RESPONSE TO INDUSTRIALISM

I. Purpose and Overview of Lecture

A. To examine the response to the enormous changes between the late 18th and early 19th centuries
   1. In fact, not only to industrialism but what has been called the Dual Revolution—industrial and French revolutions
      a) This might be put in different words: response to modernization

B. To describe and analyze the ideologies of modern times, the characteristic “isms” that emerge in these years
   1. Various ideological systems try to “make sense” of these changes, to incorporate them into a consistent body of ideas

C. To explore both the etymological origins and social foundations of key 19th century terms: liberalism, conservatism, socialism; romanticism, nationalism

D. To analyze how ideological commitments can be related to the actions of various countries, social classes in control of them, etc.

II. Etymologies of the isms

A. I have found this approach (of examining the roots of words) useful
   1. Often students become terribly confused about the isms, especially those that change over the years—as most of them do—in ways that seem so contradictory

B. This approach tries to get you to understand how words are created, how they take on their peculiar life—in fact, have their own history

C. A key point: These terms do not have any eternally “correct” definition, but rather gain (and change) meaning through use over time
   1. Thus, a revealing question is to ask why a term catches on at a particular time, how it comes to take on certain meanings, why meanings change

D. This approach encourages you as well to understand the deepest core of meaning of an ism—and there is one, however
elusive—and then be in a better position to understand how it changes

III. Conservatism

A. Etymology: conserve—thus a key concern with conserving or preserving, with stability, tranquillity, order
   1. “What does it hate?”—instability, disorder, rapid change, revolution
   2. It shows a deep respect for custom and tradition, a belief in the “wisdom of the ages”
   3. And it holds in disdain those who think that they can dream up a new world from scratch, using their feeble powers of reason
   4. Implication: the existing order is God-given and should be respected as such

B. Sub-category: reactionary—reacting against present realities, striving to go back to an idealized past
   1. Thus, a reactionary hopes to undo both the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, to return to the Old Order
   2. A conservative would be more inclined to recognize that certain changes are inevitable, that it is impossible to go back—but, still, change must be slow and cautious

C. Conservatives and reactionaries of course reject the ideas of the Enlightenment, and they are deeply suspicious of the reforms of the revolution
   1. The philosophes had stressed the power of reason, the greatness of man, the potential to become like gods, the possibility of progress, the “naturalness” of social harmony
      a) This position is often summarized—inadequately—as believing in the “goodness” of man
   2. The conservatives stressed rather that reason was a frail and fallible tool, that man is naturally corrupt, irrational in his basic tendencies—thus the equally simplistic "man is evil"
      a) Obviously, much of this derives from or parallels Christian teachings

D. For conservatives and reactionaries, the French Revolution was
a horror—and a perfect example of what false pride and a belief in human reason could create (anarchy, mass bloodshed, injustice, social breakdown)

E. In a broader way the conservatives reject the notion of man as an abstraction with “natural rights”
   1. Rights, from the conservative perspective, are defined by the specific historical and social context
   2. This perspective meshes into the general conservative veneration for the past, for the sense of the “wisdom of the ages” or the collective wisdom of past generations (powerfully defended by Edmund Burke)
      a) No individual “rationalizers” could possibly achieve so deep an understanding as the countless generations of the past
   3. Thus, they believe in a traditionalist-authoritarian society in Europe
      a) The people, including the middle classes, should be kept in their place
      b) Their unruly and destructive passions had to be opposed by a strong authority

F. Conservatives and industrialism
   1. The point should be obvious: industrialism, especially when very rapid, was suspect
   2. It was seen, moreover, as strengthening the middle class in a dangerous way, as far as the ruling classes were concerned
   3. However, conservatives were not blind to the power and riches that industrialism created
      a) They were thus increasingly ambivalent about it
      b) More and more in the course of the century they were inclined to sponsor it, even, since it gave power to the state—and really could not be avoided
      c) The most striking example of this ambivalence is in Russia (as will be discussed in a later lecture)

IV. Liberalism

A. Etymology: *liber* (“free” in Latin), thus, an overall concern with freedom
B. Rather than being first concerned with stability and order, the
liberal sees freedom as a primary good

