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Age Of Equipoise

This term “Age of Equipoise” is used to indicate a generation of political and social tranquility in the mid-Victorian Era in Britain. The following papers describes two different eras through which the region of Lancashire went through

Industrial districts of Lancashire between 1852 and 1867

According to a special census of all the factories in the UK, made in 1860 by order of Parliament, was the districts of Lancashire, Cheshire, where there were six hundred and fifty to two factories. Of this number, five hundred and seventy factories contained eighty-five thousand six hundred twenty-two trades steam and six million eight hundred and nineteen thousand one hundred forty-six pin (excluding pin bend) gear Steam accounted force twenty-seven thousand four hundred thirty-nine horses, waterwheels force thousand three hundred ninety and staff included ninety-four thousand one hundred and nineteen workers. In 1865, however, these same factories containing ninety-five thousand one hundred sixty-three trades, seven million twenty-five thousand and thirty and pins and thirty thousand three hundred and seventy-strength horse, twenty-eight thousand and seven one hundred and twenty to five for steam engines and thousand four hundred forty-five waterwheels, occupied only eighty-eight thousand nine hundred and thirteen workers.

From 1860 to 1865, so there was an increase of one percent in steam trades, three per cent, five per cent strength of steam, along with the number of workers fell by five percent (Reports of Insp. of Fact. 1865, p.58).¹

We can therefore imagine the situation of workers who were employed as three, three and a half, four days a week or six hours a day. In 1863, when the state of things had already improved somewhat, the weekly wages of weavers, spinners, etc (Chadwick, 1860) were three shillings four pence, ten pence three shillings, four shillings and sixpence, five shillings a penny, etc. Amid these unfortunate circumstances, the genius inventor manufacturers abounded in excuses to imagine deductions from their meager salaries. They were sometimes fines that the worker had to pay for the defects of the goods due to the poor quality of cotton, imperfect machines, etc. But when the manufacturer owned the cottages of the workers, he began by paying the rent on the nominal wage. Inspector Redgrave speaks of self-acting Minders (workers who monitor a pair of mules automatic), which earned eight shillings eleven pence after fifteen full days of work. Of this amount was first deducted the rent of the manufacturer, however, made half as gift, so that the workers returned home with six shillings eleven pence for any soup. Weekly wages of weavers was often only two shillings and sixpence in the last months of 1862. Even though the arms working short time the rent was not very often unless deducted from wages. Surprising if, in some parts of Lancashire a kind of famine plague were to break. But something even more awful is how changes in production processes were effected at the expense of the worker. These were true experiments, like those of vivisectors on frogs and other animals in experiments.

¹ At the same time, it is true, one hundred ten new factories, counting eleven thousand six hundred twenty-five looms, six hundred twenty-eight thousand seven hundred fifty-six pin, two thousand six hundred ninety-five forces-horse in gear and waterwheels were ready to get going.

Manufacturers do successfully point to talk the workers in their direction, began to shout themselves above all in the press and in Parliament on behalf of the workers. They denounced the inspectors as a kind of revolutionary commissioners who sacrificed ruthlessly unfortunate humanitarian worker in their fantasies. This maneuver was' no more successful than the first. The factory inspector, Leonard Horner, in person and with his sub-inspectors, proceeded in Lancashire many interrogations. Approximately seventy percent of workers said they were heard for ten hours, a considerable number just eleven, and finally a very insignificant minority for twelve hours old. The crown lawyers declared absurd interpretation given by manufacturers to the 1844 Act, but the saviors of society do not yearn for so little.

"After trying in vain, says Leonard Horner, enforce the law, by ten prosecutions in seven different judicial districts, and to have been supported in one case by the magistrates, I look prosecution for breach given to the law as now useless. The part of the law that was written to create uniformity in working hours, no longer exists in Lancashire. On the other hand my sub-agents and me, we have no way to ensure that the factories where reigns the relay system, do not take teenagers and women beyond ten. Since the end of April 1849, there are already in my district one hundred and eighteen factories working by this method and their numbers are growing rapidly every day. In general they work now 1:30 p.m., 6 am to 30 pm seven in the evening in some cases fifteen hours, 5 pm 30 am to 8: 30 pm in the evening."

