

# Mass Society and Democracy 1870-1914

## THE STORY MATTERS...

The industrialization that began transforming Europe in the late 1700s had largely matured by a century later. Starting around 1850, the Second Industrial Revolution produced goods on a much larger scale. It created largely urban societies and a growing working class. This phase of industrialization also saw new advances in communications technology. A key figure was physicist and inventor Guglielmo Marconi.

## Lesson 24-2

# The Emergence of Mass Society

### READING HELPDESK

#### Academic Vocabulary

advocate

#### Content Vocabulary

feminism

suffrage

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How can industrialization affect a country's economy?
- How are political and social structures influenced by economic changes?

### IT MATTERS BECAUSE

By the end of the nineteenth century, the new industrial world had led to the emergence of a mass society in which the lower classes were demanding some governmental attention. Governments worked to improve public health and sanitation services in the cities. Women began to advocate for their rights, and many Western governments financed public education.

## The New Urban Environment

**GUIDING QUESTION** *Why did European cities grow so quickly in the nineteenth century?*

With the emergence of a mass society, governments now had to consider how to appeal to the masses, rather than just to the wealthier citizens. Housing and public sanitation in the cities were two areas of great concern.

With few jobs available in the countryside, people from rural areas migrated to cities to find work in the factories. As a result, more and more people lived in cities. In the 1850s, urban dwellers made up about 40 percent of the English population, 15 percent in France, 10 percent in Prussia (Prussia was the largest German state), and 5 percent in Russia. By 1890, urban dwellers had increased to about 60 percent in England, 25 percent in France, 30 percent in Prussia, and 10 percent in Russia. In industrialized nations, cities grew tremendously. Between 1800 and 1900, the population in London grew from 960,000 to 6,500,000.

Cities also grew faster in the second half of the nineteenth century because of improvements in public health and sanitation. Improvements came in the 1840s after a number of urban reformers urged local governments

to do something about the filthy living conditions that caused deadly epidemic diseases in the cities. Cholera (KAH • luh • ruh), for example, had ravaged Europe in the early 1830s and 1840s.

On the advice of reformers, city governments created boards of health to improve housing quality. City medical officers and building inspectors were authorized to inspect dwellings for public health hazards. Regulations required running water and internal drainage systems for new buildings.

Clean water and an effective sewage system were critical to public health. The need for freshwater was met by a system of dams and reservoirs that stored the water. Aqueducts and tunnels then carried water from the countryside to the city and into homes. Gas and electric heaters made regular hot baths possible. The treatment of sewage was improved by building underground pipes that carried raw sewage far from the city for disposal. A public campaign in Frankfurt, Germany, featured the slogan “from the toilet to the river in half an hour.”

### READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Theorizing** Present three reasons for the growth of European cities in order of importance. Explain your answer.

## Social Structure of Mass Society

**GUIDING QUESTION** *How did class divisions in Europe change during the nineteenth century?*

After 1871, most people enjoyed a higher standard of living. Still, great poverty remained in Western society. Between the few who were rich and the many who were poor existed several middle-class groups.

### The New Elite

At the top of European society stood a wealthy elite. This group made up only 5 percent of the population but controlled from 30 to 40 percent of the wealth. During the 1800s, the most successful industrialists, bankers, and merchants – the wealthy upper-middle class – had joined with the landed aristocracy – the upper class – to form this new elite. Whether aristocratic or upper-middle class in background, members of the elite became leaders in the government and military.

## The Diverse Middle Classes

While some members of the upper-middle class became part of the new elite, the rest of the middle class consisted of several groups at varying economic and social levels. Below the upper-middle class was a middle group that included lawyers, doctors, members of the civil service, business managers, engineers, architects, accountants, and chemists. Beneath this solid and comfortable middle group was a lower-middle class of small shopkeepers, traders, and prosperous farmers.

The Second Industrial Revolution produced a new group of white-collar workers between the lower-middle class and the lower classes. This group included traveling salespeople, bookkeepers, telephone operators,

department store salespeople, and secretaries. Although not highly paid, these white-collar workers were often committed to middle-class ideals.

The middle classes shared a certain lifestyle with values that dominated much of nineteenth-century society. The European middle classes believed in hard work, which was open to everyone and guaranteed positive results. Outward appearances were also very important to the middle classes. The etiquette book *The Habits of Good Society* was a best seller.

## The Working Classes

Below the middle classes on the social scale were the working classes – also referred to as the lower classes – which made up almost 80 percent of the European population. These classes included landholding peasants, farm laborers, and sharecroppers.

The urban working class consisted of many different groups. They might be skilled artisans or semiskilled laborers, but many were unskilled day laborers or domestic servants. In Britain in 1900, one out of every seven employed persons was a domestic servant. Most servants were women.

After 1870, urban workers began to live more comfortably. Reforms created better living conditions in cities. In addition, a rise in wages, along with a decline in many consumer costs, made it possible for workers to buy extra clothes or pay to entertain themselves in their few leisure hours. In organizing and conducting strikes, workers had won the 10-hour workday with a Saturday afternoon off.

### READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Categorizing** Discuss the major social changes that occurred during the Second Industrial Revolution.

## Women's Experiences

**GUIDING QUESTION** How did the Second Industrial Revolution influence women's roles in society?

In 1800 women were mainly defined by their families and household roles. In the nineteenth century, women struggled to change their status.

