



# Western Civilization from 1650 to the Present

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## TOPIC 7.3. PRIMARY SOURCES: THE EXPERIENCE OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

<b>THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION</b>	<p>The Industrial Revolution was one of the epochal events in the history of Western civilization. One of the most striking features of this event was the relative speed with which it unfolded. Look over a few tables on the <a href="#">spread of industrialization</a> to see how quickly the major Western powers expanded their industrial base.</p> <p>As telling as these numbers are, we should not rely on statistics alone to tell us about the experience of industrialization. Consider, for example, these two documents from the early years of the Industrial Revolution: the <a href="#">Leeds Woolen Workers' Petition</a> of 1786 and the reply of the <a href="#">Leeds Cloth Merchants</a> in 1791.</p> <p><b>What is the point of disagreement between these two groups? What interests do they represent? What does each group see as the consequences of industrialization?</b></p> <p>Now read this excerpt from <a href="#">The Philosophy of the Manufacturers</a> (1835), by Andrew Ure.</p> <p><b>What is this "philosophy" as Ure represents it? What is Ure's attitude toward it? Do you think he would be more likely to support a group like the Leeds woolen workers or one like the Leeds cloth merchants?</b></p> <p>Finally, take a look at some remarks concerning <a href="#">English women miners</a> (1842) and <a href="#">weaving mill girls</a> (1832-48) in Lowell, Massachusetts.</p> <p><b>How did these women experience industrialization. How was the experience of the English women miners similar to and different from that of the girls who worked on the Lowell weaving mills?</b></p>
<b>THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION</b>	<p>Accompanying the Industrial Revolution was an agricultural revolution during which new crops and, in some instances, new cultivation methods were introduced. One of the most important crops to arrive in Britain during this period was the potato. Brought east from South America, the potato quickly became a staple food crop for many peoples of Great Britain, particularly the Irish. Read some remarks on the so-called <a href="#">potato revolution</a>, paying particular attention to the comments of Adam Smith and the observers who wrote after him.</p> <p>In 1845 Ireland suffered the first of three potato crop failures caused by a fungal disease of unknown origin. Since the potato had become the mainstay of Irish agriculture, these failures were especially devastating. Unable to feed themselves or pay their rents, thousands of Irish farming families starved and were evicted from their homes. This mass displacement occasioned, among other things, the one of the greatest waves of immigration to the United States. Just as the potato was the staple crop of Ireland, the Great Famine became a staple of the news.</p> <p>One of many British papers to report on the famine, <i>The Illustrated London News</i> published articles with vivid drawings. Take a look at some samples of these illustrations: <a href="#">mother and children</a>, <a href="#">distributing clothing</a>, <a href="#">eviction</a>, and <a href="#">emigrant ship, between decks</a>.</p> <p><b>How do these drawings present the Irish famine and its effects? What responses do you think they were intended to elicit from readers of the paper?</b></p>

Now examine a cartoon of an [Irish "coffin ship"](#) published in *Harper's Weekly*, an American magazine.

**What does this cartoon suggest about the attitude of at least some of the American public toward the famine victims traveling to the U. S.?**

Finally, take a look at some photographs of famine victims: [starvation](#), [eviction](#), and [homeless woman](#).

**Aside from the medium, how do these pictures differ from the periodical illustrations you examined above? What do they convey that the illustrations do not? What do the illustrations convey that the photographs do not? Do you think the viewers responded to the photographs differently than they responded to the illustrations?**