

Name: _____

Global History III

LIFE IN THE STEEL MILLS

Kracha worked from six to six, seven days a week, one week on day turn, one week on night. The constant shifting of turns made settlement into an energy-saving routine impossible; just when he was getting used to sleeping at night he had to learn to sleep during the day. At the end of each day-turn week came the long turn of twenty-four hours, when he went into the mill Sunday morning at six and worked continuously until Monday morning. Then home to wash, eat and sleep until five that afternoon, when he got up and returned to the mill to begin his night-turn week. The long turn was bad but this first night turn coming on its heels was worse. Tempers flared easily; men fought over a shovel or a look and it was fatally easy to be careless, to blunder.

When work was good, when one full week followed another with little besides paydays to break their monotony, Kracha lived only during his day-turn weeks. Night-turn weeks were periods of mental fog; he went back and forth to the mill in half a daze which lasted until the end of his turn Sunday morning, when he was given twenty-four hours to himself. Sometimes he went to early mass; other times he went directly home and rolled into bed. When he rose late that afternoon there was little time to do anything. Usually he got drunk. Only whisky could pierce the shell of his weariness, warm him, make him think well of himself and his world again.

Hope sustained him, as it sustained-them all; hope and the human tendency to feel that, dreadful though one's circumstances might be at the moment, there were depths of misfortune still unplumbed beneath one, there were people much worse off; in fact, what with a steady job in the blast furnaces, a cozy home on the cinder dump, a friend like Dubik here and a dollar to slap down on Wold's bar of a Saturday night, one was as well-favored a man as could be found in the First Ward. And there was always, hope the hope of saving enough money to go back in triumph to the old country, of buying a farm back in the hills, of going into business for one's self.

For a few their hopes were not in vain. To others work and hope alike came to a sudden, unreasonable end when they were carried -if machinery or molten metal had left anything to be carried out of the mill feet-first. The greater part went on from day to day feeling that all this was only temporary since such things couldn't last, that just before human flesh and blood could stand no more something would happen to change everything for the better.

But it never did. When human flesh and blood could stand no more it got up at five in the morning as usual and put on its work clothes and went into the mill; and when the whistle blew it came home.

Directions: Answer the following questions on separate paper.

1. How many hours did Kracha work in a week?
2. Why did Kracha have problems sleeping?
3. In your own words, why does Kracha drink?
4. What is Kracha dream?
5. Why didn't Kracha simply quit his crummy job?
6. What does "carried out the mill feet-first mean?"
7. Why does the author refer to Kracha as "it" in the final paragraph?
8. What is the author's view on the Industrial Revolution?

Vocabulary:

Turns: shifts, work schedule

Monotony: boredom

Cinder dump: ash pile

RESPONSES TO INDUSTRIALISM

The Industrial Revolution brought many new problems to the nations of Western Europe and the United States. The most outstanding of these problems was the extreme poverty of factory workers and rural workers. The plight of the poor caused people to question old ideas about societies, economic systems, and governments. How could these be changed to make life better for everyone?

Competing Solutions

Different groups of people came up with different answers to this question. Some were against making changes. Those who did want changes often disagreed about what the changes should be.

The members of the aristocracy tended to be conservative. They wanted to maintain the kind of power structure in which they were dominant and their rights were preserved. Businesspeople such as bankers and merchants whose families had enjoyed wealth and prestige for many generations or who had only recently become wealthy sided with the aristocrats.

Many members of the middle class, though, were liberals. They thought freedom and equality should be expanded. In the 19th century, most liberals believed in *laissez-faire* economics. Therefore, while many wanted to help the poor, they did not feel that the government should regulate businesses in order to do so.

The Labor Union Movement

While utopians and other thinkers tried to design the perfect society, workers sought more immediate solutions to their problems. The eventual success of their attempts was one of the reasons that communism did not replace capitalism throughout Europe.

Organizing. People who worked in the same occupation or industry joined together in organizations called *unions* to improve their wages and working and living conditions. They realized that, as a group, they could put more pressure on employers to raise wages or improve safety measures than they could as individuals.