1. Progress, improvement can come only with the maximum possible freedom
   a) Conservatives and reactionaries, in contrast, tend to see freedom as dangerous, especially abstract freedom, rather than traditional and limited "freedoms"

C. What does the liberal hate?—repression, limits on freedom

D. But “freedom” is a most elusive idea, and liberalism takes on many far-flung and confusing forms

E. The liberal view of humanity is nearly unique in human history
   1. No other civilization has quite conceived of the free, human individual in this way:
      a) The individual who thinks for himself, standing “face-to-face” with God and nature
   2. This individual has the power of independent judgment, sense of responsibility—answering ultimately only to his or her own conscience
   3. Implied in all of this is once again a familiar idea: Human beings have an unlimited capacity for self-improvement in an atmosphere of freedom
      a) In short, this is once again the vision of the “god-like” potential of humanity

F. A concrete (and limiting) trait of nineteenth-century liberalism: Attachment to property
   1. It is believed that property is prerequisite of freedom, and a guarantee of its survival

G. Concrete trait: suspicion of the common people, the “mob”
   1. Liberalism in the nineteenth century was not democratic in the sense of believing in the direct rule of the people
   2. Again, the obvious reason is that the people are believed to be a threat to freedom
      a) They are, at least, until they are educated to be responsible (and ideally until they themselves have some property)

H. Concrete trait: desire to limit the role of the state
   1. It is at best a necessary evil
   2. This can be compared to the conservative position (or
socialist position) that the state could have a beneficial, creative role, especially preserving social harmony

a) It could, according to this anti-liberal reasoning, keep the various classes, interest groups, religions, etc. from tearing one another apart

V. Socialism

A. Etymology: emphasis on the social, or the collective (thus “collectivism”), or the communal (thus “communism”) rather than the individual

B. Individual freedom—or “excessive” freedom—is seen as “egotism” or selfishness by the socialist, thus as a threat to social cohesion, to fraternity, solidarity, and equality

C. Social and economic inequality, similarly, is a threat to social cohesion, since those who are unequal envy one another, hate one another

D. The radical democrats: in a sense, stand between the liberals and the socialists
   1. They are very much opposed to privilege, as is the liberal, but also committed to equality and social justice, as is the socialist
   2. The radical democrat is finally more in the liberal than in the socialist camp
   3. However, radical democrats often become socialists in the course of the century
   4. This is a very important group, perhaps the most numerous, if also diffuse, with differing emphases from country to country

E. Both the socialists and the radical democrats, it should be noted, claimed also to be supporters of “liberty”
   1. But they insisted, especially the socialists, that liberty without social and economic equality was an empty concept
   2. Giving the poor, uneducated, downtrodden political liberty was meaningless because they did not know how to use it—or lacked the leisure and education to do so
   3. Here of course is a connection to the issues surrounding affirmative action today
VI. Social foundations of nineteenth-century ideologies

A. We understand these ideologies better if we perceive the linkages between class and ideological commitment

B. Similarly, the relations between nations in the nineteenth century are better understood if we see how ideologies and classes play a role in what nations consider to be their interest

C. The social foundations of early nineteenth-century conservatism:
   1. The easiest and most obvious correlation: Conservatism and the old nobility—they wanted to “conserve” their position, their privileges
      a) In France, and in some other areas, they had often almost entirely lost those things
      b) Thus, they were “reactionary”; they wanted to return to the past
   2. It was not only the old nobility that became conservative, but it was the most important category
   3. Others who were attracted to conservatism:
      a) Peasants in traditional areas
      b) Craftsmen in traditional crafts, again if their position was insecure
      c) Churchmen of various sorts (though the lower clergy was at times reforming )

D. Social foundations of 19th-century liberalism
   1. On the whole, the liberal classes were the middle, especially the upper middle classes
   2. Liberal ideas benefited them the most
   3. But other classes could also be attracted:
      a) Part of the nobility, especially those most engaged in modern production, or those who felt most strongly about freedom of expression and representative government
      b) Even workers who believed in the possibility of upward mobility, the rewards of hard work

