Government Responses to the consequences of industrialisation

- **Status quo and way of thinking**
  - What changed with the industrial revolution?
    - Poverty was not new
    - What was new was the visibility and extent of poor living and working conditions
      - Especially women and children
        - Seen as unable to protect themselves from exploitation
  - Traditional thinking
    - Not the role of the state to interfere in employer-employee relationships
    - Children seen as capable of making decisions regarding decision to work
  - Employers
    - Argued that better pay and working conditions would drive them to bankruptcy
    - Believed market forces should be applied
      - No regulation
- **Early attempts**
  - Parliament acts 1802 and 1819
    - Restricted hours children could work
    - Stop those under 9 from being employed
    - No effective system of inspectors
      - Could not ensure law was obeyed
      - Attempts to prosecute law-breakers difficult and expensive
- **Reform & parties**
  - Why did people want reform?
    - Humanitarian
    - Opposed to capitalism and industry
    - Religion
    - 1830s
      - Factory reform movement
        - Focusing on child labour
  - Parties
    - Whigs
      - Favoured political reform
        - But also laissez-faire approach
    - Tories
      - Dominated British politics
      - Changed its name to Conservative Party
  - Main leaders of reform movement
    - Tory members of parliament
      - Richard Oastler (Tory)
      - Michael Sadler
      - Gain support from many workers
- **1830 Leeds newspaper**
  - Leeds
    - Centre of wool industry
  - Written by **Richard Oastler**
    - Called for an end to **'Yorkshire Slavery'** → Gave momentum to idea of regulation for children
    - Published in local newspaper → Gained national attention
  - Awareness
    - Largely **uncensored press**
      - Inform on conditions in factories and countryside
  - Why was reform delayed?
    - Greater debate at the time
      - Whether parliament should be extended to more men
- **Political developments**
  - Why was reform delayed?
    - Greater debate at the time
      - Whether parliament should be extended to more men
  - Michael Sadler (Tory)
    - Introduced bill
      - Maximum 10 hour day for under 18
        - Did not pass
        - BUT gained extensive publicity
      - Set up a committee of MPs to examine the bill
      - Persuaded a large number of **witnesses** to give evidence of abuses in textile factories
      - Sadler lost his seat in 1832 elections
        - Strongly opposed by many factory owners and people who believed in laissez-faire
  - Lord Ashley (Tory)
    - Took on Sadler's mission
    - 10-hour bill
      - Failed to pass by 1 vote
  - Government agreed to
    - **Royal Commission**
      - Examine
        - Fairly
          - Unlike Sadler's committee
            - Only published evidence supporting reform
          - Also gave manufacturers scope to present their views
      - Leader **Edwin Chadwick**
      - Recommendations adopted in 1833
- **1833 Factory Act**
  - Most important terms
    - Applied to most textile mills
    - No child under 9 could be employed
    - Restrictions on work hours for under 18
    - Children between 9 and 13 to recieve 2 hours of education daily
    - Inspectors appointed by government; some powers to enforce law
  - Positive
    - Critical first step
      - Accepted that children needed protection from exploitation
    - Acceptance that the state had a responsibility to protect vulnerable people
      - Inspectors could investigate and prosecute
    - Humanitarianism
      - Laissez-faire men persuaded to take action
    - Led to further legislation
  - Negative
    - Only covered some factories
      - E.g. did not cover coal mines
        - Many children also worked in dangerous and unhealthy conditions
    - Did not include women
    - Men hoping for shorter working day disappointed
    - Difficult to enforce
      - Factory owners ignored education requirement
      - Parents desperate for money colluded with factory owners to ignore the rules
      - Very low penalties for rule-breaking
        - Not a disincentive to employers
  - **Select committee**
    - Lord Ashely
    - Group of MPs who examine a problem and make recommendations
    - Publicised the failings of the act
- Lead to
- **Other acts**
  - **Mines Act 1842**
    - Stopped all children under 10 and women from underground work
    - Established inspectors with power to investigate and prosecute
  - **1844 and 1847 Factory Acts**
    - Reduced maximum working hours for 8-13 year olds to 6.5 per day
    - Increased amount of necessary education to 3 hours
    - Maximum 12-hour day for women
      - Later reduced to 10 hours per day and 58 hours per week

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