Radicals and Socialists

30 January 2008

New Lanark, Scotland
Features of the Industrial Revolution, as classically defined

Great Britain, 1770-1850
Lancashire and the Midlands (Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham)

textiles and metal working as key sectors of economy

factory system and division of labor; processes of urbanization and proletarianization (creation of a “proletariat,” a class of people who have nothing to sell but their labor-power)
Further points to keep in mind about the “Industrial Revolution”
cotton weaving and finishing in Lancashire
depends on cotton cultivation in American South
by slave labor

industry requires consumers as well as producers:
British India forcibly transformed from a cotton exporter into a cotton importer

proletarianization especially affected women and children

Two biggest employers in Great Britain in 1850:
agriculture and domestic service
Resistance to industrialization in Great Britain
based in
• notions of the “moral economy”
• craft traditions and artisanal autonomy
• new forms of evangelical Christianity
  (especially Methodism)

Luddism, 1811-1816, in Yorkshire and the Midlands: violent attacks on new equipment ("machine breaking") and on factory owners

“The guilty may fear, but no vengeance he aims
At the honest man’s life or Estate
His wrath is entirely confined
to wide frames
And to those that old prices abate”
Song of Captain Ludd (c. 1815)
Robert Owen (1771-1858) and Owenite Socialism

Community, a Social Hymn (1840)

O happy time, when all mankind
Shall competition’s evil see;
And seek with one united mind
The blessings of community.

When social love’s benignant flow
Shall peace on earth, goodwill restore
and charity like ocean’s flow
Connect and compass every shore.

Then will mankind, in common share
The gifts their industry supplies,
And prove, escaped from selfish care
The joys of heaven beneath the skies.
“Proto Industrialization” and Social Conflict in France

“proto industrialization” = “putting out” and piecework, not factories

1831 and 1834: protests by silk weavers (canuts) in Lyon for living wage and workers’ rights;

September Laws, 1834 prohibit all workers’ “associations” no meetings of more than 20 people strict censorship
Varieties of French “Utopian Socialism”: the Saint Simonians
Scientific Socialism and Historical materialism

Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* (1843 manuscript)

“In direct contrast to philosophy, which descends from heaven to earth, we ascend from earth to heaven. That is, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as they are narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived. We set out from real active men, and on the basis of their real life processes we demonstrate the development of ideological reflexes and echoes. The phantoms formed in the human brain are sublimates of material life processes.”