E. To an important degree the attractions of liberalism in a general sense were related to the specific arena of economic liberalism or laissez-faire
1. Businessmen, others involved in trade and commerce, yearned to be as free as possible of old-regime restrictions (though in practice many of them wanted protections for their particular area)

F. Yet, there was certainly much more to liberalism than its economic aspect

1. In some areas, especially in eastern Europe, liberalism had only distant connections to the world of business and commerce, and was almost entirely embraced by nobles

G. Still, very often when the nineteenth-century liberal said “man” he meant “bourgeois”

1. Or, if that overstates it, he did not mean “aristocrat” or “common people”
   a) The liberal believed that these two extremes of society were corrupted by too much wealth and not enough of it

2. Thus, nineteenth-century liberals believed that only “substantial” citizens should have the vote
   a) That is, those with wealth or property, not the poor (and the rich could have it, really, only because their numbers were too small to make a difference)

H. Social foundations of socialism (and democratic radicalism)

1. The socialists and the democrats were often considered to be almost the same thing, especially by their enemies
   a) They are seen as the representatives of the masses—a threat, thus, to order, privilege, property, class harmony, etc.

2. Until the 1840s, they are not an important group, but they become more important as the century progresses

3. Their ideas tend to jumble together, to lack the kind of precision they would later assume

VII. Linkage of ideologies and nations

A. Just as we can link ideologies with social classes, so they can also be linked with specific nations in the early 19th century

B. Countries with a numerous and powerful bourgeoisie tended to follow a liberal course—in foreign policy, in political institutions, in economic policy, and so on

C. Similarly, countries with a small and weak bourgeoisie tended
to follow conservative policies

D. Thus, Britain was the homeland of liberalism in this period
1. British policies, institutions, social relations were the ideal of liberals elsewhere (even more, in fact, in the 1850s and 1860s)

E. The conservative powers of this time were the three agrarian monarchies, Russia, Austria, Prussia
1. Those in power in those three countries had the most to fear from liberalism

F. However, this neat schema, while giving us a general guide, does not work out perfectly in the years immediately following Napoleon’s downfall
1. At that point, England shared the conservative outlook of the continental statesmen
2. But that was mostly because England had allied with them to defeat Napoleon
3. It was also because of the internal unrest in England at the time, which had frightened the ruling and middle classes
4. In the long run, however, given their different social and economic structures, it was almost inevitable that England and Austria would fall out
5. Increasingly as the century progressed, they found themselves at cross purposes

G. The inner differences of the two countries became especially obvious in 1820, at the Congress of Troppau
1. Metternich tried to get the Quadruple Alliance to agree to intervene in any country experiencing a liberal or a nationalist revolution—much like the later Brezhnev Doctrine
2. The British would not agree
   a) They were hoping to open markets on the continent, and they preferred to deal with independent states and their bourgeois-liberal businessmen—and not with a royal bureaucracy controlled by noble interests
   b) Within two years the English were openly encouraging national self-determination
   c) And they were quite open in saying that they
preferred governments in Europe patterned on English liberal institutions—hardly to Metternich’s taste

VIII. Nationalism

A. Nationalism at this time had revealingly different connections and connotations than in the twentieth century

B. Much as in the case of liberalism, the twentieth-century student must cast from his mind the twentieth-century American context
   1. For example, conservatives were not nationalistic but rather cosmopolitan (or internationalist), while liberals were nationalistic

C. Nationalism, like liberalism, may be seen as a bourgeois ideology in the early 19th century
   1. Although, like liberalism, it clearly was more than that
   2. And there are nationalists in all classes, even if the ideology is most prominent in the middle classes

D. Marxism describes nationalism as a bourgeois ideology—and thus an ideology that benefited the bourgeoisie
   1. By this reasoning, the creation of nation-states fulfilled an economic prerequisite for industrial growth
      a) That is, a nation-state was a unified area of significant size, free of internal tariff barriers, speaking the same language, having uniform legal codes, etc.
      b) A nation was the ideal environment for the growth of business and industry, as the multinational state was not
   2. Even if this is a simplistic picture, there is little question that business interests generally supported the idea of the nation-state at this time