In December 1848, Leonard Horner already had a list of sixty-five manufacturers and twenty-nine factory supervisors reported that all have one vote, with the relay system in use, no system of inspection could prevent extra work to take place on a larger scale. The same children and the same adolescents were transferred (Shifted) sometimes the room spinning loom in the room, sometimes a factory in another. How to control a system "that abuse of the word relay to

mix the" arms "like cards with each other in a thousand different combinations and vary daily working hours and rest so much for different individuals, that a single set of "arms" never works complete in the same place and at the same time."

But the triumph of capital final appearance was immediately followed by a reaction. The workers had previously opposed a passive resistance, but indomitable and constantly renewed. Now they began to protest in Lancashire, with meetings more threatening. "The pretended Ten Hours Bill, they cried, would have been a farce, a sham parliament, and would never have existed?"

The factory inspectors warned the government bodies with the class antagonism had risen to an incredible degree. Manufacturers themselves began to murmur. They complained that "Thanks to contradictory decisions of judges ruled it a real anarchy. This law was in force in Yorkshire, another in Lancashire, another in a parish in the latter county, another finally in the immediate vicinity. If manufacturers of large cities could evade the law, it was not the same for others who found no staff needed for the relay system and even less for the ballot workers of a factory in another, and so on.'

A medical investigation official then proved the contrary that "the average number of deaths in the districts where the silk factory is exceptionally high and even exceeds, for the female part of the population of the cotton districts of Lancashire". Despite protests inspectors renewed every six months the same privilege still exists.

Industrial districts of Lancashire between 1830 and 1840

The labor movement Chartist follows a sudden change, as soon as the agitation is spreading among the working people of the industrial districts of the North West. The Chartists in London were the only staff without troops. The proletariat of Lancashire communicates movement magnitude and power that would not have otherwise.

The pioneers of the Trades Union were workers of the textile industry and construction in Lancashire. And it is among the industrial proletariat counties Northwest that in 1830-1831, the National Association for the Protection of Labour, then the 1833-1834 Consolidated Trades Union Grand will find enthusiastic support but ephemeral. In the same districts, the industrial proletariat welcome the idea of a general strike as a means to obtain, without any intervention of Parliament, the application in factories, 8:00. The Association for the Protection of Labour was able to collect membership subscriptions and 80,000 workers, and the Great Consolidated Trades Union was an instant group 250,000 workers in factories and fields.

The Association initially limited to Lancashire, Cheshire, Derby, Nottingham and Leicester, quickly spread to Yorkshire. 150 Unions that make up the National Association include cotton spinners, knitters all the printers on calico and silk weavers, but also mechanics, foundry, blacksmiths, joined the miners of Staffordshire, the Yorkshire, Cheshire and Wales. The National Union of Potters is affiliated. The National Association has 000 members from 80 to 100: Voice of the People coming to 30,000. The success of the miners' strike Oldham drew the attention of the authorities and the Secretary of State for the Interior, Sir Robert Peel, considering legislative measures to prevent danger to the public what the Association National.

John Doherty, in his Poor Man's Advocate, supports the initiative taken by the cotton spinners, and these are followed by workers in other textile industries of Lancashire. Union and

the Potters, which was formed in 1830 and included ten thousand members, will join them. Robert Owen supported the movement, not only in his many travels through the Northwest district, but in his journal the Crisis, became the "Gazette of the Union and cooperation of all trades and Fair Trade Labour."

John Fielden provides industrial populations of Lancashire the method of the general strike. John Fielden advises workers, rather than to Parliament, to make themselves the eight-hour day. Indeed, in the presence of the bill passed by Parliament, the disappointment was great. All the efforts of a generous and ardent campaign had been in vain, in vain President Sadler was spent tirelessly to understand the cruelty of Parliament work organisation which, since their adolescence, made of young workers and workers beings worn, deformed by disease, overwork, poverty.

References

Reports of Insp. of Fact. October 31, 1865, p.58

Chadwick, D. (1860) "On the rate of wages in Manchester, Salford and the Manufacturing districts of Lancashire" in journal of the statistical society, vol. xxiii