

## Mass Society in an “Age of Progress,” 1871–1894

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Coney Island fun

### CHAPTER OUTLINE AND FOCUS QUESTIONS

#### The Growth of Industrial Prosperity

**Q** What was the Second Industrial Revolution, and what effects did it have on European economic and social life? What roles did socialist parties and trade unions play in improving conditions for the working classes?

#### The Emergence of a Mass Society

**Q** What is a mass society, and what were its main characteristics? What role were women expected to play in society and family life in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and how closely did patterns of family life correspond to this ideal?

#### The National State

**Q** What general political trends were evident in the nations of western Europe in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and how did these trends differ from the policies pursued in Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia?

#### CRITICAL THINKING

**Q** What was the relationship among economic, social, and political developments between 1871 and 1894?

#### CONNECTIONS TO TODAY

**Q** In the late nineteenth century, new work opportunities for women emerged, but many middle- and upper-class women were still expected to remain in the home. What are the new opportunities and challenges for women today, and how do they compare with those in the nineteenth century?

IN THE LATE 1800s, Europe entered a dynamic period of material prosperity. Bringing with it new industries, new sources of energy, and new goods, a second Industrial Revolution transformed the human environment, dazzled Europeans, and led them to believe that their material progress meant human progress. Scientific and technological achievements, many naively believed, would improve humanity's condition and solve all human problems. The doctrine of progress became an article of great faith.

The new urban and industrial world created by the rapid economic changes of the nineteenth century led to the emergence of a mass society by the late nineteenth century. Mass society meant improvements for the lower classes, who benefited from the extension of voting rights, a better standard of living, and education. It also brought

mass leisure. New work patterns established the “weekend” as a distinct time of recreation and fun, and new forms of mass transportation—railroads and streetcars—enabled even ordinary workers to make excursions to amusement parks. Coney Island was only 8 miles from central New York City; Blackpool in England was a short train ride from nearby industrial towns. With their Ferris wheels and other daring rides that threw young men and women together, amusement parks offered a whole new world of entertainment. Thanks to the railroad, seaside resorts, once the preserve of the wealthy, became accessible to more people for weekend visits, much to the disgust of one upper-class regular, who complained about the new “day-trippers”: “They swarm upon the beach, wandering listlessly about with apparently no other aim than to get a mouthful of fresh air.” Enterprising entrepreneurs in resorts like Blackpool welcomed the masses of new visitors, however, and built piers laden with food, drink, and entertainment to serve them.

The coming of mass society also created new roles for the governments of Europe’s nation-states. In the early nineteenth century, “nations” functioned as communities of people bound together by common language, traditions, customs, and institutions. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, the “state”—the organized institutions of government—had come to dominate European lives. By 1871, the national states promoted economic growth and mass education, amassed national armies by conscription, and took more responsibility for public health and housing in their cities. By taking these steps, the governments of the national states hoped to foster national unity and national loyalty.

Within many of these national states, the growth of the middle class had led to the triumph of liberal practices: constitutional governments, parliaments, and principles of equality. The period after 1871 also witnessed the growth of political democracy as the right to vote was extended to all adult males; women, though, would still have to fight for the same political rights. With political democracy came a new mass politics and a new mass press. Both would become regular features of the twentieth century. ◀

## The Growth of Industrial Prosperity

**Q FOCUS QUESTIONS:** What was the Second Industrial Revolution, and what effects did it have on European economic and social life? What roles did socialist parties and trade unions play in improving conditions for the working classes?

At the heart of Europeans’ belief in progress after 1871 was the stunning material growth produced by what historians

have called the Second Industrial Revolution. The First Industrial Revolution had given rise to textiles, railroads, iron, and coal. In the second revolution, steel, chemicals, electricity, and petroleum led the way to new industrial frontiers.

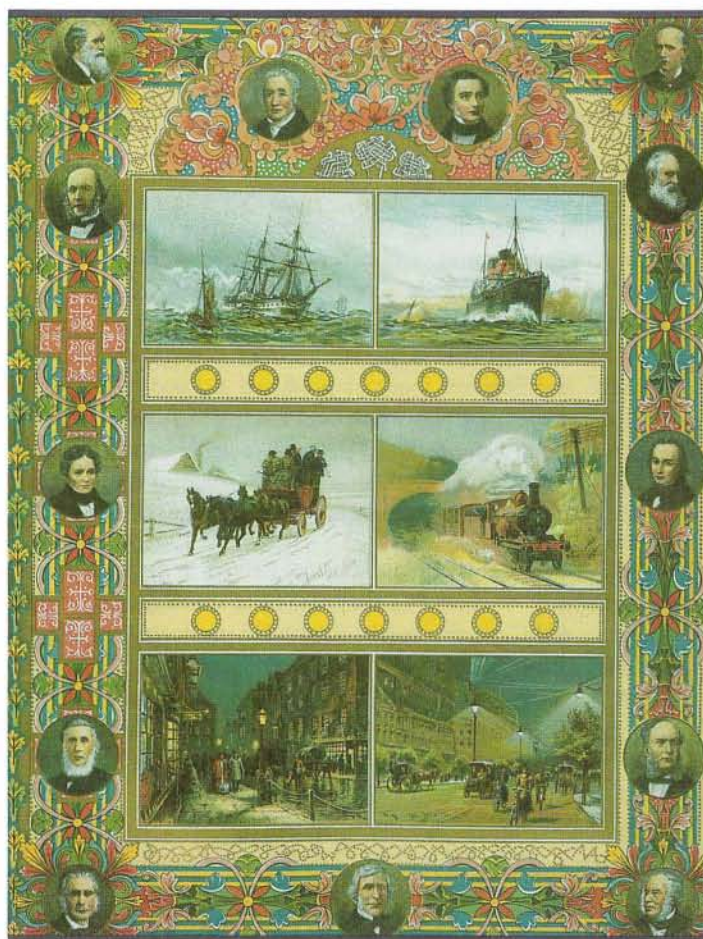
### New Products

The first major change in industrial development after 1870 was the substitution of steel for iron. New methods of rolling and shaping steel made it useful in the construction of lighter, smaller, and faster machines and engines, as well as railways, ships, and armaments. In 1860, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Belgium together produced 125,000 tons of steel; by 1913, the total was 32 million tons. Whereas in the early 1870s Britain had produced twice as much steel as Germany, by 1910, German production was double that of Great Britain. The United States had surpassed them both in 1890.

**CHEMICALS** Great Britain also fell behind in the new chemical industry. A change in the method of making soda enabled France and Germany to take the lead in producing the alkalies used in the textile, soap, and paper industries. German laboratories soon overtook the British in the development of new organic chemical compounds, such as artificial dyes. By 1900, German firms had cornered 90 percent of the market for dye-stuffs and also led in the development of photographic plates and film.

**ELECTRICITY** Electricity was a major new form of energy that proved to be of great value since it could be easily converted into other forms of energy, such as heat, light, and motion, and moved relatively effortlessly through space over wires. In the 1870s, the first commercially practical generators of electrical current were developed. By 1881, Britain had its first public power station. By 1910, hydroelectric power stations and coal-fired steam-generating plants enabled entire districts to be tied in to a single power distribution system that provided a common source of power for homes, shops, and industrial enterprises.

Electricity spawned a whole series of inventions. The lightbulb, invented independently by the American Thomas Edison (1847–1931) and the Briton Joseph Swan (1828–1914), opened homes and cities to illumination by electric lights. A revolution in communications was fostered when Alexander Graham Bell (1847–1922) invented the telephone in 1876 and Guglielmo Marconi (gool-YEL-moh mahr-KOH-nee) (1874–1937) sent the first radio waves across the Atlantic in 1901. Although most electricity was initially used for lighting, it was eventually put to use in transportation. The first electric railway was installed in Berlin in 1879. By the 1880s, streetcars and subways had appeared in major European cities and had begun to replace horse-drawn buses. Electricity also transformed the factory. Conveyor belts, cranes, machines, and machine tools could all be powered by electricity and located anywhere. In the First Industrial Revolution, coal had been the major source of energy. Countries without adequate coal supplies lagged behind in industrialization. Thanks to electricity, they could now enter the industrial age.



**An Age of Progress.** In the decades after 1871, the Second Industrial Revolution led many Europeans to believe that they were living in an age of progress when most human problems would be solved by scientific achievements. This illustration is taken from a special issue of the *Illustrated London News* celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897. On the left are scenes from 1837, when Victoria came to the British throne; on the right are scenes from 1897. The vivid contrast underscored the magazine's conclusion: "The most striking . . . evidence of progress during the reign is the ever increasing speed which the discoveries of physical science have forced into everyday life. Steam and electricity have conquered time and space to a greater extent during the last sixty years than all the preceding six hundred years witnessed."

**THE INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE** The development of the internal combustion engine had a similar effect. The first internal combustion engine, fired by gas and air, was produced in 1878. It proved unsuitable for widespread use as a source of power in transportation until the development of liquid fuels—petroleum and its distilled derivatives. An oil-fired engine was made in 1897, and by 1902, the Hamburg-Amerika Line had switched from coal to oil on its new ocean liners. By the end of the nineteenth century, some naval fleets had been converted to oil burners as well.

The development of the internal combustion engine gave rise to the automobile and the airplane. The invention of a light engine by Gottlieb Daimler (GUHT-leeb DYM-lur) (1834–1900) in 1886 was the key to the development of the automobile. In 1900, world production stood at 9,000 cars; by 1906, Americans had overtaken the initial lead of the French. It was an American, Henry Ford (1863–1947), who revolutionized the car industry with the mass production of the Model T. By 1916, Ford's factories were producing 735,000 cars a year. Air transportation began with the Zepelin (ZEP-puh-lin) airship in 1900. In 1903, at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, Wilbur and Orville Wright made the first flight in a fixed-wing plane powered by a gasoline engine. It took World War I to stimulate the aircraft industry, however, and the first regular passenger air service was not established until 1919.

## New Markets

The growth of industrial production depended on the development of markets for the sale of manufactured goods. After 1870, the best foreign markets were already heavily saturated, forcing Europeans to take a renewed look at their domestic markets. As Europeans were the richest consumers in the world, those markets offered abundant possibilities. The dramatic population increases after 1870 (see "Population Growth" later in this chapter) were accompanied by a steady rise in national incomes. The leading industrialized nations, Britain and Germany, doubled or tripled their national incomes. Between 1850 and 1900, real wages increased by two-thirds in Britain and by one-third in Germany. As the prices of both food and manufactured goods declined due to lower transportation costs, Europeans could spend more on consumer products. Businesses soon perceived the value of using new techniques of mass marketing to sell the consumer goods made possible by the development of the steel and electrical industries. By bringing together a vast array of new products in one place, they created the department store (see the box on p. 693). The desire to own sewing machines, clocks, bicycles, electric lights, and typewriters rapidly created a new consumer ethic that became a crucial part of the modern economy (see "Mass Consumption" later in this chapter).

# The Department Store and the Beginnings of Mass Consumerism

**DOMESTIC MARKETS WERE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT** for the sale of the goods being turned out by Europe's increasing number of industrial plants. Techniques of mass marketing were developed to encourage people to purchase the new consumer goods. The Parisians pioneered the department store, and this selection is taken from a contemporary's account of the growth of these stores in the French capital city.

## E. Lavasseur, *On Parisian Department Stores*

It was in the reign of Louis-Philippe that department stores for fashion goods and dresses, extending to material and other clothing, began to be distinguished. The type was already one of the notable developments of the Second Empire; it became one of the most important ones of the Third Republic. These stores have increased in number and several of them have become extremely large. Combining in their different departments all articles of clothing, toilet articles, furniture and many other ranges of goods, it is their special object so to combine all commodities as to attract and satisfy customers who will find conveniently together an assortment of a mass of articles corresponding to all their various needs. They attract customers by permanent display, by free entry into the shops, by periodic exhibitions, by special sales, by fixed prices, and by their ability to deliver the goods purchased to customers' homes, in Paris and to the provinces. Turning themselves into direct intermediaries between the producer and the consumer, even producing sometimes some of their articles in their own workshops, buying at lowest prices because of their large orders and because they are in a position to profit from bargains, working with large sums, and selling to most of their customers for cash only, they can transmit these benefits in lowered selling prices. They can even decide to sell at a loss, as an advertisement or to get rid of out-of-date fashions. Taking 5–6 percent on 100 million brings them in more than 20 percent would bring to a firm doing a turnover of 50,000 francs.

The success of these department stores is only possible thanks to the volume of their business and this volume needs considerable capital and a very large turnover. Now capital, having become abundant, is freely combined nowadays in large enterprises, although French capital has the reputation of being more wary of the risks of industry than of State or railway securities. On the other hand, the large urban agglomerations, the ease with which goods can be transported by the railways, the diffusion of some comforts to strata below the middle classes, have all favored these developments.

As example we may cite some figures relating to these stores, since they were brought to the notice of the public in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*. . . .

*Le Louvre*, dating to the time of the extension of the rue de Rivoli under the Second Empire, did in 1893 a business of 120 million at a profit of 6.4 percent. *Le Bon Marché*, which was a small shop when Mr. Boucicaut entered it in 1852, already did a business of 20 million at the end of the Empire. During the republic its new buildings were erected; Mme. Boucicaut turned it by her will into a kind of cooperative society, with shares and an ingenious organization; turnover reached 150 million in 1893, leaving a profit of 5 percent. . . .

According to the tax records of 1891, these stores in Paris, numbering 12, employed 1,708 persons and were rated on their site values at 2,159,000 francs; the largest had then 542 employees. These same stores had, in 1901, 9,784 employees; one of them over 2,000 and another over 1,600; their site value has doubled (4,089,000 francs).



*Did the invention of department stores respond to or create the new "consumer ethic" in industrialized societies? What was the new turn-of-the-century ethic? According to Lavasseur, what were the positive effects of department stores for Parisian society?*

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**TARIFFS AND CARTELS** Meanwhile, increased competition for foreign markets and the growing importance of domestic demand led to a reaction against free trade. To many industrial and political leaders, protective **tariffs** guaranteed domestic markets for the products of their own industries. That is why, after a decade of experimentation with free trade in the 1860s, Europeans returned to tariff protection.

During this same period, **cartels** were being formed to decrease competition internally. In a cartel, independent enterprises worked together to control prices and fix production quotas, thereby restraining the kind of competition that led to reduced prices. Cartels were especially strong in

Germany, where banks moved to protect their investments by eliminating the "anarchy of competition." German businesses established cartels in potash, coal, steel, and chemicals.

**LARGER FACTORIES** The formation of cartels was paralleled by a move toward ever-larger manufacturing plants, especially in the iron and steel, machinery, heavy electrical equipment, and chemical industries. Although evident in Britain, France, and Belgium, the trend was most pronounced in Germany. Between 1882 and 1907, the number of people working in German factories with more than one thousand employees rose from 205,000 to 879,000. This growth in the size of

industrial plants led to pressure for greater efficiency in factory production at the same time that competition led to demands for greater economy. The result was a desire to streamline or rationalize production as much as possible. One way to accomplish this was to cut labor costs by mechanizing transport within plants, such as using electric cranes to move materials. Even more important, the development of precision tools enabled manufacturers to produce interchangeable parts, which in turn led to the creation of the assembly line for production. First used in the United States for small arms and clocks, the assembly line had moved to Europe by 1850. In the second half of the nineteenth century, it was used primarily in manufacturing nonmilitary goods, such as sewing machines, typewriters, bicycles, and eventually automobiles. Principles of scientific management were also introduced by 1900 to maximize workers' efficiency.

## New Patterns in an Industrial Economy

The Second Industrial Revolution played a role in the emergence of basic economic patterns that have characterized much of the modern European economy. Although the period after 1871 has been described as an age of material prosperity, recessions and crises were still very much a part of economic life. Although some historians question the appropriateness of characterizing the period from 1873 to 1895 as a great **depression**, Europeans did experience a series of economic crises during those years. Prices, especially those of agricultural products, fell dramatically. Slumps in the business cycle reduced profits, although recession occurred at different times in different countries. France and Britain, for example, sank into depression in the 1880s while Germany and the United States were recovering from their depression of the 1870s. From 1895 until World War I, however, Europe overall experienced an economic boom and achieved a level of prosperity that encouraged people later to look back to that era as *la belle époque* (lah BEL ay-PUK)—a golden age in European civilization.

**GERMAN INDUSTRIAL LEADERSHIP** After 1870, Germany replaced Great Britain as the industrial leader of Europe. Within two decades, Germany's superiority was evident in new areas of manufacturing, such as organic chemicals and electrical equipment, and increasingly apparent in its ever-greater share of worldwide trade. Why had industrial leadership passed from Britain to Germany?