Tactics. Union members elected representatives to present their requests or demands to an employer. This process is called *collective bargaining*. If an employer did not grant their requests or demands, the workers might strike. They would stop working until they got what they wanted. Sometimes unions organized a *boycott* of an employer's product. They refused to buy the product and urged others not to buy it until the employer came to an agreement with the union.

To stop a strike, an employer might hire strikebreakers to replace the striking workers. Police or military troops might be called in to end a strike. Some employers tried to weaken union causes by *blacklisting* outspoken members. This list, which was sent to other employers, branded selected workers as undesirable employees. Blacklisting meant that the selected workers could not get jobs in their usual line of work.

The Socialist Movement

Socialists believed that setting up a new form of government and economic system was the best solution to the problems caused by the Industrial Revolution. They wanted the people as a whole, rather than single individuals, to own factories, mines, and farms. Socialists attacked the practice of producing goods for profit. Instead, they wanted the goods everyone needed to be produced at prices everyone could afford. Most important, socialists demanded that governments serve the needs of all the people and not just the wealthy landowners and industrialists.

Directions: Answer the following questions based on the reading.

1. Name one problem that the Industrial Revolution brought to the United States and Western Europe. _____

2. How did the “aristocracy” respond to the problems of the Industrial Revolution?

3. How did the “Middle Class” respond to the problems of the Industrial Revolution? _____

4. In the 19th century what did most “liberals” believe in? _____

5. What is a “labor union?” _____

6. What are some of the tactics used by labor unions? _____

7. What did socialists believe would be the best solution to the problems caused by the Industrial Revolution? _____

8. According to socialists who should own factories? _____
9. Why did socialists attack the practice of producing goods for profit? _____

10. What did socialists demand from the government? _____

NAME: _____

The Communist Movement

Marx and Engels. Karl Marx was a 19th-century German revolutionary who lived much of his life in London. His solutions to the problems of industrialization were more radical than those proposed by most other socialists. In 1848, Marx and a friend named Friedrich Engels published a pamphlet titled the *Communist Manifesto*. The ideas discussed in it came to be called scientific socialism, or *communism*.

Class Struggle. Marx blamed the problems faced by workers on capitalism. Under the capitalistic system, business owners put up the money, or capital, needed to bring workers, machines, and raw materials together to produce goods. Workers receive wages for their labor. Capitalists gain profits on their investments. Marx claimed that it was unfair for workers who produce goods to get less for their labor than the capitalists get for their investments. According to Marx, workers and capitalists were enemies locked in an endless conflict. He referred to this conflict as a "class struggle." It would take place between the *proletariat*, the working class, and the *bourgeoisie*, the owners of businesses.

Revolution. For Marx, the solution to the problems caused by capitalism was revolution. He urged the workers of every nation to rise up and smash the capitalistic system. The workers would then own all the sources of wealth. Since everything would be shared and businesses would be cooperative instead of competitive, the state would no longer be necessary. People would be truly free.

Limited Acceptance. The theories developed by Marx and Engels appealed to many. They were especially attractive to those who saw no other solution to problems such as poverty and unemployment. But the worldwide revolution Marx predicted never occurred. Instead, conditions for workers gradually improved. By the beginning of the 20th century, the standard of living for most people in the Western world had begun to rise higher than ever before.

Communist Governments. Russia and China adopted Communist governments. A great revolution in 1917 gave Communist leaders control over Russia. This revolution was caused by the inability of the czar's government to stop the terrible suffering and problems brought about by World War I. Communists took over the government of China in 1949 after a long civil war. Neither Russia nor China had gone through the Industrial Revolution at the time of the Communist takeovers. Workers never directed the government in either country. The government in China remains a dictatorship. Russia was a dictatorship until late 1991, when the Communist system collapsed. Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba continue to have Communist governments.

Directions: Answer the following questions based on the reading.

1. How did communism seek to respond to the problems of the Industrial Revolution?

2. Why was communism regarded as the most revolutionary and potentially violent solution? _____
