderate government. In
1799, Napoleon Bonaparte, one of the successful French generals, converted the republic to an
increasingly autocratic regime while continuing to champion individual liberties, religious
freedom, and the promulgation of a new law code. Napoleon’s attempt to carve out a
European-wide empire was less successful. Following a failed invasion of Russia in 1812,
French forces fell back until their final defeat in 1815. The growth of revolutionary, national
patriotism in France spawned similar movements elsewhere in Europe.

F. A Conservative Settlement and the Revolutionary Legacy

The allies responsible for the defeat of Napoleon met at Vienna after 1815 to craft a lasting
peace predicated on the establishment of a European balance of power. The settlements
reached at Vienna gave Europe almost 50 years of stability. The sentiment at Vienna was to
create a conservative political framework that would halt social and political revolution. In
this the Vienna negotiators failed. New political movements spread across Europe. Liberals
sought greater individual liberties guaranteed by constitutions and parliaments. Radicals
pressed for more democratic political structures and social reforms in favor of workers.
Nationalists urged national boundaries that coincided with ethnic unity. The new ideologies
drew new participants into the political arena from the middle classes and the workers.
Revolutions broke out in the 1820s and 1830s. In Greece, nationalists sought independence
from the Ottoman Empire. Spanish revolutionaries sought to end the Bourbon monarchy. In
France, the Bourbons were ejected again in 1830 in favor of a new monarch and a somewhat
liberal constitution. In the same year, Belgium gained its independence. In Britain and the
United States, movements successfully introduced wider suffrage within the electorate.

G. Industrialization and the Revolutions of 1848

Industrialization increased revolutionary pressure, particularly among skilled artisans worried
about their future in an industrialized world. In Britain, the Chartist movement attempted to
democratize representation in the British Parliament. In some cases, unfulfilled labor requests
contributed to revolutionary movements. Beginning in 1848, revolutions broke out
throughout continental Europe. A revolution in France unseated the monarch and briefly
instituted a republic. Workers’ groups pressed for social and economic reforms. Revolutions
followed in Germany, Austria, and Hungary, where liberals and nationalists pressed for
national unification. Socialist and nationalist movements failed in 1848. Prussian and Austrian armies restored the status quo in central Europe. In France, a nationalist empire rapidly replaced the republic. The revolutions of 1848 were the last major European rebellions. Industrialization replaced the old social order with a new one. The aristocracy and artisan class declined after 1850 to be replaced by new social divisions between the middle class and laborers. The new social organization helped to make revolution obsolete.

III. The Consolidation of the Industrial Order, 1850-1914

A. Introduction

After 1850, the sense of chaos lessened as the pace of industrialization and urbanization slowed. Urban governments began to find answers to the problems created by rapid growth.

B. Adjustments to Industrial Life

After 1850, birth rates dropped and the population began to stabilize. Although the European economy remained unstable, standards of living began to rise. Rates of infant mortality dropped. With Louis Pasteur’s discovery of germs as agents of disease, sanitation and health improved. New technology increased the pace of work in the factory system, and workers were often reduced to metronomic repetition of tasks. In the countryside, there was some organization of peasants to take better advantage of market conditions. Agriculture became more commercialized.

C. Political Trends and the Rise of New Nations

Consensus began to replace revolution in the European political scene after 1850. Governments embraced the concept of broader representation in parliaments and supported the process of industrialization. As a result, many groups gained new political rights. Conservative politicians learned to utilize nationalism as a means of engendering support for governmental policies. More aggressive foreign policies were the result. The most important uses of nationalism occurred when Italy and Germany were able to unify as new states in central Europe. The American Civil War resolved the sectional debate over rights and ended slavery. Following its defeat by the new German nation in 1871, France overthrew the second empire and restored a republic. In general, differences that had previously separated liberals and conservatives were minimized.