As a result of its early lead in industrialization, Britain had already established industrial plants and found it more difficult to shift to the new techniques of the Second Industrial Revolution. As later entrants to the industrial age, the Germans could build the latest and most efficient plants. British entrepreneurs made the situation worse by their tendency to be suspicious of innovations and their reluctance to invest in new plants and industries. As one manufacturer remarked, "One wants to be thoroughly convinced of the superiority of a new method before condemning as useless a large plant that

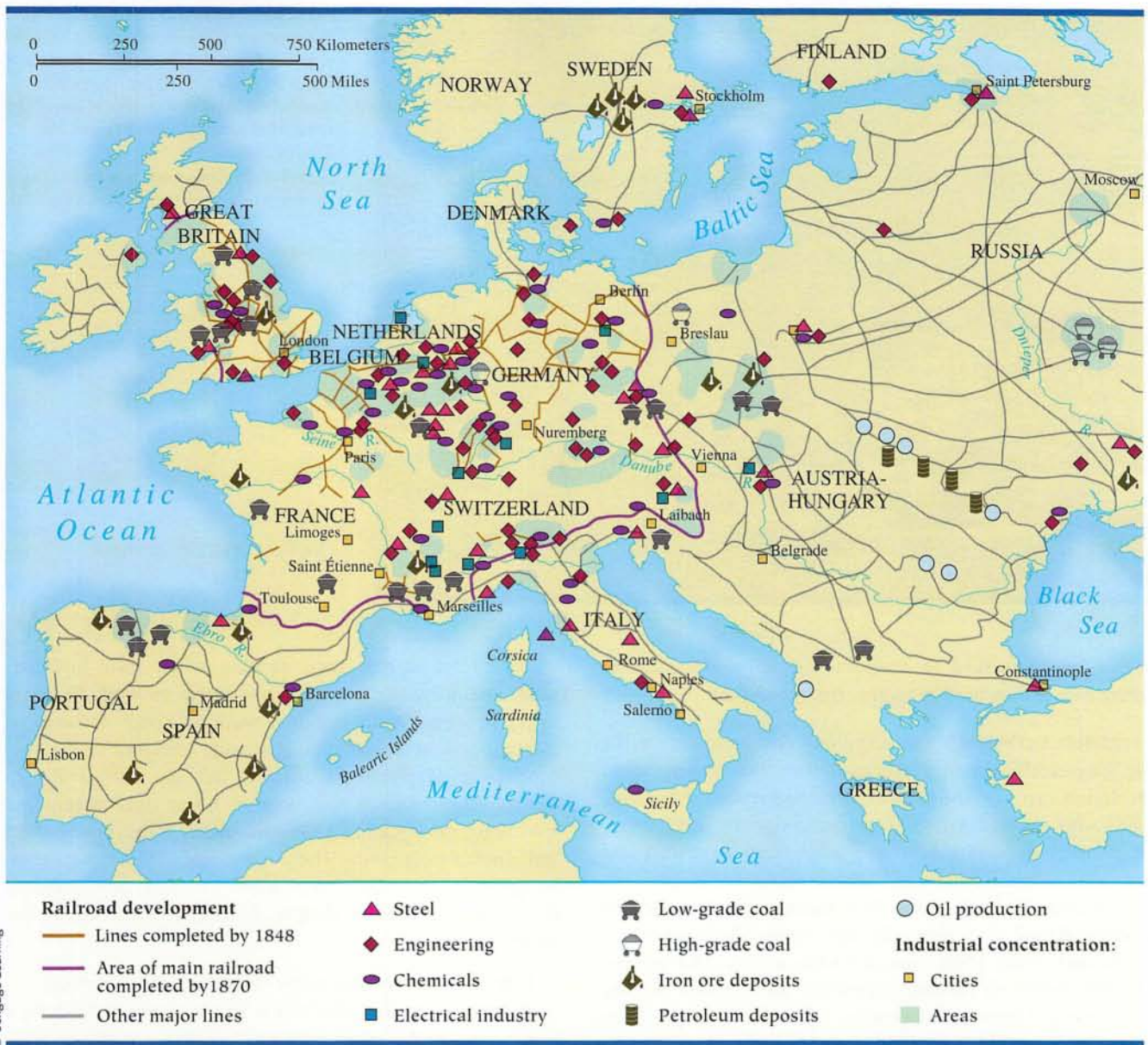
has hitherto done good service."<sup>1</sup> German managers, by contrast, were accustomed to change, and the formation of large cartels encouraged German banks to provide enormous sums for investment. Then, too, unlike the Germans, the British did not encourage formal scientific and technical education.

After 1870, the relationship of science and technology grew closer. Newer fields of industrial activity, such as organic chemistry and electrical engineering, required more scientific knowledge than the commonsense tinkering employed by amateur inventors. Companies began to invest capital in laboratory equipment for their own research or hired scientific consultants for advice. Nowhere was the relationship between science and technology more apparent than in Germany. In 1899, German technical schools were allowed to award doctorate degrees, and by 1900, they were turning out three to four thousand graduates a year. Many of these graduates made their way into industrial firms.

**EUROPEAN ECONOMIC ZONES** The struggle for economic (and political) supremacy between Great Britain and Germany should not cause us to overlook the other great polarization of the age. By 1900, Europe was divided into two economic zones. Great Britain, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Germany, the western part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and northern Italy constituted an advanced industrialized core that had a high standard of living, decent systems of transportation, and relatively healthy and educated populations (see Map 23.1). Another part of Europe, the backward and little industrialized area to the south and east, consisting of southern Italy, most of Austria-Hungary, Spain, Portugal, the Balkan kingdoms, and Russia, was still largely agricultural and relegated by the industrial countries to the function of providing food and raw materials. The presence of Romanian oil, Greek olive oil, and Serbian pigs and prunes in western Europe served as reminders of an economic division of Europe that continued well into the twentieth century.

The growth of an industrial economy also led to new patterns for European agriculture. An abundance of grain and lower transportation costs caused the prices of farm commodities to plummet. Some countries responded with tariff barriers against lower-priced foodstuffs. Where agricultural labor was scarce and hence expensive, as in Britain and Germany, landowners introduced machines for threshing and harvesting. The slump in grain prices also led some countries to specialize in other food products. Denmark, for example, exported eggs, butter, and cheese; sugar beets predominated in Bohemia and northern France, fruit in Mediterranean countries, and wine in Spain and Italy. This age also witnessed the introduction of chemical fertilizers. Large estates could make these adjustments easily, but individual small farmers could not afford them and formed farm cooperatives that provided capital for making improvements and purchasing equipment and fertilizer.

Although the lower grain prices had a negative impact on farmers, the decline in prices benefited many working- and middle-class families in northern Europe. As less money was needed to purchase bread, the consumption of other foods



**MAP 23.1 The Industrial Regions of Europe at the End of the Nineteenth Century.** By the end of the nineteenth century, the Second Industrial Revolution—in steelmaking, electricity, petroleum, and chemicals—had spurred substantial economic growth and prosperity in western and central Europe; it also sparked economic and political competition between Great Britain and Germany.

**Q** Look back at Map 20.2. What parts of Europe not industrialized in 1850 had become industrialized in the ensuing decades?

increased during the second half of the nineteenth century. In Germany, meat consumption doubled between 1873 and 1914, and in France bread fell from 20 percent of the diet to 9 percent in 1900.

**THE SPREAD OF INDUSTRIALIZATION** After 1870, industrialization began to spread beyond western and central Europe and North America. Especially noticeable was its rapid development in Russia (see Chapter 24) and Japan. In Japan, the imperial government took the lead in promoting industry. The government financed industries, built railroads, brought foreign experts to train Japanese employees in new industrial

techniques, and instituted a universal educational system based on applied science. By the end of the nineteenth century, Japan had developed key industries in tea, silk, armaments, and shipbuilding. Workers for these industries came from the large number of people who had abandoned their farms due to severe hardships in the countryside and fled to the cities, where they provided an abundant source of cheap labor.

As in Europe during the early decades of the Industrial Revolution, workers toiled for long hours in the coal mines and textile mills, often under horrendous conditions. Reportedly, coal miners employed on a small island in Nagasaki



**A Textile Factory in Japan.** The development of the factory forced workers to adjust to a new system of discipline in which they worked regular hours under close supervision. Shown here is one of the earliest industrial factories in Japan, the Tomioka silk factory, built in the 1870s. Note that although women are doing the work in the factory, the managers are men.

harbor worked naked in temperatures up to 130 degrees Fahrenheit. If they tried to escape, they were shot.

**A WORLD ECONOMY** The economic developments of the late nineteenth century, combined with the transportation revolution that saw the growth of marine transport and railroads, also fostered a true world economy. By 1900, Europeans were importing beef and wool from Argentina and Australia, coffee from Brazil, nitrates from Chile, iron ore from Algeria, and sugar from Java. European capital was also invested abroad to develop railways, mines, electrical power plants, and banks. High rates of return, such as 11.3 percent on Latin American banking shares that were floated in London, provided plenty of incentive. Of course, foreign countries also provided markets for the surplus manufactured goods of Europe. With its capital, industries, and military might, Europe dominated the world economy by the end of the nineteenth century.

## Women and Work: New Job Opportunities

The Second Industrial Revolution had an enormous impact on the position of women in the labor market. During the course of the nineteenth century, considerable controversy erupted over a woman's "right to work." Working-class organizations tended to reinforce the underlying ideology of domesticity: women should remain at home to bear and nurture children and should not be allowed in the industrial workforce. Working-class men argued that keeping women out of industrial work would ensure the moral and physical well-being of families. In reality, keeping women out of the industrial workforce simply made it easier to exploit them when they needed income to supplement their husbands'

wages or to support their families when their husbands were unemployed. The desperate need to work at times forced women to do marginal work at home or labor as pieceworkers in sweatshops. "Sweating" referred to the sub-contracting of piecework usually, but not exclusively, in the tailoring trades; it was done at home since it required few skills or equipment. Pieceworkers were poorly paid and worked long hours. The poorest-paid jobs for the cheapest goods were called "slop work." In this description of the room of a London sloop, we see how precarious her position was:

I then directed my steps to the neighborhood of Drury-lane, to see a poor woman who lived in an attic on one of the closest courts in that quarter. On the table was a quarter of an ounce of tea. Observing my eye to rest upon it, she told me it was all she took. "Sugar," she said, "I broke myself of long ago; I couldn't afford it. A cup of tea, a piece of bread, and an onion is generally all I have for my dinner, and sometimes I haven't even an onion, and then I sops my bread."<sup>2</sup>

Often excluded from factories and in need of income, many women had no choice but to work for the pitiful wages of the sweated industries.

**WHITE-COLLAR JOBS** After 1870, however, new job opportunities for women became available. Although the growth of heavy industry in the mining, metallurgy, engineering, chemicals, and electrical sectors meant fewer jobs for women in manufacturing, the development of larger industrial plants and the expansion of government services created a large number of service or white-collar jobs. The increased demand for white-collar workers at relatively low wages, coupled with a shortage of male workers, led employers to hire women.



**New Jobs for Women: The Telephone Exchange.** The invention of the telephone in 1876 soon led to its widespread use. As is evident from this illustration of a telephone exchange in New York, most of the telephone operators were women. This was but one of a number of new job opportunities for women created by the Second Industrial Revolution.

Big businesses and retail shops needed clerks, typists, secretaries, file clerks, and salesclerks. The expansion of government services created opportunities for women to be secretaries and telephone operators and to take jobs in health and social services. Compulsory education necessitated more teachers, and the development of modern hospital services opened the way for an increase in nurses.

Many of the new white-collar jobs were unexciting. The work was routine and, except for teaching and nursing, required few skills beyond basic literacy. Although there was little hope for advancement, these jobs had distinct advantages for the daughters of the middle classes and especially the upward-aspiring working classes. For some middle-class women, the new jobs offered freedom from the domestic patterns expected of them. Nevertheless, because middle-class women did not receive an education comparable to that of men, the careers they could pursue were limited. Thus, they found it easier to fill the jobs at the lower end of middle-class occupations, such as teaching and civil service jobs, especially in the postal service.

Most of the new white-collar jobs, however, were filled by working-class women who saw them as an opportunity to escape from the “dirty” work of the lower-class world. Studies in France and Britain indicate that the increase in white-collar jobs did not lead to a rise in the size of the female labor force, but resulted only in a shift from industrial jobs to the white-collar sector of the economy.

**PROSTITUTION** Despite the new job opportunities, many lower-class women were forced to become prostitutes to survive. The rural, working-class girls who flocked into the cities in search of new opportunities were often naive and vulnerable. Employment was unstable, and wages were low. No longer protected by family or village community and church,

some girls faced only one grim alternative—prostitution. In Paris, London, and many other large cities with transient populations, thousands of prostitutes plied their trade. One journalist estimated that there were 60,000 prostitutes in London in 1885 (see the box on p. 698). Most prostitutes were active for only a short time, usually from their late teens through their early twenties. Many eventually joined the regular workforce or married when they could.

In most European countries, prostitution was licensed and regulated by government and municipal authorities. Although the British government provided minimal regulation of prostitution, in the 1870s and 1880s it did attempt to enforce the Contagious Diseases Acts by giving authorities the right to examine prostitutes for venereal disease. Prostitutes found to be infected were confined for some time to special institutions called lock hospitals, where they were given moral instruction. But opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts soon arose from middle-class female reformers. Their leader was Josephine Butler (1828–1906), who objected to laws that punished women but not men who suffered from venereal disease. Known as the “shrieking sisters” because they discussed sexual matters in public, Butler and her fellow reformers were successful in gaining the repeal of the acts in 1886.

## Organizing the Working Classes

In the first half of the nineteenth century, many workers had formed trade unions that had functioned primarily as mutual aid societies (see Chapter 20). In return for a small weekly payment, the unions provided benefits to assist unemployed workers. In the late nineteenth century, the desire to improve their working and living conditions led many industrial workers to form political parties and labor unions, often based on the ideas of Karl Marx (see Chapter 22). One of the most



# Prostitution in Victorian London

AS CITIES GREW, MANY WOMEN LIVING without family support turned to prostitution to survive. The increase in prostitution led to the spread of venereal disease, prompting public health officials to call for laws against prostitutes. In England, the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s allowed police to arrest women on suspicion of prostitution. Men who frequented prostitutes were rarely charged, however, and a public outcry against the laws led to their repeal and a more sympathetic view of prostitution by the end of the century. In the meantime, journalists such as Henry Mayhew began to interview prostitutes in an effort to understand their plight. This excerpt, which tells the story of a young London prostitute, was published in Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* in 1862.

## Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*

The narrative which follows—that of a prostitute, sleeping in the low-lodging houses, where boys and girls are huddled promiscuously together, discloses a system of depravity, atrocity, and enormity, which certainly cannot be paralleled in any nation, however, barbarous, nor in any age, however “dark.” . . .

A good-looking girl of sixteen gave me the following awful statement:

“I am an orphan. When I was ten I was sent to service as maid of all-work, in a small tradesman’s family. It was a hard place, and my mistress used me very cruelly, beating me often. When I had been in place three weeks, my mother died; my father having died . . . years before. I stood my mistress’s ill-treatment for about six months. She beat me with sticks as well as her hands. I was black and blue, and at

last I ran away. I got to Mrs. —, a low lodging-house. I didn’t know before that there was such a place. . . .

“During this time I used to see boys and girls from ten and twelve years old sleeping together, but understood nothing wrong. I had never heard of such places before I ran away. I can neither read nor write. My mother was a good woman, and I wish I’d had her to run away to. . . .

“At the month’s end, when I was beat out, I met with a young man of fifteen—I myself was going on twelve years old—and he persuaded me to take up with him. I stayed with him three months in the same lodging house, living with him as his wife, though we were mere children, and being true to him. At the three months’ end he was taken up for picking pockets, and got six months. I was sorry, for he was kind to me; . . . [I] was forced to go into the streets for a living. I continued walking the streets for three years, sometimes making a good deal of money, sometimes none, feasting one day and starving the next. . . .

“I lodged all this time at a lodging-house in Kent-street. They were all thieves and bad girls. I have known between three and four dozen boys and girls sleep in one room. The beds were filth and full of vermin. . . .

“At the house where I am [now] it is 3d. a night; but at Mrs. —’s it is 1d. and 2d. a night, and just the same goings on. Many a girl—nearly all of them—goes out into the streets from this penny and twopenny house, to get money for their favourite boys by prostitution. If the girl cannot get money she must steal something, or will be beaten by her ‘chap’ when she comes home.”



What role did poverty play in prostitution? Based on this account, what other options did a poor orphan girl have?

Source: Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor: Cyclopaedia of the Conditions and Earnings of Those that Will Work, Those that Cannot Work, and Those that Will Not Work* (London: Charles Griffin & Co., 1862) Vol. 1, pp. 458–460

important working-class or socialist parties was formed in Germany in 1875.