E. But there were other forces that encouraged a national consciousness, besides the felt need for economic growth
   1. For example, the resistance to French and Napoleonic imperialism
      a) Germans and Italians had suffered under French domination—both directly, in taxation and military levies, and indirectly, in cultural domination, French language and laws
2. Such feelings linked up to a long-existing awareness of linguistic and ethnic similarities among peoples
   a) Previously, primary allegiances had been to locale (village, town, province), profession, religion
   b) The idea that the boundaries of a state should correspond to linguistic borders had not been widespread

3. Now that connection began to be widely made, and an awareness of linguistic similarities began to spread to a sense that language and culture were ultimately linked—that there was a German or Italian or Hungarian “people” (or even “race”)

4. The French model was undoubtedly important:
   a) Just as France was united nation, so the Germans, the Italians, the Hungarians believed they should have something similar

F. Opposition of the nobility to nationalism
   1. That nationalistic ideas were not widely appealing to the nobility can be easily understood
   2. For the nobles, especially in central and eastern Europe, typically ruled over a peasantry that was of different linguistic origin
      a) Hungarian and German nobles, for example, usually had Slavic peasants and serfs
      b) Similarly, urban areas were often different from surrounding areas—often Jewish, Germanic, Greek, or Armenian (the typical trader peoples of Europe)
   3. For those at the top of a multinational empire, the idea of nationalism seemed to threaten chaos
   4. There was no way, in their minds, that coherent nations could in fact be created

G. Thus, the Metternichean era was not only one of a struggle between conservatism and liberalism
   1. This struggle was mixed into struggle between nationalism and internationalism (or multinationalism)

H. Two opposing camps: the large, multinational Empire, conservative, internationalist, ruled by the nobility vs. those who wanted nation-states, with liberal institutions, ruled by the bourgeoisie
1. The second half of the century sees a kind of victory of the second group, the end of Metternich’s system of rule, although the process would continue well into the twentieth century

2. One might say that the break-up of the multinational state, Yugoslavia, or the USSR, is a final gasp of the process

IX. Romanticism

A. Here the ambiguities and overlaps are even greater than with liberalism and nationalism

1. Romanticism is unusually protean; it meant many different things to different people

B. In the broadest sense, the distinctions between romanticism and its opposite, classicism are as old as human thought

1. The Greeks distinguished between the Dionysian and the Apollonian: the wild, uncontrollable passions vs. the rational and balanced mind

2. Freud, in fact borrowing much from the ancients, distinguished the id and the ego (the pleasure principle and the rational principle)

C. Western history has seen a complex oscillation between these poles of the human psyche

D. The early nineteenth century was a time of rebellion and passionate commitments

1. Of rebellion against the rationalism, formalism, and classicism of the 18th century

2. A central concern of romanticism may thus be seen as aesthetic—in the arts, poetry, literature, painting, and music

3. In them we see a rebellion against all the rules conventions of classic standards—a general sense that humanity’s creative genius must be “released”

E. The romantics in art thus threw themselves into new, experimental forms

1. They were inclined to extremes of all sorts: grotesque and unusual sights, sounds, images

2. Many romantics deliberately induced hallucinations by taking drugs
a) They hoped thus to gain new insights, have fresh and exciting experiences, “break free”

F. The links between romanticism, liberalism, and nationalism
   1. All call for “freedom”, the creativity of the individual, the sense of wanting to break away from constraints, limits, rules
   2. A taste for rebellion similarly linked the romantics and the nationalists

G. Romanticism and conservatism
   1. Here, too, are linkages—and part of the reason that romanticism is so difficult to pin down
   2. Some romantics tended to look back to the middle ages, to “romanticize” them
      a) Not really because of the supposed stability of the middle ages, however (which is the conservatives' reason for idealizing them)
      b) Rather, they were perceived by the romantics as a time of chivalry, courtly love, religious passion
   3. On the whole, however, romanticism was anti-establishment, hostile to control and authority—Thus, hostile to conservatism
      a) The revolutions of 1848 are seen mostly as romantic
      b) As indeed, are the socialists of the time, as we will see next time