D. The Social Questions and New Government Functions

After 1870, government functions expanded to include public education and national systems of welfare. As government responsibilities were enlarged, new taxes were imposed to pay for the additional programs. The chief political issues surrounded what was referred to as the social question. With the emergence of the social question, socialism and feminism became newly powerful political movements. Karl Marx introduced a more aggressive form of socialism after 1848. Marx’s system was predicated on the inevitability of class conflict. He believed that modern political systems would be shaped by the resolution of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Marxist theory provided a context in which working-class movements could confront post-1870 governments. Socialism spread rapidly among the grass roots, particularly in Germany. Socialist parties developed as strong political alternatives in France and Austria. Socialism proved less successful initially in Britain and the United States. Some socialists, called revisionists, abandoned Marx’s revolutionary scheme in
favor of more gradual reform and began to participate actively in electoral strategies. By 1900, women also demanded more political rights through feminist movements.

IV. Cultural Transformations

A. Introduction

Western culture shifted in favor of consumerism during the later 19th century. There were modifications in traditional views of science. New styles appeared in the fine arts.

B. Emphasis on Consumption and Leisure

Improved standards of living and reduction in working hours prepared the way for a new concept of leisure. Increased production required the development of mass markets and new consumers. Consumerism spread among all classes. Newspapers with mass circulations, popular theater, and vacation trips appealed to the new consumers. Leisure became a marketable commodity. One aspect of the new concept of leisure was the emergence of team sports, which reflected industrialized life and community loyalties. The trend to worldly enjoyments corresponded to a decline in religious practice.

C. Advances in Scientific Knowledge

The advance of scientific knowledge competed with alternative, less structured approaches to human experience. One aspect of cultural activity stemmed from the Western emphasis on rationalism. Advances in science were often linked to technological applications, such as improvements in medicine and agriculture. One of the great theories of the age was Charles Darwin’s discussion of biological diversity in terms of evolution. In physics, new theories sought to explain planetary motion in the macrocosm and the movement of atomic particles in the microcosm. Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity added conceptions of time to physical calculations. Social sciences also continued to advance. Sigmund Freud sought to explain human actions in terms of the unconscious, and economists attempted to unravel the mysteries behind the cycles of boom and depression.

D. New Directions in Artistic Expression

Art, in contradiction to the growth of science, seemed to glorify the irrational. Beginning with romanticism, artists sought to capture emotion rather than material reality. By 1900, painters began to portray objects abstractly. Composers experimented with atonal forms. Western art began to pull the culture of other civilizations into the maelstrom of creativity. Differences in approach between scientists and artists created a dichotomy in Western culture that was reflected in the institutionalization of science and the arts. By the end of the 19th century, Western culture failed to resolve the chasm between the rational and the irrational.

V. Western Settler Societies

A. Introduction

Industrialization enhanced the dominant position of Western nations within the world trade network and increased technological advantages in military science. As a result, European nations embarked on new rounds of colonialism in the 19th century. Western settler societies developed overseas, the most powerful being the United States.
B. Emerging Power of the United States

From colonization until the middle of the 19th century, the United States played a minor role in world politics. Most of the new nation’s energies were expended in extending its boundaries from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The Civil War served to strengthen the unity of the United States, end slavery, and promote the course of industrialization. Railways were built that spanned the nation. American agricultural and industrial products began to compete on the world’s markets. Even at the end of the 19th century, however, American diplomacy had little impact outside the Western hemisphere. In culture and science, the United States continued to borrow heavily from Europe.

C. European Settlements in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand

European settlement led to the establishment of Western governments and cultures in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. These nations remained part of the British Empire. The British won Canada during the imperial wars of the 18th century. During the 19th century, Canada was permitted to establish virtual self-government. As in the United States, settlement was eventually extended to the Pacific coast.

Australia entered the British Empire as a penal colony. By the mid-19th century, Australia attracted a substantial population of European immigrants. Discovery of gold in the 1850s stimulated further immigration. As in Canada, individual provinces were granted substantial rights of self-government.