**SOCIALIST PARTIES** Under the direction of its two Marxist leaders, Wilhelm Liebknecht (VIL-helm LEEP-knekht) (1826–1900) and August Bebel (ow-GOOST BAY-bul) (1840–1913), the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) espoused revolutionary Marxist rhetoric while organizing itself as a mass political party competing in elections for the Reichstag (the German parliament). Once in the Reichstag, SPD delegates worked to enact legislation to improve the condition of the working class. As August Bebel explained, “Pure negation would not be accepted by the voters. The masses demand that something should be done for today irrespective of what will happen on the morrow.”<sup>3</sup> Despite government efforts to destroy it (see “Central and Eastern Europe:

Persistence of the Old Order” later in this chapter), the SPD continued to grow. In 1890, it received 1.5 million votes and thirty-five seats in the Reichstag. When it received 4 million votes in the 1912 elections, it became the largest single party in Germany.

Socialist parties also emerged in other European states, although none proved as successful as the German Social Democrats. France had a variety of socialist parties, including a Marxist one. The leader of French socialism, Jean Jaurès (ZHANNH zhaw-RESS) (1859–1914), was an independent socialist who looked to the French revolutionary tradition rather than Marxism to justify revolutionary socialism. In 1905, the French socialist parties succeeded in unifying themselves into a single, mostly Marxist-oriented socialist party. Social democratic parties on the German model were founded in Belgium, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, and the Netherlands before 1900.



**“Proletarians of the World, Unite.”** To improve their working and living conditions, many industrial workers, inspired by the ideas of Karl Marx, joined working-class or socialist parties. Pictured here is a socialist-sponsored poster that proclaims in German the closing words of *The Communist Manifesto*: “Proletarians of the World, Unite!”

The Marxist Social Democratic Labor Party had been organized in Russia by 1898.

As the socialist parties grew, agitation for an international organization that would strengthen their position against international capitalism also grew. In 1889, leaders of the various socialist parties formed the Second International, which was organized as a loose association of national groups. Although the Second International took some coordinated actions—May Day (May 1), for example, was made an international labor day to be marked by strikes and mass labor demonstrations—differences often wreaked havoc at the organization’s congresses. Two issues proved particularly divisive: revisionism and nationalism.

**EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM** Some Marxists believed in a pure **Marxism** that accepted the imminent collapse of capitalism and the need for socialist ownership of the means of production. The guiding light of the German Social Democrats, August Bebel, confided to another socialist that “every night I go to sleep with the thought that the last hour of bourgeois society strikes soon.” Earlier, Bebel had said, “I am convinced that the

fulfillment of our aims is so close, that there are few in this hall who will not live to see the day.”<sup>4</sup> But a severe challenge to this orthodox Marxist position arose in the form of **evolutionary socialism**, also known as **revisionism**.

Most prominent among the evolutionary socialists was Eduard Bernstein (AY-doo-art BAYRN-shtyn) (1850–1932), a member of the German Social Democratic Party who had spent years in exile in Britain, where he had been influenced by moderate English socialism and the British parliamentary system. In 1899, Bernstein challenged Marxist orthodoxy with his book *Evolutionary Socialism* in which he argued that some of Marx’s ideas had turned out to be quite wrong (see the box on p. 700). The capitalist system had not broken down, said Bernstein. Contrary to Marx’s assertion, the middle class was actually expanding, not declining. At the same time, the proletariat was not sinking further down; instead, its position was improving as workers experienced a higher standard of living. In the face of this reality, Bernstein discarded Marx’s emphasis on class struggle and revolution. The workers, he asserted, must continue to organize in mass political parties and even work together with the other advanced elements in a nation to bring about change. With the extension of the right to vote, workers were in a better position than ever to achieve their aims through democratic channels. Evolution by democratic means, not revolution, would achieve the desired goal of socialism. German and French socialist leaders, as well as the Second International, condemned evolutionary socialism as heresy and opportunism. But many socialist parties, including the German Social Democrats, while spouting revolutionary slogans, followed Bernstein’s revisionist, gradualist approach.

**THE PROBLEM OF NATIONALISM** A second divisive issue for international socialism was nationalism. Marx and Engels had said that “the working men have no country” and that “national differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie.”<sup>5</sup> They proved drastically wrong. Congresses of the Second International passed resolutions in 1907 and 1910 advocating joint action by workers of different countries to avert war but provided no real machinery to implement the resolutions. In truth, socialist parties varied from country to country and remained tied to national concerns and issues. Socialist leaders always worried that in the end, national loyalties might outweigh class loyalties among the masses. When World War I came in 1914, not only the working-class masses but even many of their socialist party leaders supported the war efforts of their national governments. Nationalism had proved a much more powerful force than socialism.

**THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS** Workers also formed trade unions to improve their working conditions. Attempts to organize the workers did not come until after unions had won the right to strike in the 1870s. Strikes proved necessary to achieve the workers’ goals. A walkout by female workers in the match industry in 1888 and by dockworkers in London the following year led to the establishment of trade union

# The Voice of Evolutionary Socialism: Eduard Bernstein

**THE GERMAN MARXIST EDUARD BERNSTEIN** was regarded as the foremost late-nineteenth-century theorist of Marxist revisionism. In his book *Evolutionary Socialism*, Bernstein argued that Marx had made some fundamental mistakes and that socialists needed to stress cooperation and evolution rather than class conflict and revolution.

## Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*

It has been maintained in a certain quarter that the practical deductions from my treatises would be the abandonment of the conquest of political power by the proletariat organized politically and economically. That is quite an arbitrary deduction, the accuracy of which I altogether deny.

I set myself against the notion that we have to expect shortly a collapse of the bourgeois economy, and that social democracy should be induced by the prospect of such an imminent, great, social catastrophe to adapt its tactics to that assumption. That I maintain most emphatically.

The adherents of this theory of a catastrophe base it especially on the conclusions of the *Communist Manifesto*. This is a mistake in every respect.

The theory which the *Communist Manifesto* sets forth of the evolution of modern society was correct as far as it characterized the general tendencies of that evolution. But it was mistaken in several special deductions, above all in the estimate of the time the evolution would take. . . . But it is evident that if social evolution takes a much greater period of time than was assumed, it must also take upon itself forms and lead to forms that were not foreseen and could not be foreseen then.

Social conditions have not developed to such an acute opposition of things and classes as is depicted in the *Manifesto*. It is not only useless, it is the greatest folly to attempt to conceal this from ourselves. The number of members of the possessing classes is today not smaller but larger. The enormous increase of social wealth is not accompanied by a decreasing number of large capitalists but by an increasing number of capitalists of all degrees. The middle classes

change their character but they do not disappear from the social scale. . . .

In all advanced countries we see the privileges of the capitalist bourgeoisie yielding step by step to democratic organizations. Under the influence of this, and driven by the movement of the working classes which is daily becoming stronger, a social reaction has set in against the exploiting tendencies of capital, a counteraction which, although it still proceeds timidly and feebly, yet does exist, and is always drawing more departments of economic life under its influence. Factory legislation, the democratizing of local government, and the extension of its area of work, the freeing of trade unions and systems of cooperative trading from legal restrictions, the consideration of standard conditions of labor in the work undertaken by public authorities—all these characterize this phase of the evolution.

But the more the political organizations of modern nations are democratized the more the needs and opportunities of great political catastrophes are diminished. . . . But is the conquest of political power by the proletariat simply to be by a political catastrophe? Is it to be the appropriation and utilization of the power of the State by the proletariat exclusively against the whole non-proletarian world? . . .

No one has questioned the necessity for the working classes to gain the control of government. The point at issue is between the theory of a social cataclysm and the question whether, with the given social development in Germany and the present advanced state of its working classes in the towns and the country, a sudden catastrophe would be desirable in the interest of the social democracy. I have denied it and deny it again, because in my judgment a greater security for lasting success lies in a steady advance than in the possibilities offered by a catastrophic crash.

**Q** Based on this selection, how would you define evolutionary socialism? What broader forces in nineteenth-century European society came together to promote this type of political thinking?

Source: Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, Edith C. Harney, trans. (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1911), pp. x–xii, xiv.

organizations for both groups. By 1900, 2 million workers were enrolled in British unions, and by the outbreak of World War I, this number had risen to between 3 million and 4 million, although this was still less than one-fifth of the total workforce.

Trade unions failed to develop as quickly on the Continent as they had in Britain. In France, the union movement was from the beginning closely tied to socialist ideology. As there were a number of French socialist parties, the socialist trade unions remained badly splintered. Not until 1895 did French unions create a national organization called the General

Confederation of Labor. Its decentralization and failure to include some of the more important individual unions, however, kept it weak and ineffective.

German trade unions, also closely attached to political parties, were first formed in the 1860s. Although there were liberal trade unions comprising skilled artisans and Catholic or Christian trade unions, the largest German trade unions were those of the socialists. By 1899, even the latter had accepted the practice of collective bargaining with employers. As strikes and collective bargaining achieved successes, German workers were increasingly inclined to forgo revolution for gradual improvements. By

1914, its 3 million members made the German trade union movement the second largest in Europe, after Great Britain's. Almost 85 percent of these 3 million belonged to socialist unions. Trade unions in the rest of Europe had varying degrees of success, but by 1914, they had made considerable progress in bettering the living and working conditions of the laboring classes.

**THE ANARCHIST ALTERNATIVE** Despite the revolutionary rhetoric, socialist parties and trade unions gradually became less radical in pursuing their goals. Indeed, this lack of revolutionary fervor drove some people from Marxist socialism into **anarchism**, a movement that was especially prominent in less industrialized and less democratic countries.

Initially, anarchism was not a violent movement. Early anarchists believed that people were inherently good but had been corrupted by the state and society. True freedom could be achieved only by abolishing the state and all existing social institutions. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, anarchists in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Russia began to advocate using radical means to accomplish this goal. The Russian Michael Bakunin (buh-KOON-yun) (1814–1876), for example, believed that small groups of well-trained, fanatical revolutionaries could perpetrate so much violence that the state and all its institutions would disintegrate. To revolutionary anarchists, that would usher in the anarchist golden age. The Russian anarchist Lev Aleshker wrote shortly before his execution:

Slavery, poverty, weakness, and ignorance—the external fetters of man—will be broken. Man will be at the center of nature. The earth and its products will serve everyone dutifully. Weapons will cease to be a measure of strength and gold a measure of wealth; the strong will be those who are bold and daring in the conquest of nature, and riches will be the things that are useful. Such a world is called “Anarchy.” It will have no castles, no place for masters and slaves. Life will be open to all. Everyone will take what he needs—this is the anarchist ideal. And when it comes about, men will live wisely and well. The masses must take part in the construction of this paradise on earth.<sup>6</sup>

After Bakunin's death in 1876, anarchist revolutionaries used assassination as their primary instrument of terror. Their victims included a Russian tsar (1881), a president of the French Republic (1894), the king of Italy (1900), and a president of the United States (1901). Despite anarchist hopes, these states did not collapse.

## The Emergence of a Mass Society

**Q FOCUS QUESTIONS:** What is a mass society, and what were its main characteristics? What role were women expected to play in society and family life in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and how closely did patterns of family life correspond to this ideal?

The new patterns of industrial production, mass consumption, and working-class organization that we identify with

the Second Industrial Revolution were only one aspect of the new **mass society** that emerged in Europe after 1870. A larger and vastly improved urban environment, new patterns of social structure, gender issues, mass education, and mass leisure were also important features of European society.

## Population Growth

The European population increased dramatically between 1850 and 1910, rising from 270 million to more than 460 million by 1910 (see Table 23.1). Between 1850 and 1880, the main cause of the population increase was a rising birthrate, at least in western Europe, but after 1880, a noticeable decline in death rates largely explains the increase in population. Although the causes of this decline have been debated, two major factors—medical discoveries and environmental conditions—stand out. Some historians have stressed the importance of developments in medical science. Smallpox vaccinations, for example, were compulsory in many European countries by the mid-1850s. More important were improvements in the urban environment in the second half of the nineteenth century that greatly reduced fatalities from such diseases as diarrhea, dysentery, typhoid fever, and cholera, which had been spread through contaminated water

**TABLE 23.1** European Populations, 1851–1911 (in Thousands)

	1851	1881	1911
England and Wales	17,928	25,974	36,070
Scotland	2,889	3,736	4,761
Ireland	6,552	5,175	4,390
France	35,783	37,406	39,192
Germany	33,413	45,234	64,926
Belgium	4,530	5,520	7,424
Netherlands	3,309	4,013	5,858
Denmark	1,415	1,969	2,757
Norway	1,490	1,819	2,392
Sweden	3,471	4,169	5,522
Spain	15,455	16,622	19,927
Portugal	3,844	4,551	5,958
Italy	24,351	28,460	34,671
Switzerland	2,393	2,846	3,753
Austria	17,535	22,144	28,572
Hungary	18,192	15,739	20,886
Russia	68,500	97,700	160,700
Romania	—	4,600	7,000
Bulgaria	—	2,800	4,338
Greece	—	1,679	2,632
Serbia	—	1,700	2,912

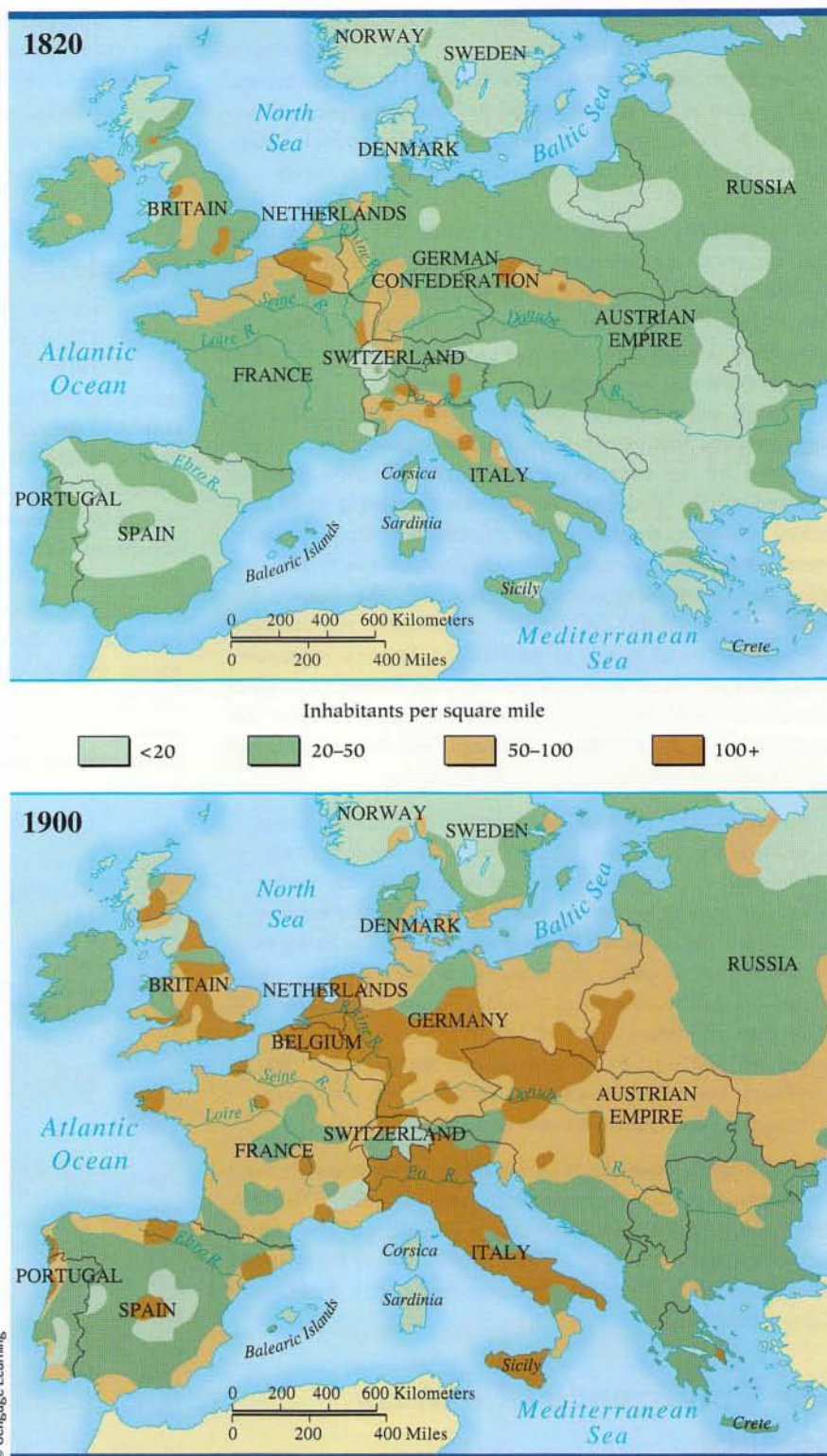
SOURCE: Data from B. R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics, 1750–1970* (New York, 1975).

supplies and improper elimination of sewage. Improved nutrition also made a significant difference in the health of the population. The increase in agricultural productivity combined with improvements in transportation facilitated the shipment of food supplies from areas of surplus to regions with poor harvests. Better nutrition and food hygiene were especially instrumental in the decline in infant mortality by 1900. The pasteurization of milk reduced intestinal disorders that had been a major cause of infant deaths.