## New Job Opportunities

During much of the nineteenth century, working-class groups maintained the belief that women should remain at home to bear and nurture children and should not be allowed in the industrial workforce.

The Second Industrial Revolution opened the door to new jobs for women. There were not enough men to fill the relatively low-paid, white-collar jobs being created. Both industrial plants and retail shops hired women as clerks, typists, secretaries, and salesclerks.

The expansion of government services also created job opportunities for women. Women took jobs in education, health, and social services. Middleclass women held these jobs, but they were mainly filled by the working class.

## Marriage and the Family

As the chief family wage earners, men worked outside the home. Women were left to care for the family. Throughout the 1800s, marriage remained almost the only honorable and available career for most women. The number of children born to the average woman began to decline – the most significant development in the modern family. This decline was tied to improved economic conditions and increased use of birth control.

The family was the central institution of middle-class life. With fewer children in the family, mothers could devote more time to child care and domestic leisure. The middle-class family fostered an ideal of togetherness. The Victorians in Britain created the family Christmas with its Yule log, tree, songs, and exchange of gifts.

The lives of working-class women were different from those of their middle-class counterparts. Most working-class women had to earn money to help support their families. Their contributions made a big difference in the economic survival of their families. For the children of the working classes, childhood was over by the age of 9 or 10. By this age, children often became apprentices or were employed in odd jobs.

Between 1890 and 1914, family patterns among the working class began to change. Higher-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 alone. By the early twentieth century, some working-class mothers could afford to stay at home, following the pattern of middle-class women. At the same time, working-class families aspired to buy new consumer products such as sewing machines and cast-iron stoves.

## Women's Rights

Modern feminism, or the movement for women's rights, had its beginnings during the Enlightenment. At this time, some women advocated equality for women based on the doctrine of natural rights.

In the 1830s, a number of women in the United States and Europe argued for the right of women to own property. By law, a husband had almost total control over his wife's property. These early efforts were not very successful, however. Married women did not win the right

to own some property until 1870 in Great Britain, 1900 in Germany, and 1907 in France.

The fight for property rights was only the beginning of the women's movement. Some middle- and upper-middle-class women fought for and gained access to universities. Others sought entry into occupations dominated by men. Although training to become doctors was largely closed to women, some entered the medical field by becoming nurses. The efforts of the British nurse Florence Nightingale, combined with those of Clara Barton in the U.S. Civil War, transformed nursing into a profession of trained, middle-class "women in white."

By the 1840s and 1850s, the movement for women's rights expanded as women called for equal political rights. They believed that suffrage, the right to vote, was the key to improving their overall position. Members of the women's movement, called suffragists, had one basic aim: the right of women to full citizenship in the nation-state.

The British women's movement was the most active in Europe. The Women's Social and Political Union, founded in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters, used unusual publicity stunts to call attention to its demands. Its members pelted government officials with eggs, chained themselves to lampposts, and smashed department store windows. British police answered with arrests and brutal treatment of leading activists.

## Analyzing PRIMARY SOURCES

### Emmeline Pankhurst on Militancy

"Be militant in your own way. Those of you who can express your militancy by going to the House of Commons and refusing to leave without satisfaction, as we did in the early days – do so. . . . Those of you who can express your militancy by joining us in our anti-Government by-election policy – do so. Those of you who can break windows – do so (great applause)."

– Emmeline Pankhurst, from a speech  
on October 17, 1912

### DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

What do the different types of militancy outlined by Pankhurst show about her approach to the struggle for women's rights?

Before 1914, women had the right to vote in only a few nations, such as Norway and Finland, along with some American states. It took the upheaval of World War I to make governments give in on this basic issue.

### READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Distinguishing** How did the working-class family change in the late 1800s?

## Education and Leisure

**GUIDING QUESTION** *How did society change as a result of urbanization and industrialization?*

Universal education was a product of the mass society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Before that time, education was reserved mostly for the elite and the wealthier middle class. Between 1870 and 1914, most Western governments began to finance a system of primary education. Boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 12 were required to attend these schools.

Why did Western nations make this commitment to public education? One reason was industrialization. In the first Industrial Revolution, workers without training or experience were able to meet factory needs. The new firms of the Second Industrial Revolution needed trained, skilled workers.

The chief motive for public education was political. Giving more people the right to vote created a need for better-educated voters. Even more importantly, primary schools instilled patriotism.

Compulsory elementary education created a demand for teachers, and most of them were women. Many men saw teaching as a part of women's "natural role" as nurturers of children. Women were also paid lower salaries than men, which in itself was a strong incentive for states to set up teacher-training schools for women.

The Second Industrial Revolution allowed people to pursue new forms of leisure. Popular mass leisure both entertained large crowds and distracted them from the realities of work lives. Leisure came to be viewed as what people do for fun after work. The industrial system gave people new times – evening hours, weekends, and a week or two in the summer – to indulge in leisure activities. Amusement parks, dance halls, and organized team sports became enjoyable ways for people to spend their leisure hours.

### READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Explaining** What were some reasons governments promoted public education?

## REVIEWING VOCABULARY

<b>feminism</b>	the movement for women's rights
<b>suffrage</b>	the right to vote