New Zealand was first settled by British immigrants in 1814. Fearful of French intervention in the region, the British moved to establish a formal colonial structure in the 1840s. British settlers were primarily agriculturists who fought several wars with the indigenous Maori inhabitants of the islands. After the 1860s, Britain granted self-government within the empire on the same basis established in Canada and Australia.

The new countries remained more dependent on Britain than did the United States. Industrialization was slow to occur, and the economies remained largely agricultural. During the 19th century, all of these regions, including the United States, received new waves of European immigrants. The exportation of European population continued to support the development of essentially Western cultures in these areas. The extension of Western culture and political institutions was made possible by the absence of large indigenous populations capable of resisting colonization.

VI. Diplomatic Tensions and World War I

A. Introduction

The unification of Germany upset the balance of power established in Europe after the Napoleonic wars. Germany’s emergence set off rounds of diplomacy that resulted in new alliances. Competition between nations over colonies tested the ability of the alliance system to maintain the peace.
B. The New Alliance System

By 1907, two alliance systems structured the diplomatic relations of Europe. Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy formed the Triple Alliance, while France, Britain, and Russia made up the Triple Entente. All parties began to construct more powerful militaries to offset perceived gains among their rivals. Each alliance system was dependent on the status of a weak member. Russia (of the Triple Entente) had recently suffered an internal revolution and was increasingly unstable. Austria-Hungary (of the Triple Alliance) was divided among quarreling ethnic groups seeking autonomy. Both of the weaker partners were engaged in extending their influence into the Balkans. Small nations in the Balkans had won their independence from the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century. Slavic nationalism threatened Austrian interests in the region. The Russians sought to advance Slavic interests as a means of enhancing their presence. When in 1914 a Serbian nationalist assassinated the Austrian heir to the throne, Austria attempted to crush the Slavic state. Russia mobilized its troops in support of Serbia. In response, the greater powers of both alliance systems were drawn into war.

C. Diplomacy and Society

By the 19th century, the absence of a single imperial power in Europe resulted in tensions among the nation-states. International disputes reflected growing fears of European governments over socialism and the potential power of the masses. Strong foreign policies and appeals to nationalism were one means utilized to distract populations from internal distress. Military escalation also aided industrialization. Mass circulation of newspapers could be used to shape public opinion in favor of nationalist escapades. Thus, after a century of peace and enhanced standards of living, European nations embarked on the path to war.

VIII. Global Connections: Industrial Europe and the War

Europe’s growing power in the 19th century transformed the world and made it a global model. The European revolutionary heritage spread new ideas of liberalism, radicalism, and socialism around world.
TIMELINE

Insert the following events into the timeline. This should help you to compare important historical events chronologically.

unification of Germany achieved Congress of Vienna meets to settle Napoleonic Wars
revolutions in Italy, France, Austria-Hungary beginning of first stage of French Revolution
Charles Darwin publishes major work Austrian archduke assassinated in Balkans

1789
1815
1848
1859
1871
1914

TERMS, PEOPLE, EVENTS

The following terms, people, and events are important to your understanding of the chapter. Define each one.

population revolution proto-industrialization American Revolution
French Revolution Louis XVI Declaration of the Rights of Man
guillotine Napoleon Bonaparte conservatives
liberals radicals nationalism
Greek Revolution French Revolution of 1830 Belgian Revolution
Reform Bill of 1832 Industrial Revolution Revolutions of 1848
Chartist movement demographic transition Louis Pasteur
Triple Entente Benjamin Disraeli Count Camillo di Cavour
Otto von Bismarck American Civil War the social question
Karl Marx revisionism feminist movement
mass leisure culture Charles Darwin Albert Einstein
Sigmund Freud Romanticism Triple Alliance
MAP EXERCISE

The following exercise is intended to clarify the geophysical environment and the spatial relationships among the important objects and places mentioned in the chapter. Locate the following places on the map.