## Emigration

Although growing agricultural and industrial prosperity supported an increase in the European population, it could not do so indefinitely, especially in areas that had little industrialization and severe rural overpopulation. Some of the excess labor from underdeveloped areas migrated to the industrial regions of Europe (see Map 23.2). By 1913, more than 400,000 Poles were working in the heavily industrialized Ruhr region of western Germany, and thousands of Italian laborers had migrated to France. The industrialized regions of Europe, however, were not able to absorb the entire surplus population of heavily agricultural regions like southern Italy, Spain, Hungary, and Romania, where the land could not support the growing numbers of people. The booming economies of North America after 1898 and cheap shipping fares after 1900 led to mass emigration from southern and eastern Europe to North America at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1880, about 500,000 people left Europe each year on average; between 1906 and 1910, annual departures increased to 1.3 million, many of them from southern and eastern Europe. Altogether, between 1846 and 1932, probably 60 million Europeans left Europe, half of them bound for the United States and most of the rest for Canada or Latin America (see Table 23.2).

Other concerns besides economic motives also caused people to leave eastern Europe. Migrants from Austria



**MAP 23.2 Population Growth in Europe, 1820–1900.** Europe’s population increased steadily throughout the nineteenth century. Advances in medical science, hygiene, nutrition, living conditions, and standards of living help account for the population increase, even though emigration to the United States, South America, and other regions reduced the total growth numbers.

**Q** Which regions experienced the greatest population growth between 1820 and 1900, and how can you account for this?

**TABLE 23.2** European Emigration, 1876–1910 (Average Annual Emigration to Non-European Countries per 100,000 Population)

	1876–1880	1881–1885	1886–1890	1891–1895	1896–1900	1901–1905	1906–1910
Europe	94	196	213	185	147	271	322
Ireland	650	1,422	1,322	988	759	743	662
Great Britain	102	174	162	119	88	127	172
Denmark	157	380	401	338	117	292	275
Norway	432	1,105	819	597	312	903	746
Sweden	301	705	759	587	249	496	347
Germany	108	379	207	163	47	50	44
Belgium	—	—	86	50	23	57	69
Netherlands	32	136	111	76	25	45	58
France	8	14	49	14	13	12	12
Spain	—	280	437	434	446	391	758
Portugal	258	356	423	609	417	464	694
Italy	396	542	754	842	974	1,706	1,938
Austria	48	90	114	182	182	355	469
Hungary	—	92	156	134	205	437	616
Russia	6	13	42	47	32	63	67

SOURCE: Robert Gildea, *Barricades and Borders: Europe, 1800–1914* (Oxford, 1987), p. 283.

and Hungary, for example, were not the dominant nationalities, the Germans and Magyars, but mostly their oppressed minorities, such as Poles, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats, Romanians, and Jews. Between 1880 and 1914, some 3.5 million Poles from Russia, Austria, and Germany went to the United States. Jews, who were severely persecuted, constituted 40 percent of the Russian emigrants to the United States between 1900 and 1913 and almost 12 percent of all emigrants to the United States during the first five years of the twentieth century.

## Transformation of the Urban Environment

One of the most important consequences of industrialization and the population explosion of the nineteenth century was urbanization. In the course of the nineteenth century, urban dwellers came to make up an ever-increasing percentage of the European population. In 1800, they constituted 40 percent of the population in Britain, 25 percent in France and Germany, and only 10 percent in eastern Europe. By 1914, urban inhabitants had increased to 80 percent of the population in Britain, 45 percent in France, 60 percent in Germany, and 30 percent in eastern Europe. The size of cities also expanded dramatically, especially in industrialized countries. In 1800, there were 21 European cities with populations over 100,000; by 1900, there were 147. Between 1800 and 1900, London's population grew from 960,000 to 6.5 million and Berlin's from 172,000 to 2.7 million.

Urban populations grew faster than the general population primarily because of the vast migration from rural areas to cities. People were driven from the countryside to the cities by sheer economic necessity—unemployment, land hunger, and physical want. Urban centers offered something positive

as well, usually mass employment in factories and later in service trades and professions. But cities also grew faster in the second half of the nineteenth century because health and living conditions in them were improving.

**IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS** In the 1840s, a number of urban reformers, such as Edwin Chadwick in Britain (see Chapter 20) and Rudolf Virchow (ROO-dulf FEER-khoh) and Solomon Neumann (NOI-mahn) in Germany, had pointed to filthy living conditions as the primary cause of epidemic disease and urged sanitary reforms to correct the problem. Soon legislative acts created boards of health that brought governmental action to bear on public health issues. Urban medical officers and building inspectors were authorized to inspect dwellings for public health hazards. New building regulations made it more difficult for private contractors to build shoddy housing. The Public Health Act of 1875 in Britain, for example, prohibited the construction of new buildings without running water and an internal drainage system. For the first time in Western history, the role of municipal governments had been expanded to include detailed regulations for the improvement of the living conditions of urban dwellers.

Essential to the public health of the modern European city was the ability to bring clean water into the city and to expel sewage from it. The accomplishment of those two tasks was a major engineering feat in the second half of the nineteenth century. With the construction of dams and reservoirs to store clean water and aqueducts and tunnels to carry it from the countryside to the city and into individual dwellings, people could bathe and drink water that was not contaminated with waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid. Regular private baths became accessible to more people as gas

**Sewers in Paris.** Like London and Frankfurt, Paris constructed a vast sewer system. It extended 348 miles under the city by 1870. The sewers quickly became a tourist attraction, and riders took tours of the vast underground network, as shown in this 1878 lithograph of an excursion through the Paris sewers.

© Classic Image/Alamy



heaters in the 1860s and later electric heaters made hot baths possible. The shower had appeared by the 1880s.

The treatment of wastewater was improved by building mammoth underground pipes that carried raw sewage far from the city for disposal. In the late 1860s, a number of German cities began to construct sewer systems. Frankfurt began its program after a lengthy public campaign enlivened by the slogan “From the toilet to the river in half an hour.” London devised a system of five enormous sewers that discharged their loads 12 miles from the city, where the waste was chemically treated. Unfortunately, in many places, new underground sewers simply discharged their raw sewage into what soon became highly polluted lakes and rivers. Nevertheless, the development of pure water and sewerage systems dramatically improved the public health of European cities.

Another effort to improve the urban environment involved the creation of public parks to help combat air pollution and provide a place where city dwellers could enjoy fresh air and sunshine. In many cities, reformers pushed for more green space. London devoted more than 190 acres to the creation of Victoria Park in 1842; by 1869, Paris had increased the size of its municipal parks from 47 to 4,500 acres.

**HOUSING NEEDS** Middle-class reformers who denounced the unsanitary living conditions of the working classes also focused on their housing needs. Overcrowded, disease-ridden slums were viewed as dangerous not only to physical health but also to the political and moral health of the entire nation. V. A. Huber (1800–1869), the foremost early German housing

reformer, wrote in 1861, “Certainly it would not be too much to say that the home is the communal embodiment of family life. Thus, the purity of the dwelling is almost as important for the family as is the cleanliness of the body for the individual.”<sup>7</sup> To Huber, good housing was a prerequisite for a stable family life and hence a stable society.

Early efforts to attack the housing problem emphasized the middle-class, liberal belief in the efficacy of private enterprise. Reformers such as Huber believed that the construction of model dwellings renting at a reasonable price would force other private landlords to elevate their housing standards. A fine example of this approach was the work of Octavia Hill (1838–1912), granddaughter of a celebrated social reformer (see the box on p. 705). With the financial assistance of a friend, she rehabilitated some old dwellings and constructed new ones to create housing for 3,500 tenants.

As the number and size of cities continued to mushroom, by the 1880s governments came to the conclusion—reluctantly—that private enterprise could not solve the housing crisis. In 1890, a British law empowered local town councils to collect new taxes and construct cheap housing for the working classes. London and Liverpool were the first communities to take advantage of their new powers. Similar activity had been set in motion in Germany by 1900. Everywhere, however, these lukewarm measures failed to do much to meet the real housing needs of the working classes. In housing, as in so many other areas of life in the late nineteenth century, the liberal principle that the government that governs least governs best had simply proved untrue. More and

# The Housing Venture of Octavia Hill

**OCTAVIA HILL WAS A PRACTICAL-MINDED** British housing reformer who believed that workers and their families were entitled to happy homes. At the same time, she was convinced that the poor needed guidance and encouragement, not charity. In this selection, she describes her housing venture.

## *Octavia Hill, Homes of the London Poor*

About four years ago I was put in possession of three houses in one of the worst courts of Marylebone. Six other houses were bought subsequently. All were crowded with inmates.

The first thing to be done was to put them in decent tenantable order. The set last purchased was a row of cottages facing a bit of desolate ground, occupied with wretched, dilapidated cow-sheds, manure heaps, old timber, and rubbish of every description. The houses were in a most deplorable condition—the plaster was dropping from the walls; on one staircase a pail was placed to catch the rain that fell through the roof. All the staircases were perfectly dark; the banisters were gone, having been burnt as firewood by tenants. The grates, with large holes in them, were falling forward into the rooms. The wash-house, full of lumber belonging to the landlord, was locked up; thus, the inhabitants had to wash clothes, as well as to cook, eat and sleep in their small rooms. The dustbin, standing in the front part of the houses, was accessible to the whole neighborhood, and boys often dragged from it quantities of unseemly objects and spread them over the court. The state of the drainage was in keeping with everything else. The pavement of the back-yard was all broken up, and great puddles stood in it, so that the damp crept up the outer walls. . . .

As soon as I entered into possession, each family had an opportunity of doing better: those who would not pay, or who led clearly immoral lives, were ejected. The rooms they vacated were cleansed; the tenants who showed signs of improvement moved into them, and thus, in turn, an

opportunity was obtained for having each room distempered [painted] and papered. The drains were put in order, a large slate cistern was fixed, the wash-house was cleared of its lumber, and thrown open on stated days to each tenant in turn. The roof, the plaster, the woodwork were repaired; the staircase walls were distempered; new grates were fixed; the layers of paper and rag (black with age) were torn from the windows, and glass put in; out of 192 panes only eight were found unbroken. The yard and footpath were paved.

The rooms, as a rule, were re-let at the same prices at which they had been let before; but tenants with large families were counseled to take two rooms, and for these much less was charged than if let singly; this plan I continue to pursue. In-coming tenants are not allowed to take a decidedly insufficient quantity of room, and no subletting is permitted. . . .

The pecuniary result has been very satisfactory. Five percent has been paid on all the capital invested. A fund for the repayment of capital is accumulating. A liberal allowance has been made for repairs. . . .

My tenants are mostly of a class far below that of mechanics. They are, indeed, of the very poor. And yet, although the gifts they have received have been next to nothing, none of the families who have passed under my care during the whole four years have continued in what is called "distress," except such as have been unwilling to exert themselves. Those who will not exert the necessary self-control cannot avail themselves of the means of livelihood held out to them. But, for those who are willing, some small assistance in the form of work has, from time to time, been provided—not much, but sufficient to keep them from want or despair.



*Did Octavia Hill's housing venture generate financial returns on her initial investment? What benefits did her tenants receive in turn? What feelings and beliefs about the lower classes are evident in Hill's account?*

Source: From Octavia Hill, *Homes of the London Poor* (New York: Macmillan, 1875), pp. 15–16, 17–18, 23.

more, governments were stepping into areas of activity that they would never have touched earlier.

**REDESIGNING THE CITIES** Housing was but one area of urban reconstruction after 1870. As urban populations expanded in the nineteenth century, the older layout, confining the city to a compact area enclosed by defensive walls, seemed restrictive and utterly useless. In the second half of the nineteenth century, many of the old defensive walls—worthless anyway from a military standpoint—were pulled down, and the areas were converted into parks and boulevards. In Vienna, for example, the great boulevards of the Ringstrasse replaced the old medieval walls. While

the broad streets served a military purpose—the rapid deployment of troops to crush civil disturbances—they also offered magnificent views of the city hall, the university, and the parliament building, all powerful symbols of middle-class social values.

Like Vienna, many European urban centers were redesigned during the second half of the nineteenth century. The reconstruction of Paris after 1850 by Emperor Napoleon III was perhaps the most famous project and provided a model for other cities. Paris was reshaped along wide boulevards, twice the width of previous streets and 12 percent longer to accommodate the new city structures. The old residential districts in the central city, many of them working-class slums, were demolished and





**Paris Transformed.** These two photographs, both of L'avenue de l'Opéra, show the degree of destruction that was needed to create the grand boulevards and monuments of late-nineteenth-century Paris. The first photograph was taken in 1865, and the second is from the 1880s. Evident in the latter photograph are the new uniform buildings, gas street lamps, and broad boulevards that linked the city's great cultural sites, such as the Opéra, shown in the background—the most expensive building constructed during the Second Empire.

replaced with town halls, government office buildings, retail stores including the new department stores, museums, cafés, and theaters, all of which provided for the shopping and recreational pleasures of the middle classes.

As cities expanded and entire groups of people were displaced from urban centers by reconstruction, city populations spilled over into the neighboring villages and countrysides, which were soon incorporated into the cities. The construction of streetcar and commuter train lines by the turn of the century enabled both working-class and middle-class populations to live in their own suburban neighborhoods far removed from their places of work. Cheap, modern transportation essentially separated home and work for many Europeans.

## Social Structure of the Mass Society

Despite the improvements in living standards for many people in the last decades of the nineteenth century, wide disparities in wealth continued to exist. While the wealthiest members of the upper middle class were finding their way into the upper classes and the numbers of the middle classes were growing, most Europeans were still in the lower classes.

**THE UPPER CLASSES** At the top of European society stood a wealthy elite, constituting only 5 percent of the population but controlling between 30 and 40 percent of its wealth. In the course of the nineteenth century, aristocrats coalesced with the most successful industrialists, bankers, and merchants to form this new elite. Big business had produced this group of wealthy **plutocrats**, while aristocrats, whose income from landed estates had declined, invested in railway shares, public utilities, government bonds, and businesses, sometimes on their own estates. Gradually, the greatest fortunes shifted into the hands of the upper middle class. In Great Britain, for example, landed aristocrats constituted 73 percent of the country's millionaires at midcentury, while commercial and financial magnates made up 14 percent. By the period 1900–1914, landowners had declined to 27 percent.

Increasingly, aristocrats and plutocrats fused as the wealthy upper middle class purchased landed estates to join the aristocrats in the pleasures of country living and the aristocrats bought lavish town houses for part-time urban life. Common bonds were also forged when the sons of wealthy middle-class families were admitted to the elite schools dominated by the children of the aristocracy. At Oxford, the landed upper class made up 40 percent of the student body in 1870 but only 15 percent in 1910, while undergraduates from business families went from 7 to 21 percent during the same period. This educated elite, whether aristocratic or middle class in background, assumed leadership roles in government bureaucracies and military hierarchies. Marriage also served to unite the two groups. Daughters of tycoons acquired titles, while aristocratic heirs gained new sources of cash. Wealthy American heiresses were especially in demand. When Consuelo Vanderbilt married the duke of Marlborough, the new duchess brought £2.5 million (approximately \$67 million) to her husband.

**THE MIDDLE CLASSES** The middle classes consisted of a variety of groups. Just below the upper middle class were such traditional groups as professionals in law, medicine, and the civil service as well as moderately well-to-do industrialists and

merchants. The industrial expansion of the nineteenth century also added new groups to this segment of the middle class. These included business managers and new professionals, such as the engineers, architects, accountants, and chemists who formed professional associations as the symbols of their newfound importance. A lower middle class of small shopkeepers, traders, manufacturers, and prosperous peasants provided goods and services for the classes above them.

Standing between the lower middle class and the lower classes were new groups of white-collar workers who were the product of the Second Industrial Revolution. They included traveling sales representatives, bookkeepers, bank tellers, telephone operators, department store salesclerks, and secretaries. Although largely propertyless and often paid little more than skilled laborers, these white-collar workers were generally committed to middle-class ideals and optimistic about improving their status.

The moderately prosperous and successful middle classes shared a common lifestyle and values that dominated nineteenth-century society. The members of the middle class were especially active in preaching their worldview to their children and to the upper and lower classes of their society. This was particularly evident in Victorian Britain, often considered a model of middle-class society. It was the European middle classes who accepted and promulgated the importance of progress and science. They believed in hard work, which they viewed as the primary human good, open to everyone and guaranteed to have positive results. They were also regular churchgoers who believed in the good conduct associated with traditional Christian morality. The middle class was concerned with propriety, the right way of doing things, which gave rise to an incessant number of books aimed at the middle-class market with such titles as *The Habits of Good Society* and *Don't: A Manual of Mistakes and Improprieties More or Less Prevalent in Conduct and Speech*.

**THE LOWER CLASSES** Almost 80 percent of Europeans belonged to the lower classes. Many of them were landholding peasants, agricultural laborers, and sharecroppers, especially in eastern Europe. This was less true, however, in western and central Europe. About 10 percent of the British population worked in agriculture; in Germany, the figure was 25 percent. Many prosperous, landowning peasants shared the values of the middle class. Military conscription brought peasants into contact with the other groups of society, and state-run elementary schools forced the children of peasants to speak the national dialect and accept national loyalties.

The urban working class consisted of many different groups, including skilled artisans in such trades as cabinetmaking, printing, and jewelry making. Semiskilled laborers, who included such people as carpenters, bricklayers, and many factory workers, earned wages that were about two-thirds of those of highly skilled workers. At the bottom of the working-class hierarchy stood the largest group of workers, the unskilled laborers. They included day laborers, who worked irregularly for very low wages, and large numbers of domestic servants. One out of every seven employed persons in Great Britain in 1900 was a domestic servant. Most were women.

Urban workers did experience a real betterment in the material conditions of their lives after 1871. For one thing, urban improvements meant better living conditions. A rise in real wages, accompanied by a decline in many consumer costs, especially in the 1880s and 1890s, made it possible for workers to buy more than just food and housing. Workers' budgets now provided money for more clothes and even leisure at the same time that strikes and labor agitation were winning shorter (ten-hour) workdays and Saturday afternoons off.

## "The Woman Question": The Role of Women

"The woman question" was the catchphrase used to refer to the debate over the role of women in society. In the nineteenth century, women remained legally inferior, economically dependent, and largely defined by family and household roles. Many women still aspired to the ideal of femininity popularized by writers and poets. Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem *The Princess* expressed it well:

*Man for the field and woman for the hearth:  
Man for the sword and for the needle she:  
Man with the head and woman with the heart:  
Man to command and woman to obey;  
All else confusion.*

Historians have pointed out that this traditional characterization of the sexes, based on gender-defined social roles, was elevated to the status of universal male and female attributes in the nineteenth century, due largely to the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the family. As the chief family wage earners, men worked outside the home, while women were left with the care of the family, for which they were paid nothing. Of course, the ideal did not always match reality, especially for the lower classes, where the need for supplemental income drove women to do sweatwork.

**MARRIAGE AND DOMESTICITY** Throughout most of the nineteenth century, marriage was viewed as the only honorable career available for most women. Though the middle class glorified the ideal of domesticity (see the box on p. 708) for most women, marriage was a matter of economic necessity. The lack of meaningful work and the lower wages paid to women made it difficult for single women to earn a living. Retiring to convents as in the past was no longer an option; many spinsters who could not find sufficiently remunerative work therefore elected to enter domestic service as live-in servants. Most women chose instead to marry, which was reflected in an increase in marriage rates and a decline in illegitimacy rates in the course of the nineteenth century.

**BIRTHRATES AND BIRTH CONTROL** Birthrates also dropped significantly at this time. A very important factor in the evolution of the modern family was the decline in the number of offspring born to the average woman. The change was not necessarily due to new technological products. Although the invention of vulcanized rubber in the 1840s made possible the

## Advice to Women: Two Views

**INDUSTRIALIZATION HAD A STRONG IMPACT** on middle-class women as gender-based social roles became the norm. Men worked outside the home to support the family, while women provided for the needs of their children and husband at home. In the first selection, *Woman in Her Social and Domestic Character* (1842), Elizabeth Poole Sanford gives advice to middle-class women on their proper role and behavior.

Although a majority of women probably followed the nineteenth-century middle-class ideal of women as keepers of the household and nurturers of husband and children, an increasing number of women fought for the rights of women. The second selection is taken from the third act of Henrik Ibsen's 1879 play *A Doll's House*, in which the character Nora Helmer declares her independence from her husband's control.

### Elizabeth Poole Sanford, *Woman in Her Social and Domestic Character*

The changes wrought by Time are many. It influences the opinions of men as familiarity does their feelings; it has a tendency to do away with superstition, and to reduce every thing to its real worth.

It is thus that the sentiment for woman has undergone a change. The romantic passion which once almost deified her is on the decline; and it is by intrinsic qualities that she must now inspire respect. She is no longer the queen of song and the star of chivalry. But if there is less of enthusiasm entertained for her, the sentiment is more rational, and, perhaps, equally sincere; for it is in relation to happiness that she is chiefly appreciated.

And in this respect it is, we must confess, that she is most useful and most important. Domestic life is the chief source of her influence; and the greatest debt society can owe to her is domestic comfort; for happiness is almost an element of virtue; and nothing conduces more to improve the character of men than domestic peace. A woman may make a man's home delightful, and may thus increase his motives for virtuous exertion. She may refine and tranquilize his mind,—may turn away his anger or allay his grief. Her smile may be the happy influence to gladden his heart, and to disperse the cloud that gathers on his brow. And in proportion to her endeavors to make those around her happy, she will be esteemed and loved. She will secure by her excellence that interest and that regard which she might formerly claim as the privilege of her sex, and will really merit the deference which was then conceded to her as a matter of course. . . .

Perhaps one of the first secrets of her influence is adaptation to the tastes, and sympathy in the feelings, of

those around her. This holds true in lesser as well as in graver points. It is in the former, indeed, that the absence of interest in a companion is frequently most disappointing. Where want of congeniality impairs domestic comfort, the fault is generally chargeable on the female side. It is for woman, not for man, to make the sacrifice, especially in indifferent matters. She must, in a certain degree, be plastic herself if she would mold others. . . .

Nothing is so likely to conciliate the affections of the other sex as a feeling that woman looks to them for support and guidance. In proportion as men are themselves superior, they are accessible to this appeal. On the contrary, they never feel interested in one who seems disposed rather to offer than to ask assistance. There is, indeed, something unfeminine in independence. It is contrary to nature, and therefore it offends. We do not like to see a woman affecting tremors, but still less do we like to see her acting the amazon. A really sensible woman feels her dependence. She does what she can; but she is conscious of inferiority, and therefore grateful for support. She knows that she is the weaker vessel, and that as such she should receive honor. In this view, her weakness is an attraction, not a blemish.

In every thing, therefore, that women attempt, they should show their consciousness of dependence. If they are learners, let them evince a teachable spirit; if they give an opinion, let them do it in an unassuming manner. There is something so unpleasant in female self-sufficiency that it not unfrequently deters instead of persuading, and prevents the adoption of advice which the judgment even approves.

### Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House*

NORA (*Pause*): Does anything strike you as we sit here?

HELMER: What should strike me?

NORA: We've been married eight years; does it not strike you that this is the first time we two, you and I, man and wife, have talked together seriously?

HELMER: Seriously? What do you mean, *seriously*?

NORA: For eight whole years, and more—ever since the day we first met—we have never exchanged one serious word about serious things. . . .

HELMER: Why, my dearest Nora, what have you to do with serious things?

NORA: There we have it! You have never understood me. I've had great injustice done to me, Torvald; first by Father, then by you.

(continued)

(*Opposing Viewpoints continued*)

HELMER: What! Your father *and* me? We, who have loved you more than all the world!

NORA (*Shaking her head*): You have never loved me. You just found it amusing to think you were in love with me.

HELMER: Nora! What a thing to say!

NORA: Yes, it's true, Torvald. When I was living at home with Father, he told me his opinions and mine were the same. If I had different opinions, I said nothing about them, because he would not have liked it. He used to call me his doll-child and played with me as I played with my dolls. Then I came to live in your house.

HELMER: What a way to speak of our marriage!

NORA (*Undisturbed*): I mean that I passed from Father's hands into yours. You arranged everything to your taste and I got the same tastes as you; or pretended to—I don't know which—both, perhaps; sometimes one, sometimes the other. When I look back on it now, I seem to have been living here like a beggar, on handouts. I lived by performing tricks for you, Torvald. But that was how you wanted it. You and Father have done me a great wrong. It is your fault that my life has come to naught.

HELMER: Why, Nora, how unreasonable and ungrateful! Haven't you been happy here?

NORA: No, never. I thought I was, but I never was.

HELMER: Not—not happy! . . .

NORA: I must stand quite alone if I am ever to know myself and my surroundings; so I cannot stay with you.

HELMER: Nora! Nora!

NORA: I am going at once. I daresay [my friend] Christina will take me in for tonight.

HELMER: You are mad! I shall not allow it! I forbid it!

NORA: It's no use your forbidding me anything now. I shall take with me only what belongs to me; from you I will accept nothing, either now or later.

HELMER: This is madness!

NORA: Tomorrow I shall go home—I mean to what was my home. It will be easier for me to find a job there.

HELMER: On, in your blind inexperience—

NORA: I must try to gain experience, Torvald.

HELMER: Forsake your home, your husband, your children! And you don't consider what the world will say.

NORA: I can't pay attention to that. I only know that I must do it.

HELMER: This is monstrous! Can you forsake your holiest duties?

NORA: What do you consider my holiest duties?

HELMER: Need I tell you that? Your duties to your husband and children.

NORA: I have other duties equally sacred.

HELMER: Impossible! What do you mean?

NORA: My duties toward myself.

HELMER: Before all else you are a wife and a mother.

NORA: That I no longer believe. Before all else I believe I am a human being just as much as you are—or at least that I should try to become one. I know that most people agree with you, Torvald, and that they say so in books. But I can no longer be satisfied with what most people say and what is in books. I must think things out for myself and try to get clear about them.



According to Elizabeth Sanford, what is the proper role of women? What forces in nineteenth-century European society merged to shape Sanford's understanding of "proper" gender roles? In Ibsen's play, what challenges does Nora Helmer make to Sanford's view of the proper role and behavior of wives? Why is her husband so shocked? Why did Ibsen title this play *A Doll's House*?

Sources: Elizabeth Poole Sanford, *Woman in Her Social and Domestic Character*. From Elizabeth Poole Sanford, *Woman, in Her Social and Domestic Character* (Boston: Otis, Broaders & Co., 1842), pp. 5–7, 15–16. Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House*. Excerpt as appeared in *Roots of Western Civilization* by Wesley D. Camp (Wiley, 1983).

production of condoms and diaphragms, they were not widely used as effective contraceptive devices until World War I. Some historians maintain that the change in attitude that led parents to deliberately limit the number of offspring was more important than the method used. Although some historians attribute increased birth control to more widespread use of coitus interruptus, or male withdrawal before ejaculation, others have emphasized the ability of women to restrict family size through abortion and even infanticide or abandonment. That a change in attitude occurred was apparent in the emergence of a movement to increase awareness of

birth control methods. Authorities prosecuted individuals who spread information about contraception for "depraving public morals" but were unable to stop them. In 1882 in Amsterdam, Dr. Aletta Jacob founded Europe's first birth control clinic. Initially, "family planning" was the suggestion of reformers who thought that the problem of poverty could be solved by reducing the number of children among the lower classes. In fact, the practice spread quickly among the propertied classes, rather than among the impoverished, a good reminder that considerable differences still remained between middle-class and working-class families.

**THE MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILY** The family was the central institution of middle-class life (see *Images of Everyday Life* on p. 711). Men provided the family income, while women focused on household and child care. The use of domestic servants in many middle-class homes, made possible by an abundant supply of cheap labor, reduced the amount of time middle-class women had to spend on household work. At the same time, by limiting the number of children in the family, mothers could devote more time to child care and domestic leisure. The idea that leisure should be used for constructive purposes supported and encouraged the cult of middle-class domesticity.

The middle-class family fostered an ideal of togetherness. The Victorians created the family Christmas with its yule log, Christmas tree, songs, and exchange of gifts. In the United States, Fourth of July celebrations changed from drunken revels to family picnics by the 1850s. The education of middle-class females in domestic crafts, singing, and piano playing prepared them for their function of providing a proper environment for home recreation.

The new domestic ideal had an impact on child raising and children's play. Late-eighteenth-century thought, beginning with Rousseau, had encouraged a new view of children as unique beings, not small adults, which had carried over into the nineteenth century. They were entitled to a long childhood involved in activities with other children their own age. The early environment in which they were raised, it was thought, would determine how they turned out. And mothers were seen as the most important force in protecting children from the harmful influences of the adult world. New children's games and toys, including mass-produced dolls for girls, appeared in middle-class homes. The middle-class emphasis on the functional value of knowledge was also evident in these games. One advice manual maintained that young children should learn checkers because it "calls forth the resources of the mind in the most gentle as well as the most successful manner."

Since middle-class sons were expected to follow careers like their father's, they were sent to schools where they were kept separate from the rest of society until the age of sixteen or seventeen. The schools used sport to "toughen boys up," and their leisure activities centered around both national military concerns and character building. This combination was especially evident in the establishment of the Boy Scouts in Britain in 1908. Boy Scouts provided organized recreation for boys between the ages of twelve and eighteen; adventure was combined with the discipline of earning merit badges and ranks in such a way as to instill ideals of patriotism, self-sacrifice, and masculinity.

The emphasis on manliness stemmed not only from military concerns but also from conceptions of masculinity formed during the late nineteenth century as the middle and upper classes looked for ways to control sexual licentiousness in the form of venereal disease or prostitution. Boy Scouts and *The Scout* magazine promoted an image of manliness with stories of youthful heroes who demonstrated their self-control by conquering the challenges of the wilderness. Thus, the Boy Scouts sought to reinforce Victorian and Edwardian codes of masculinity in an effort to counter the possible

dangers that female domination of the home posed for male development. As one scout leader wrote, "The REAL Boy Scout is not a sissy. [He] adores his mother [but] is not hitched to [her] apron strings."

There was little organized recreational activity of this type for girls, although Robert Baden-Powell (BAD-un-POW-ul) (1857–1941), the founder of the Boy Scouts, did encourage his sister to establish a girls' division as an afterthought. Its goal is evident from Agnes Baden-Powell's comment that "you do not want to make tomboys of refined girls, yet you want to attract, and thus raise, the slum girl from the gutter. The main object is to give them all the ability to be better mothers and Guides to the next generation."<sup>8</sup> Despite her comment, most organizations of this kind were for middle-class children, although some reformers tried to establish boys' clubs for working-class youths to reform them.

The new ideal of the middle-class woman as nurturing mother and wife who "determined the atmosphere of the household" through her character, not her work, frequently did not correspond to reality. In France, Germany, and even mid-Victorian Britain, relatively few families could actually afford to hire a host of servants. More often, middle-class families had one servant, usually a young working-class or country girl not used to middle-class lifestyles. Women, then, were often forced to work quite hard to maintain the expected appearance of the well-ordered household. A German house-keeping manual makes this evident:

It often happens that even high-ranking ladies help at home with housework, and particularly with kitchen chores, scrubbing, etc., so that, above all, the hands have good cause to become very rough, hard, and calloused. When these ladies appear in society, they are extremely upset at having such rough-looking hands. In order to perform the hardest and most ordinary chores . . . and, at the same time, to keep a soft hand like those fine ladies who have no heavier work to do than embroidering and sewing, always keep a piece of fresh bacon, rub your hands with it just before bedtime, and you will fully achieve your goal. You will, as a result, have the inconvenience of having to sleep with gloves on, in order not to soil the bed.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, many middle-class wives were caught in a no-win situation. Often, for the sake of the advancement of her husband's career, she was expected to maintain in public the image of the "idle" wife, freed from demeaning physical labor and able to pass her days in ornamental pursuits. In truth, it was frequently the middle-class woman who paid the price for this facade in a life of unpaid work, carefully managing the family budget and participating in housework that could never be done by only one servant girl. As one historian has argued, the reality of many middle-class women's lives was that "what appears at first glance to be idleness is revealed, on closer examination, to be difficult and tiresome work."