- Italy (after 1870)
- Germany (after 1871)
- Russia
- Austria-Hungary
- France

How was the map of Europe altered after 1871? (You may wish to consider the maps that appear on pp. 703, 711, and 712 of the text.) What effect did the changes in the European map have on traditional rivalries and alliances? Why?
MAKING CONNECTIONS

The following questions are intended to emphasize important ideas within the chapter.

1. What were the causes of the American Revolution? The French Revolution?
2. What were the lasting reforms of the French Revolution?
3. What new political movements emerged in the aftermath of the French Revolution?
4. What changes in social organization did industrialization cause?
5. How were industrialization and revolution linked?
6. How did government functions increase in response to the ‘social question’?
7. How did science and the arts diverge in the period after 1850?
8. How did industrialization lead to an expansion of the West’s influence in the world?
9. Discuss the alliance system put in place by 1907.

PUTTING LARGER CONCEPTS TOGETHER

The following questions test your ability to summarize the major conclusions of the chapter.

1. In what way did the revolutions beginning in 1820 and extending through 1871 reconstruct the map of Europe? How did the creation of new political boundaries affect the development of European diplomacy by 1907?
2. In what ways did industrialization change the social structure and political alignment of the West?
SELF-TEST OF FACTUAL INFORMATION

1. Proto-industrialization refers to
   a. the strictly agricultural economy that preceded the Industrial Revolution.
   b. the development of the factory system.
   c. the employment of laborers who worked at home but in a capitalist system dependent on urban merchants.
   d. the development of systems of transportation necessary for full industrialization.

2. Which of the following was a cause of the French Revolution?
   a. Enlightenment endorsement of absolute monarchy
   b. the middle-class demand for greater political representation
   c. the continued influence of the Protestant clergy at the French court
   d. French territorial additions during the French and Indian Wars

3. The radical phase of the French Revolution led to all of the following EXCEPT
   a. the execution of the king.
   b. the introduction of the metric system of weights and measures.
   c. the extension of the revolution to include war in the Low Countries, Italy, and Germany.
   d. a full-scale attack on private property.

4. The meeting of the victorious powers at Vienna in 1815 resulted in
   a. the severe punishment of France.
   b. conservative attempts to restore the status quo.
   c. the establishment of a united Germany.
   d. the restoration of the liberal constitution of the moderate phase of the French Revolution.

5. Belgium became an independent nation for the first time as a result of a revolution in
   a. 1820.
   b. 1830.
   c. 1848.
   d. 1870.

6. Karl Marx argued that the prime force shaping human history was:
   a. developments in the nature of family life.
   b. the rise and fall of centralizing empires
   c. the available means of production and who controlled those means.
   d. the spread of the great world religions, including Christianity and Islam.
7. Which of the following statements concerning the revolutions of 1848 is most accurate?
   a. Nationalist agitation failed as the armies of Prussia and Austria-Hungary restored the political status quo.
   b. In France, the concept of monarchy and authoritarian government was irrevocably overthrown.
   c. The map of central Europe was dramatically revised as new nations arose in Germany and Italy.
   d. Although nationalist rebellions failed in 1848, the working classes gained permanent advantages never to be lost.

8. Which of the following statements concerning the general prosperity of Europeans by 1900 is most accurate?
   a. Despite the technological successes of the Industrial Revolution, the living standards for most Europeans had declined.
   b. The working classes remained almost without exception in abject poverty.
   c. The Industrial Revolution reduced class distinctions so that almost all Europeans were better off.
   d. By 1900, nearly two-thirds of the European population lived above subsistence level.

9. As industrialization spread, peasants in Europe improved their condition by undertaking all of the following EXCEPT:
   a. joining trades unions.
   b. forming cooperatives.
   c. specializing in new cash crops.
   d. seeking education and new technical skills.

10. In what nation did socialism produce the strongest political party?
   a. Britain
   b. the United States
   c. France
   d. Germany