**THE WORKING-CLASS FAMILY** Hard work was, of course, standard fare for women in working-class families. Daughters in working-class families were expected to work until they

## The Middle-Class Family

NINETEENTH-CENTURY MIDDLE-CLASS MORALISTS considered the family the fundamental pillar of a healthy society. The family was a crucial institution in middle-class life, and togetherness constituted one of the important ideals of the middle-class family. The painting below by William P. Frith, titled *Many Happy Returns of the Day*, shows grandparents, parents, and children taking part in a family birthday celebration for a little girl. The servant at the left holds the presents for the little

girl. New games and toys also appeared for middle-class children. The illustration on the bottom left is taken from a book of games of 1889 and shows young girls playing a game called battledore and shuttlecock, which the book describes as “a most convenient game because one solitary individual can find amusement as well as any number, provided there is a bat for each player. The object of the game is to keep the shuttlecock going as long as possible.” The final illustration shows the cover of *The Scout*, a magazine of the scouting movement founded by Robert Baden-Powell. The cover shows one of the new scouts wearing his uniform and watching a ship at sea, an activity that could later have military value in time of war. ☞

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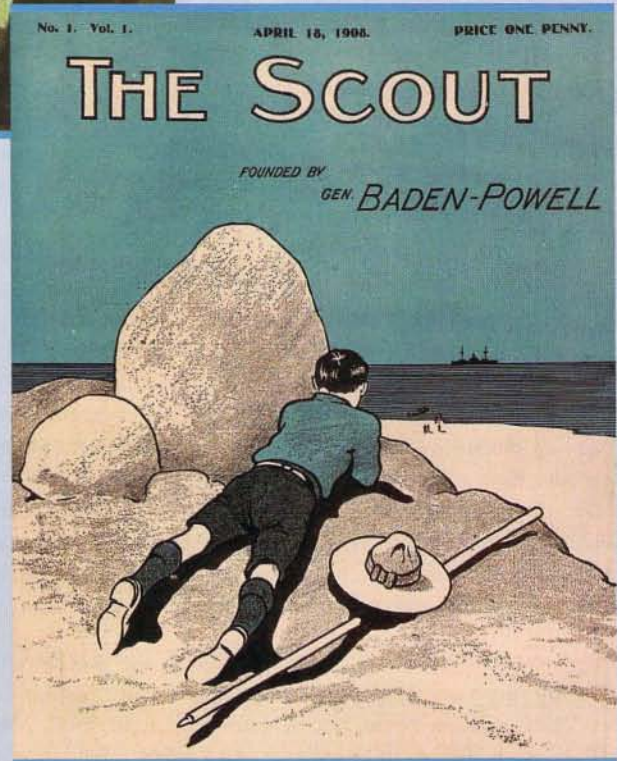
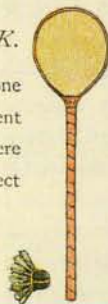


Greenaway Collection, Keats House, London/The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY



### BATTLEDORE & SHUTTLECOCK.

THIS is a most convenient game, because one solitary individual can find amusement as well as any number, provided there is a bat for each player. The object of the game is to keep the shuttlecock going as long as possible.



Bodleian Library (U Boy Scouts), Oxford, UK/The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY

married; even after marriage, they often did piecework at home to help support the family. For the children of the working classes, childhood was over by the age of nine or ten, when they became apprentices or were employed in odd jobs.

Between 1890 and 1914, however, family patterns among the working class began to change. High-paying jobs in heavy industry and improvements in the standard of living made it possible for working-class families to depend on the income of husbands and the wages of grown children. By the early twentieth century, some working-class mothers could afford to stay at home, following the pattern of middle-class women. Women's work patterns varied by country, however; married French women were twice as likely to work outside the home as their British counterparts. In France, married women made up 20 percent of the nonagricultural labor force and contributed almost 15 percent of total family income. Nevertheless, working-class women were increasingly able to focus more on family life and to work only sporadically to supplement the family income.

The working classes also followed the middle classes in limiting the size of their families. Children began to be viewed as dependents rather than as potential wage earners as child labor laws and compulsory education moved children out of the workforce and into schools. Improvements in public health, as well as advances in medicine and a better diet, resulted in a decline in infant mortality rates for the lower classes, especially noticeable in the cities after 1890, and made it easier for working-class families to choose to have fewer children. At the same time, strikes and labor agitation led to laws that reduced work hours to ten per day by 1900 and eliminated work on Saturday afternoons, which enabled working-class parents to devote more attention to their children and develop deeper emotional ties with them. Even working-class fathers became involved in their children's lives. One observer in the French town of Belleville in the 1890s noted that "the workingman's love for his children borders on being an obsession."<sup>10</sup> Interest in educating children as a way to improve their future also grew.

## Education in the Mass Society

**Mass education** was a product of the mass society of the late nineteenth century. Being "educated" in the early nineteenth century meant attending a secondary school or possibly even a university. Secondary schools emphasized a Classical education based on the study of Greek and Latin. Secondary and university education was primarily for the elite, the sons of government officials, nobles, or wealthier middle-class families. After 1850, secondary education was expanded as more middle-class families sought employment in public service and the professions or entry into elite scientific and technical schools.

**UNIVERSAL ELEMENTARY EDUCATION** In the decades after 1870, the functions of the state were extended to include the development of mass education in state-run systems. Most Western governments began to offer at least primary education to both boys and girls between the ages of six and twelve. States also assumed responsibility for the quality of teachers by establishing teacher-training schools. By 1900, many European states,

especially in northern and western Europe, were providing state-financed primary schools, salaried and trained teachers, and free, compulsory elementary education for the masses.

Why did European states make this commitment to mass education? Liberals believed that education was important to personal and social improvement and also sought, as in France, to supplant Catholic education with moral and civic training based on secular values. Even conservatives favored mass education as a means of improving the quality of military recruits and training people in social discipline. In 1875, a German military journal stated, "We in Germany consider education to be one of the principal ways of promoting the strength of the nation and above all military strength."<sup>11</sup>

Another incentive for mass education came from industrialization. In the early Industrial Revolution, unskilled labor was sufficient to meet factory needs, but the new firms of the Second Industrial Revolution demanded skilled labor. Both boys and girls with an elementary education had new possibilities of jobs beyond their villages or small towns, including white-collar jobs in railways, subway stations, post offices, banking and shipping firms, teaching, and nursing. To industrialists, then, mass education furnished the trained workers they needed.

Nevertheless, the chief motive for mass education was political. For one thing, the expansion of voting rights necessitated a more educated electorate. Even more important, however, mass compulsory education instilled patriotism and nationalized the masses, providing an opportunity for even greater national integration. As people lost their ties to local regions and even to religion, nationalism supplied a new faith. The use of a single national language created greater national unity than loyalty to a ruler did.

A nation's motives for universal elementary education largely determined what was taught in its elementary schools. Indoctrination in national values took on great importance. At the core of the academic curriculum were reading, writing, arithmetic, national history (from a patriotic perspective), geography, literature, and some singing and drawing. The education of boys and girls differed, however. Where possible, the sexes were separated. Girls did less math and no science but concentrated on such domestic skills as sewing, washing, ironing, and cooking, all prerequisites for providing a good home for husband and children. Boys were taught some practical skills, such as carpentry, and even some military drill. Most of the elementary schools also inculcated the middle-class virtues of hard work, thrift, sobriety, cleanliness, and respect for the family. For most students, elementary education led to apprenticeship and a job.

**FEMALE TEACHERS** The development of compulsory elementary education created a demand for teachers, and most of them were female. In the United States, for example, women constituted two-thirds of all teachers by the 1880s. Many men viewed the teaching of children as an extension of women's "natural role" as nurturers of children. Moreover, females were paid lower salaries, in itself a considerable incentive for governments to encourage the establishment of teacher-training



**A Women's College.** Women were largely excluded from male-dominated universities before 1900. Consequently, women's desire for higher education led to the establishment of women's colleges, most of which were primarily teacher-training schools. This photograph shows female medical students dissecting cadavers in anatomy class at the Women's Medical College of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

institutes for women. The first colleges for women were really teacher-training schools. In Britain, the women's colleges of Queen's and Bedford were established in the 1840s to provide teacher training for middle-class spinsters who needed to work. Barbara Bodichon (boh-di-SHOHNH) (1827–1891), a pioneer in the development of female education, established her own school where girls were trained for economic independence as well as domesticity. Not until the beginning of the twentieth century, however, were women permitted to enter the male-dominated universities. In France, 3 percent of university students in 1902 were women; by 1914, their number had increased to 10 percent of the total.

**LITERACY AND NEWSPAPERS** The most immediate result of mass education was an increase in literacy. In Germany, Great Britain, France, and the Scandinavian countries, adult illiteracy was virtually eliminated by 1900. Where there was less schooling, the story is very different. Adult illiteracy rates were 79 percent in Serbia, 78 percent in Romania, 72 percent in Bulgaria, and 79 percent in Russia. All of these countries had made only a minimal investment in compulsory mass education.

With the dramatic increase in literacy after 1871 came the rise of mass-circulation newspapers, such as the *Evening News* (1881) and *Daily Mail* (1896) in London, which sold millions of copies a day. Known as the “yellow press” in the United States, these newspapers shared some common characteristics. They were written in an easily understood style and tended toward the sensational. Unlike eighteenth-century newspapers, which were full of serious editorials and lengthy political analyses, these tabloids provided lurid details of crimes, jingoistic diatribes, gossip, and sports news. There were other forms of cheap literature as well. Specialty magazines, such as the *Family Herald* for the entire family, and women's magazines began in the 1860s. Pulp fiction for adults included the extremely popular westerns with their innumerable variations on conflicts

between cowboys and Indians. Literature for the masses was but one feature of the new mass culture; another was the emergence of new forms of leisure.

## Mass Leisure

In the preindustrial centuries, play or leisure activities had been closely connected to work patterns based on the seasonal or daily cycles typical of the life of peasants and artisans. The process of industrialization in the nineteenth century had an enormous impact on those traditional patterns. The factory imposed new work patterns that were determined by the rhythms of machines and clocks and removed work time completely from the family environment of farms and workshops. Work and leisure became opposites as leisure came to be viewed as what people did for fun when not on the job. In fact, the new leisure hours created by the industrial system—evening hours after work, weekends, and later a week or two in the summer—largely determined the contours of the new **mass leisure**.

New technology and business practices also determined the forms of leisure pursuits. Gas street lamps and open boulevards enabled many urban dwellers to escape their cramped working and living conditions to promenade for pleasure. In 1901, an observer from Glasgow wrote, “Here come every night the young persons who have spent the day cooped in shops or warehouses, or offices, and who find sitting at home in dreary lodgings an intolerable torture. On Saturday they come in all the greater number. . . . The lighted street demands no admission money, and so they come in droves.”<sup>12</sup> New technology also created novelties such as the Ferris wheel at amusement parks. The mechanized urban transportation systems of the 1880s meant that even the working classes were no longer dependent on neighborhood taverns but could make their way to athletic events, amusement parks, and dance halls. Likewise, railroads could take people to the beaches on weekends.



**MUSIC AND DANCE HALLS** Music and dance halls appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century. The first music hall in London was constructed in 1849 for a lower-class audience. As is evident from one Londoner's observation, music halls were primarily for males:

[They were a] popular place of Saturday night resort with working men, as at them they can combine the drinking of the Saturday night glass and smoking of the Saturday night pipe, with the seeing and hearing of a variety of entertainments, ranging from magnificent ballets and marvelous scenic illusions to inferior tumbling, and from well-given operatic selections to the most idiotic of the so-called comic songs.<sup>13</sup>

By the 1880s, there were five hundred music halls in London. Promoters gradually made them more respectable and broadened their fare to entice both women and children to attend the programs. The new dance halls, which were all the rage by 1900, were more strictly oriented toward adults. The sight of young people engaged in sexually suggestive dancing often shocked contemporaries.

**MASS TOURISM** The upper and middle classes had created the first market for tourism, but as wages increased and workers were given paid vacations, tourism became another form of mass leisure. Thomas Cook (1808–1892) was a British pioneer of mass tourism. Secretary to a British temperance group, Cook had been responsible for organizing a railroad trip to temperance gatherings in 1841. This experience led him to offer trips on a regular basis after he found that he could make substantial profits by renting special trains, lowering prices, and increasing the number of passengers. In 1867, he offered tours to Paris and by the 1880s to Switzerland. Of course, overseas tours were for the industrial and commercial middle classes, but soon, thanks to savings clubs, even British factory workers were able to take weekend excursions.

**TEAM SPORTS** Team sports had also developed into yet another form of mass leisure by the late nineteenth century. Sports were by no means a new activity. Unlike the old rural games, however, they were no longer chaotic and spontaneous activities but became strictly organized, with written rules and officials to enforce them. The rules were the products of organized athletic groups, such as the English Football Association (1863) and the American Bowling Congress (1895).

The new sports were not just for fun; like other forms of middle-class recreation, they were intended to provide training for people, especially adolescents. Not only could the participants develop individual skills, but they could also acquire a sense of teamwork useful for military service. These characteristics were already evident in the British public schools (which were really private boarding schools) in the 1850s and 1860s when such schools as Harrow, Uppingham, and Loretto placed organized sports at the center of the curriculum (see the box on p. 715). At Loretto, for example, education was supposed to instill “First—Character. Second—Physique. Third—Intelligence. Fourth—Manners. Fifth—Information.”

The new team sports rapidly became professionalized. In Britain, soccer had its Football Association in 1863 and rugby

its Rugby Football Union in 1871. In the United States, the first national association to recognize professional baseball players was formed in 1863. By 1900, the National League and American League had a monopoly over professional baseball. The development of urban transportation systems made possible the construction of stadiums where thousands could attend, making mass spectator sports a big business. In 1872, some 2,000 people watched the British Soccer Cup Final. By 1885, the crowd had increased to 10,000 and by 1901 to 100,000. Professional teams became objects of mass adulation by crowds of urbanites who compensated for their lost sense of identity in mass urban areas by developing these new loyalties. Spectator sports even reflected class differences. Upper-class soccer teams in Britain viewed working-class teams as vicious and prone to “money-grubbing, tricks, sensational displays, and utter rotteness.”

The sports cult of the late nineteenth century was mostly male oriented. Many men believed that females were not particularly suited for “vigorous physical activity,” although it was permissible for middle-class women to indulge in less active sports such as croquet and lawn tennis. Eventually, some athletics crept into women's colleges and girls' public schools in England.

Standardized forms of amusement drew mass audiences. Although some authorities argued that the new amusements were important for improving people, in truth, they served primarily to provide entertainment and distract people from the realities of their work lives. The new mass leisure also represented a significant change from earlier forms of popular culture. Festivals and fairs had been based on active and spontaneous community participation, whereas the new forms of mass leisure were businesses, standardized for largely passive mass audiences and organized to make profits.

## Mass Consumption

Amusement parks, dance halls, organized tourist trips, and athletic events all offered new forms of leisure for masses of people, but they also quickly became part of the new mass consumption of the late nineteenth century. Earlier most people's purchases had been limited: some kitchen utensils, bedding, furniture, and a few select pieces of tailor-made clothing. Now middle- and upper-class Europeans were able to purchase and enjoy a wide variety of material goods. The new mass consumption was made possible by improvements in the standard of living, the factory system, population growth, expanded transportation systems, urbanization, and new modernized retailers, which sold standardized merchandise in large volumes.

When European cities were reconstructed in the late nineteenth century, space was allotted for department stores. Constructed of the new industrial materials—iron columns and plate-glass windows—department stores such as Paris's Le Bon Marché (luh BAHN mar-SHAY) offered consumers an endless variety of goods in large spaces; Le Bon Marché covered 52,000 square meters of surface space (see the box on p. 693). In 1860, its merchandise included shawls, cloaks,

# The Fight Song: Sports in the English Public School

IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, organized sports were often at the center of the curriculum in English public schools. These sports were not just for leisure but were intended to instill character, strength, and teamwork. This “fight song” was written by H. B. Tristram for the rugby team at Loretto School.

## H. B. Tristram, “Going Strong”

*Sing Football the grandest of sports in the world,  
And you know it yourself if your pluck's never curled,  
If you've gritted your teeth and gone hard to the last,  
And sworn that you'll never let anyone past.*

### Chorus

*Keeping close upon the hall—we drive it through  
them all,  
And again we go rushing along, along, along;  
O the tackle and the run, and the matches we  
have won,*

*From the start to the finish going strong, strong,  
strong, going strong!*

*If you live to be a hundred you'll never forget  
How they hacked in the scrum, how you payed back  
the debt;*

*The joy of the swing when you tackled your man,  
The lust of the fray when the battle began.*

*Long hence when you look with a quivering eye  
On the little white tassel you value so high;  
You'll think of the matches you've played in and won,  
And you'll long for the days that are over and done.*

**Q** How would the singing of such songs and the virtues they express work to shape the boys' conceptions of proper male behavior, masculine values, and masculinity itself?

Source: From *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* by J. A. Mangan. Copyright © 1981 by Cambridge University Press.

bedding, and fabrics; by the 1880s, its stock had expanded to include women's, men's, and children's clothing, accessories, furniture, rugs, umbrellas, toothbrushes, stationery, perfume, toys, shoes, and cutlery. Sales at Le Bon Marché in 1877 registered 73 million francs. Omnibuses carried people throughout

Paris, enabling them to travel beyond their neighborhoods to shop at the new stores. Advertising in mass newspapers introduced Europeans to the new products, while department store catalogs enabled people living outside the cities to also purchase the new goods.



**Soccer Moments.** Until 1863, football (soccer) in Britain was an aggressive sport with few set rules. One of the first things the new English Football Association did after it was established on October 26, 1863, was to set up fourteen rules of play. At the left, a sketch from a magazine called *The Graphic* shows a scene from an international soccer match in 1872. The two players with the ball have the rose of England on their shirts. At the right, another sketch from *The Graphic* shows the first match of the Ladies' Football Club in 1895.



Although most advertisements were directed toward women, men also took part in the new consumer culture of the late nineteenth century. Not only did men consume goods such as alcohol and tobacco, but they were also the chief purchasers of ready-made clothing in the late nineteenth century. In the United States in 1890, men bought 71 percent of all ready-made clothing. As work and leisure were separated, men needed to expand their wardrobes to include both clothes for work outside the home and clothes to be worn for entertaining at home or other leisure activities. Men also consumed such goods as shaving soaps, aftershave lotions, hair dyes, and sporting goods.

## The National State

**Q FOCUS QUESTION:** What general political trends were evident in the nations of western Europe in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and how did these trends differ from the policies pursued in Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia?

Within the major European states, considerable progress was made toward achieving such liberal practices as constitutions and parliaments, but it was largely in western European states that **mass politics** became a reality. Reforms encouraged the expansion of political democracy through voting rights for men and the creation of mass political parties. At the same time, however, these developments were strongly resisted in parts of Europe where the old political forces remained strong.

## Western Europe: The Growth of Political Democracy

In general, parliamentary government was most firmly rooted in the western European states. Both Britain and France saw an expansion of the right to vote, but liberal reforms proved less successful in Spain and Italy.

**REFORM IN BRITAIN** By 1871, Great Britain had a functioning two-party parliamentary system, and the growth of political democracy became one of the preoccupations of British politics. Its cause was pushed along by the expansion of suffrage. Much advanced by the Reform Act of 1867 (see Chapter 22), the right to vote was further extended during the second ministry of William Gladstone (1880–1885) with the passage of the Reform Act of 1884. It gave the vote to all men who paid regular rents or taxes; by largely enfranchising agricultural workers, a group previously excluded, the act added another 2 million male voters to the electorate (see Table 22.1 on p. 674 in Chapter 22). Women were still denied the right to vote. The following year, the Redistribution Act eliminated historic boroughs and counties and established constituencies with approximately equal populations and one representative each. The payment of salaries to members of the House of Commons beginning in 1911 further democratized that institution by at least opening the door to people other than the wealthy. The British system of gradual reform

through parliamentary institutions had become the way of British political life.

Gradual reform failed to solve the problem of Ireland, however. The Irish had long been subject to British rule, and the Act of Union of 1801 had united the English and Irish Parliaments. Like other unfree ethnic groups in Europe, the Irish developed a sense of national self-consciousness. They detested the absentee British landlords and their burdensome rents.

In 1870, William Gladstone attempted to alleviate Irish discontent by enacting limited land reform, but as Irish tenants continued to be evicted in the 1870s, the Irish began to make new demands. In 1879, a group called the Irish Land League, which advocated independence, called on Parliament to at least institute land reform. Charles Parnell (1846–1891), a leader of the Irish representatives in Parliament, called for **home rule**, which meant self-government by having a separate Parliament but not complete independence. Soon Irish peasants were responding to British inaction with terrorist acts. When the British government reacted with more force, Irish Catholics began to demand independence.

The Liberal leader William Gladstone, continuing to hope for a peaceful solution to the “Irish Question,” introduced a home rule bill in 1886 that would have created an Irish Parliament without granting independence. But even this compromise was voted down in Parliament, especially by Conservative members who believed that concessions would only result in more violence. Gladstone tried again when he was prime minister in 1893 but experienced yet another defeat. The Irish Question remained unresolved.

**THE THIRD REPUBLIC IN FRANCE** The defeat of France by the Prussian army in 1870 brought the downfall of Louis Napoleon’s Second Empire. French republicans initially set up a provisional government, but the victorious Otto von Bismarck intervened and forced the French to choose a government by universal male suffrage. The French people rejected the republicans and overwhelmingly favored the monarchists, who won 400 of the 630 seats in the new National Assembly. In response, on March 26, 1871, radical republicans formed an independent republican government in Paris known as the Commune.

But the National Assembly refused to give up its power and decided to crush the revolutionary Commune. When vicious fighting broke out in April, many working-class men and women stepped forth to defend the Commune. At first, women’s activities were the traditional ones: caring for the wounded soldiers and feeding the troops. Gradually, however, women expanded their activities to include taking care of weapons, working as scouts, and even setting up their own fighting brigades. Louise Michel (mee-SHEL) (1830–1905), a schoolteacher, emerged as one of the leaders of the Paris Commune. She proved tireless in forming committees for the defense of the Commune.

All of these efforts were in vain, however. In the last week of May, government troops massacred thousands of the Commune’s defenders. Estimates are that 20,000 were shot; another

10,000 (including Louise Michel) were shipped to the French penal colony of New Caledonia in the South Pacific. The brutal repression of the Commune bequeathed a legacy of hatred that continued to plague French politics for decades. The split between the middle and working classes, begun in the revolutionary hostilities of 1848–1849, had widened immensely. The harsh punishment of women who participated in the revolutionary activity also served to discourage any future efforts by working-class women to improve their conditions.

Although a majority of the members of the monarchist-dominated National Assembly wished to restore a monarchy to France, inability to agree on who should be king caused the monarchists to miss their opportunity and led in 1875 to an improvised constitution that established a republican form of government as the least divisive compromise. This constitution established a bicameral legislature with an upper house, the Senate, elected indirectly and a lower house, the Chamber of Deputies, chosen by universal male suffrage; a president, selected by the legislature for a term of seven years, served as executive of the government. The Constitution of 1875, intended only as a stopgap measure, solidified the republic—the Third Republic—which lasted sixty-five years. New elections in 1876 and 1877 strengthened the hands of the republicans who managed by 1879 to institute ministerial responsibility and establish the power of the Chamber of Deputies. The prime minister or premier and his ministers were now responsible not to the president but to the Chamber of Deputies.

Although the government's moderation gradually encouraged more and more middle-class and peasant support, the position of the Third Republic remained precarious because monarchists, Catholic clergy, and professional army officers still opposed it.

A major crisis in the 1880s, however, actually served to strengthen the republican government. General Georges Boulanger (ZHORZH boo-lahnh-ZHAY) (1837–1891) was a popular military officer who attracted the public attention of all those discontented with the Third Republic: monarchists, Bonapartists, aristocrats, and nationalists who favored a war of revenge against Germany. Boulanger appeared as the strong man on horseback, the savior of France. But in 1889, just when his strength had grown to the point when many expected a coup d'état, he lost his nerve and fled France, a completely discredited man. In the long run, the Boulanger crisis served to rally support for the resilient republic.

**SPAIN** In Spain, a new constitution, drafted in 1875 under King Alfonso XII (1874–1885), established a parliamentary government dominated by two political groups, the Conservatives and the Liberals, whose members stemmed from the same small social group of great landowners allied with a few wealthy industrialists. Because suffrage was limited to the propertied classes, Liberals and Conservatives alternated in power but followed basically the same conservative policies. Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War in 1898 and the loss of Cuba and the Philippines to the United States increased the discontent with the status quo. When a group of young

intellectuals known as the Generation of 1898 called for political and social reforms, both Liberals and Conservatives attempted to enlarge the electorate and win the masses' support for their policies. The attempted reforms did little to allay the unrest, however, and the growth of industrialization in some areas resulted in more workers being attracted to the radical solutions of socialism and anarchism. When violence erupted in Barcelona in July 1909, military forces brutally suppressed the rebels. The revolt and its repression made clear that reform would not be easily accomplished because the Catholic Church, the large landowners, and the army remained tied to a conservative social order.

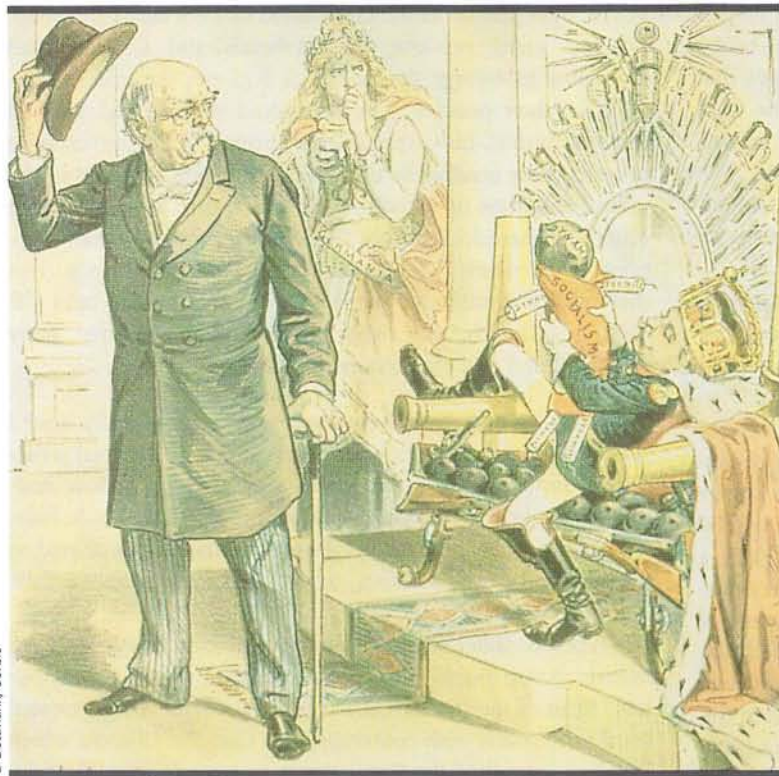
**ITALY** By 1870, Italy had emerged as a geographically united state with pretensions to great power status. Its internal weaknesses, however, gave that claim a particularly hollow ring. One Italian leader said after unification, "We have made Italy; now we must make Italians." But many Italians continued to put loyalty to their families, towns, and regions above their loyalty to the new state.

Sectional differences—a poverty-stricken south and an industrializing north—also weakened any sense of community. Most of the Italian leaders were northerners who treated southern Italians with contempt. The Catholic Church, which had lost control of the Papal States as a result of unification, even refused to accept the existence of the new state. Chronic turmoil between workers and industrialists undermined the social fabric. And few Italians felt empowered in the new Italy: only 2.5 percent of the people could vote for the legislative body. In 1882, the number was increased, but only to 10 percent. The Italian government was unable to deal effectively with these problems because of the extensive corruption among government officials and the lack of stability created by ever-changing government coalitions.

## Central and Eastern Europe: Persistence of the Old Order

Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia pursued political policies that were quite different from those of the western European nations. The central European states (Germany and Austria-Hungary) had the trappings of parliamentary government, including legislative bodies and elections by universal male suffrage, but authoritarian forces, especially powerful monarchies and conservative social groups, remained strong. In eastern Europe, especially Russia, the old system of autocracy was barely touched by the winds of change.

**GERMANY** Despite unification, important divisions remained in German society that could not simply be papered over by the force of nationalism. These divisions were already evident in the new German constitution that provided for a federal system with a bicameral legislature. The Bundesrat, or upper house, represented the twenty-five states that made up Germany. Individual states, such as Bavaria and Prussia, kept their own kings, their own post offices, and even their own armies in peacetime. The lower house of the German parliament, the



**Bismarck and William II.** In 1890, Bismarck sought to undertake new repressive measures against the Social Democrats. Disagreeing with this policy, Emperor William II forced him to resign. This political cartoon shows William II reclining on a throne made of artillery and cannonballs and holding a doll labeled “socialism.” Bismarck bids farewell as Germany, personified as a woman, looks on with grave concern.

Reichstag, was elected on the basis of universal male suffrage, but it did not have ministerial responsibility. Ministers of government, including the all-important chancellor, were responsible not to the parliament but to the emperor. The emperor also commanded the armed forces and controlled foreign policy and internal administration. Though the creation of a parliament elected by universal male suffrage presented opportunities for the growth of a real political democracy, it failed to develop in Germany before World War I. The army and Bismarck were two major reasons why it did not.

The German (largely Prussian) army viewed itself as the defender of monarchy and aristocracy and sought to escape any control by the Reichstag by operating under a general staff responsible only to the emperor. Prussian military tradition was strong, and military officers took steps to ensure the loyalty of their subordinates to the emperor, which was easy as long as Junker landowners were officers. As the growth of the army made it necessary to turn to the middle class for officers, extreme care was taken to choose only sons “of honorable bourgeois families in whom the love for King and Fatherland, a warm heart for the soldier’s calling, and Christian morality are planted and nurtured.”

The policies of Otto von Bismarck, who served as chancellor of the new German state until 1890, often served to prevent the growth of more democratic institutions. At first, Bismarck worked with the liberals to achieve greater centralization of Germany through common codes of criminal and commercial law. The liberals also joined Bismarck in his attack on the Catholic Church, the so-called *Kulturkampf* (kool-TOOR-kahtm), or “struggle for civilization.” Like

Bismarck, middle-class liberals distrusted Catholic loyalty to the new Germany. Bismarck’s strong-arm tactics against the Catholic clergy and Catholic institutions proved counterproductive, however, and Bismarck welcomed an opportunity in 1878 to abandon the attack on Catholicism by making an abrupt shift in policy.

In 1878, Bismarck abandoned the liberals and began to persecute the socialists. When the Social Democratic Party elected twelve deputies to the Reichstag in 1877, Bismarck grew alarmed. He genuinely believed that the socialists’ anti-nationalistic, anticapitalistic, and antimonarchical stance represented a danger to the empire. In 1878, Bismarck got parliament to pass a stringent antisocialist law that outlawed the Social Democratic Party and limited socialist meetings and publications, although socialist candidates were still permitted to run for the Reichstag. In addition to these repressive measures, Bismarck also attempted to woo workers away from socialism by enacting social welfare legislation (see the box on p. 719). Between 1883 and 1889, the Reichstag passed laws that established sickness, accident, and disability benefits as well as old-age pensions financed by compulsory contributions from workers, employers, and the state. Bismarck’s social security system was the most progressive the world had yet seen, although even his system left much to be desired, as the Social Democrats pointed out. A full pension, for example, was payable only at age seventy after forty-eight years of contributions. In the event of a male worker’s death, no benefits were paid to his widow or children.

Both the repressive and the social welfare measures failed to stop the advance of socialism, however. The Social Democratic

# Bismarck and the Welfare of the Workers

IN HIS ATTEMPT TO WIN WORKERS AWAY from socialism, Bismarck favored an extensive program of social welfare benefits, including old-age pensions and compensation for absence from work due to sickness, accident, or disability. This selection is taken from Bismarck's address to the Reichstag on March 10, 1884, in which he explained his motives for social welfare legislation.

## Bismarck, Address to the Reichstag

The positive efforts began really only in the year . . . 1881 . . . with the imperial message . . . in which His Majesty William I said: "Already in February of this year, we have expressed our conviction that the healing of social ills is not to be sought exclusively by means of repression of Social Democratic excesses, but equally in the positive promotion of the welfare of the workers."

In consequence of this, first of all the insurance law against accidents was submitted. . . . And it reads . . . "But those who have, through age or disability, become incapable of working have a confirmed claim on all for a higher degree of state care than could have been their share heretofore. . . ."

The worker's real sore point is the insecurity of his existence. He is not always sure he will always have work. He is not sure he will always be healthy, and he foresees some day he will be old and incapable of work. But also if he falls into poverty as a result of long illness, he is completely helpless with his own powers, and society hitherto does not recognize relief, even when he has worked ever so faithfully

and diligently before. But ordinary poor relief leaves much to be desired, especially in the great cities where it is extraordinarily much worse than in the country. . . . We read in Berlin newspapers of suicide because of difficulty in making both ends meet, of people who died from direct hunger and have hanged themselves because they have nothing to eat, of people who announce in the paper they were tossed out homeless and have no income. . . . For the worker it is always a fact that falling into poverty and onto poor relief in a great city is synonymous with misery, and this insecurity makes him hostile and mistrustful of society. That is humanly not unnatural, and as long as the state does not meet him halfway, just as long will this trust in the state's honesty be taken from him by accusations against the government, which he will find where he wills; always running back again to the socialist quacks . . . and, without great reflection, letting himself be promised things, which will not be fulfilled. On this account, I believe that accident insurance, with which we show the way, . . . will still work on the anxieties and ill-feeling of the working class.

**Q** *What arguments did Bismarck advance for social welfare legislation? How did Bismarck benefit politically from these moves toward state protection of workers' interests? To what broader forces in nineteenth-century European social and political life was Bismarck responding when he formulated these policies?*

Source: From *Bismarck*, edited by Frederick B. M. Hollyday, pp. 60, 63, 65. Copyright © 1970 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Party continued to grow. In his frustration, Bismarck planned still more repressive measures in 1890, but before he could carry them out, the new emperor, William II (1888–1918), eager to pursue his own policies, cashiered the aged chancellor.

**AUSTRIA-HUNGARY** After the creation of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary in 1867, the Austrian part received a constitution that established a parliamentary system with the principle of ministerial responsibility. But Emperor Francis Joseph (1848–1916) largely ignored ministerial responsibility and proceeded to personally appoint and dismiss his ministers and rule by decree when parliament was not in session.

The problem of the minorities continued to trouble the empire. The ethnic Germans, who made up only one-third of Austria's population, governed Austria but felt increasingly threatened by the Czechs, Poles, and other Slavic groups within the empire. The difficulties in dealing with this problem were especially evident from 1879 to 1893 when Count Edward von Taaffe (TAH-fuh) (1833–1895) served as prime minister. Taaffe attempted to "muddle through" by relying on a coalition of German conservatives, Czechs, and Poles to

maintain a majority in parliament. But his concessions to national minorities, such as allowing the Slavic languages as well as German to be used in education and administration, antagonized the German-speaking Austrian bureaucracy and aristocracy, two of the basic pillars of the empire. Opposition to Taaffe's policies brought his downfall in 1893 but did not solve the **nationalities problem**. While the dissatisfied non-German groups demanded concessions, the ruling Austrian Germans resisted change.

What held the Austro-Hungarian Empire together was a combination of forces. Francis Joseph, the emperor, was one unifying factor. Although strongly anti-Hungarian, the cautious emperor made an effort to take a position above national differences. Loyalty to the Catholic Church also helped keep such national groups as Czechs, Slovaks, and Poles loyal to the Catholic Habsburg dynasty. Finally, although dominated by German-speaking officials, the large imperial bureaucracy served as a unifying force for the empire.

Unlike Austria, Hungary had a working parliamentary system, but it was controlled by the great Magyar landowners

who dominated both the Hungarian peasantry and the other ethnic groups in Hungary. The Hungarians attempted to solve their nationalities problem by systematic Magyarization. The Magyar language was imposed on all schools and was the only language that could be used by government and military officials.

**RUSSIA** In Russia, the government made no concession whatever to liberal and democratic reforms, eliminating altogether any possibility of a mass politics. The assassination of Alexander II in 1881 convinced his son and successor, Alexander III (1881–1894), that reform had been a mistake, and he quickly instituted what he said were “exceptional measures.” The powers of the secret police were expanded. Advocates of constitutional monarchy and social reform, along with revolutionary groups, were persecuted. Entire districts of Russia were placed under martial law if the government suspected the inhabitants of treason. The powers of the zemstvos, created by the reforms of Alexander II, were sharply curtailed.

Alexander also pursued a radical Russification program of the numerous nationalities that made up the Russian Empire. Russians themselves constituted only 40 percent of the population, which did not stop the tsar from banning the use of all languages except Russian in schools. The policy of Russification served primarily to anger national groups and create new sources of opposition to tsarist policies.

When Alexander III died, his weak son and successor, Nicholas II (1894–1917), adopted his father’s conviction that the absolute power of the tsars should be preserved: “I shall maintain the principle of autocracy just as firmly and unflinchingly

as did my unforgettable father.”<sup>14</sup> But conditions were changing, especially with the growth of industrialization, and the tsar’s approach was not realistic in view of the new circumstances he faced.



#### CHRONOLOGY National States of Europe, 1871–1894

<i>Great Britain</i>	
Second ministry of William Gladstone	1880–1885
Reform Act	1884
<i>France</i>	
Surrender of French provisional government to Germany	1871 (January 28)
Paris Commune	1871 (March–May)
Republican constitution (Third Republic)	1875
Boulangier is discredited	1889
<i>Spain</i>	
King Alfonso XII	1874–1885
New constitution	1875
<i>Germany</i>	
Bismarck as chancellor	1871–1890
Antisocialist law	1878
Social welfare legislation	1883–1889
<i>Austria-Hungary</i>	
Emperor Francis Joseph	1848–1916
Count Edward von Taaffe as prime minister	1879–1893
<i>Russia</i>	
Tsar Alexander III	1881–1894

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Second Industrial Revolution helped create a new material prosperity that led Europeans to believe they had ushered in a new age of progress. In this second revolution, steel, chemicals, electricity, petroleum, and the internal combustion engine led



the way to new industrial frontiers. Europe became divided into an industrialized north and a poorer south and east, while European manufactured goods and investment capital were exported abroad in exchange for raw materials, creating a true world economy. New jobs provided work opportunities for many women, although prostitution remained an avenue for survival for other women. Working-class socialist parties, such as Germany’s Social Democratic Party, began working for change by forming trade unions and electing representatives to legislative bodies.

A major feature of this “new age of progress” was the emergence of a mass society. Better sanitation and improved

diets led to a dramatic population increase, while emigration enabled Europe to avoid overcrowding. Class divisions continued to dictate styles of living, while industrialism reinforced traditional gender patterns: women stayed at home while men went out to work. Nevertheless, some women began to espouse birth control as an avenue for change. The lower classes benefited from the right to vote, a higher standard of living, and a modicum of education from new schools as most states assumed responsibility for mass compulsory education for children. New forms of mass transportation, combined with new work patterns, enabled large numbers of people to participate in new mass leisure activities, including weekend



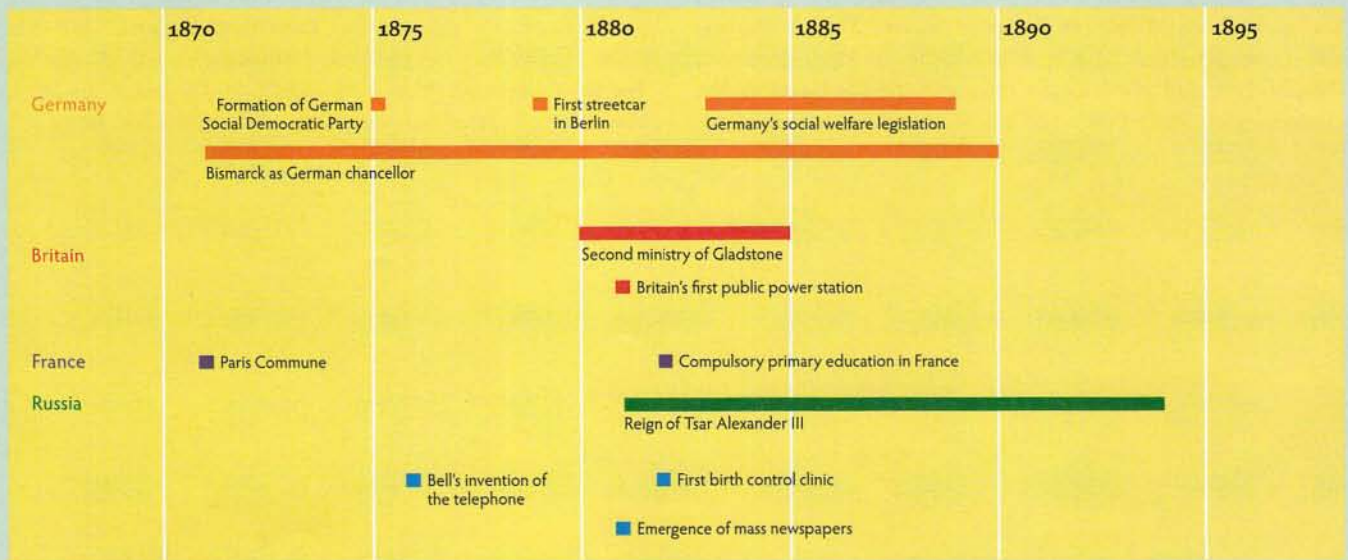
excursions to amusement parks and seaside resorts, dance halls, and sporting events. New patterns of mass consumption arose, encouraging people to accumulate more material possessions.

By 1871, the national state had become the focus of people's lives. Especially in western Europe, liberal and democratic reforms brought new possibilities for greater participation in the political process, although women were still largely excluded from political rights. After 1871, the national state also began to expand its functions beyond all previous activities by adopting social insurance measures to protect workers against accidents, illness, and old age, and by

enacting public health and housing measures, designed to curb the worst ills of urban living.

This extension of state functions took place in an atmosphere of increased national loyalty. After 1871, Western national states increasingly sought to solidify the social order and win the active loyalty and support of their citizens by deliberately cultivating national feelings. Yet this policy contained potentially great dangers. As we shall see in the next chapter, nations had discovered once again that imperialistic adventures and military successes could arouse nationalistic passions, but they also found that nationalistic feelings could lead to intense international rivalries that made war almost inevitable.

## CHAPTER TIMELINE



## CHAPTER REVIEW

### Upon Reflection

**Q** To what extent did the emergence and development of socialist parties and trade unions meet the needs of the working classes between 1871 and 1894?

**Q** How were the promises and problems of the new mass society reflected in education, leisure, and consumption?

**Q** Between 1871 and 1894, two major domestic political issues involved the achievement of liberal practices and the growth of political democracy. To what extent were these realized in Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia?

### Key Terms

**tariffs** (p. 693)  
**cartels** (p. 693)  
**depression** (p. 694)  
**Marxism** (p. 699)  
**evolutionary socialism** (p. 699)

**revisionism** (p. 699)  
**anarchism** (p. 701)  
**mass society** (p. 701)  
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**mass education** (p. 712)  
**mass leisure** (p. 713)  
**mass politics** (p. 716)  
**home rule** (p. 716)  
**Kulturkampf** (p. 718)  
**nationalities problem** (p. 719)

### Suggestions for Further Reading

**GENERAL WORKS** In addition to the general works on the nineteenth century and individual European countries cited in Chapters 21 and 22, a more specialized work on the subject matter of this chapter is available in F. Gilbert and D. C. Large, *The End of the European Era, 1890 to the Present*, 5th ed. (New York, 2002).



**SECOND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION** The subject of the Second Industrial Revolution is well covered in **D. Landes**, *The Unbound Prometheus*, cited in Chapter 20. The impact of the new technology on European thought is imaginatively discussed in **S. Kern**, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 2003).

**SOCIAL CLASSES** An interesting work on aristocratic life is **D. Cannadine**, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, Conn., 1990). On the middle classes, see **P. Pilsbeam**, *The Middle Classes in Europe, 1789–1914* (Basingstoke, England, 1990). On the working classes, see **R. Magraw**, *A History of the French Working Class* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992).

**WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES** There are good overviews of women's experiences in the nineteenth century in **B. G. Smith**, *Changing Lives: Women in European History Since 1700*, rev. ed. (Lexington, Mass., 2005). A good study is **M. J. Peterson**, *Family, Love and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen* (Bloomington, Ind., 1989). For a new perspective on domestic

life, see **J. Flanders**, *Inside the Victorian Home: A Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England* (New York, 2004).

**MASS EDUCATION, LEISURE, AND CONSUMPTION** On various aspects of education, see **M. J. Maynes**, *Schooling in Western Europe: A Social History* (Albany, N.Y., 1985). A concise and well-presented survey of leisure patterns is **G. Cross**, *A Social History of Leisure Since 1600* (State College, Pa., 1990). On the rise of the department store, see **G. Crossick**, *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store* (New York, 1999).

**DOMESTIC POLITICS** The domestic politics of the period can be examined in the general works on individual countries listed in the bibliographies for Chapters 21 and 22. There are also specialized works on aspects of each country's history. On Britain, see **D. Read**, *The Age of Urban Democracy: England, 1868–1914* (New York, 1994). On the Paris Commune, see **D. A. Shafer**, *The Paris Commune* (New York, 2005). On Germany, see **W. J. Mommsen**, *Imperial Germany, 1867–1918* (New York, 1995).

## AP® REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 23

1. "Social conditions have not developed to such an acute opposition of things and classes as is depicted in the Manifesto. It is not only useless, it is the greatest folly to attempt to conceal this from ourselves. The number of members of the possessing classes is today not smaller but larger. The enormous increase of social wealth is not accompanied by a decreasing number of large capitalists but by an increasing number of capitalists of all degrees. The middle classes change their character but they do not disappear from the social scale."
- The excerpt above from Eduard Bernstein is suggesting that
- (A) traditional Marxism has not effectively taken into account the economic advances made by all members of society, and the concept of Marxism should be revised in order to take into account these changes.
- (B) society has changed significantly, and it is useless to attempt to pretend it has not evolved. However, the wealth that has been accumulated is still primarily in the hands of a few.
- (C) capitalism should be eradicated from society. It is the basis of the problems within the heavily divided economic realities of the day.
- (D) Karl Marx was correct, and the economic realities of the day are bleak.
- (E) economic prosperity has rendered the middle class virtually nonexistent, thereby calling for a complete restructuring of society.
2. Which of the following statements best describes European family life in the nineteenth century?
- (A) All marriages were arranged by the patriarch in order to enhance his financial stability.
- (B) All marriages were arranged by the matriarch in order to enhance her domestic status.
- (C) Formality and emotional distance were atypical behaviors for the nuclear family.
- (D) Parents sought to enhance their own well-being by raising good children.
- (E) The Industrial Revolution forced families into economic dependency on their extended family members.
3. Which of the following best describes the changes in social life in the nineteenth century?
- (A) A decrease in wars and conflicts between nations led to an increase in family sizes.
- (B) A natural rise in female fertility forced many families to become dependent on state welfare for economic survival.
- (C) Greater access to news and communication led to an increase in basic literacy.
- (D) A population boom crippled local markets and froze community economies.
- (E) Outbreaks of smallpox devastated the poor in large numbers.
4. Contributing greatly to the expansion of state economies in the nineteenth century, industrialists of the era were most often
- (A) members of the ruling nobility seeking to engage in modern politics.
- (B) civil servants looking to foster nationalist feelings and loyalty to the state.
- (C) members of the farming class making a transition into urban life.
- (D) members of the middle class who worked in a hierarchical class structure.
- (E) Chinese workers imported as labor needed to offset European emigration.
5. Which of the following best describes the social reforms in urban life during the Victorian Age?
- (A) They addressed problems that arose almost a century after industrialization had started.
- (B) They were unable to address the practice of prostitution.
- (C) They were quickly enacted and widely praised due to a lack of class division.
- (D) They were only possible because men supported many of the political causes of women, such as the right to vote.
- (E) They were unsuccessful in preventing the rise and growth of trade unions.
6. One of the major social costs of late-nineteenth-century urbanization was that
- (A) working women were forced to return to the household.
- (B) the nuclear family unit fractured, breaking up countless homes.
- (C) children were separated from their working parents as early childhood centers cared for them.
- (D) families were forced to neglect the care of their elders.
- (E) it facilitated frequent outbreaks of cholera.

7. The primary reason for compulsory education, promoted by the state, was
- (A) to provide a more educated electorate amongst the general public.
  - (B) to provide general knowledge to the future workforce.
  - (C) to increase political indoctrination of the young public in order to more fully support the state.
  - (D) to help women gain more equal footing when applying for jobs.
  - (E) to de-Christianize traditional educational systems and educate students about a more liberal curriculum.
8. Which of the following best describes the changes in family life between the seventeenth century and the late nineteenth century?
- (A) The number of children per family unit doubled.
  - (B) Moral standards for women became more rigid.
  - (C) Children become less of an economic asset to their parents.
  - (D) The divorce rate fell after 1750.
  - (E) Men married at an earlier age.
9. Europe's population growth in the late nineteenth century can be attributed primarily to
- (A) a declining mortality rate.
  - (B) a decline in emigration to the New World.
  - (C) a trend toward larger families.
  - (D) declining marriage rates in western Europe.
  - (E) population growth rates that were higher in western Europe than in central Europe.
10. Which of the following was the central issue for nineteenth-century European advocates of women's rights?
- (A) equal pay for equal work
  - (B) alimony and child support after a divorce
  - (C) the right to civil marriage ceremonies
  - (D) a woman's ability to decide whom and when to marry
  - (E) the right of women to control their own property
11. Which of the following is NOT true about family life in the late nineteenth century?
- (A) Men controlled the family finances, and women mainly cared for the children.
  - (B) Families were smaller since children were no longer an earning asset for the parents.
  - (C) The men led the family in religious matters and made sure the family went to church.
  - (D) With the rise of mass production and consumerism, middle-class families were able to buy some of the "finer" things in life.
  - (E) Women gained access to new jobs as secondary school teachers, telephone operators, and skilled assistants in stores.
12. The concept of Zionism, fostered by Herzl, suggested that
- (A) racism was a positive result of urbanized society and benefited the people.
  - (B) anti-Semitism was reemerging and a separate Jewish state was necessary.
  - (C) social Darwinism would help to create a new, stronger Europe.
  - (D) racial superiority could indeed be scientifically proved and that the Aryan race had been proved to be the strongest.
  - (E) nations should cooperate to commit to the growth of a Palestinian state.
13. By the 1890s, European socialism was largely
- (A) Marxist in that most socialists believed a massive revolution would unfold and redefine world history.
  - (B) revisionist in that most socialists favored democratic reforms passed by parliaments.
  - (C) anarchist in that most socialists sought to remove all authority.
  - (D) syndicalist in that most socialists sought cooperatives as a form of national rule.
  - (E) dead in western Europe, but active in eastern Europe.