

Reform Movement

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A reform movement is a kind of social movement that aims to make gradual change, or change in certain aspects of society, rather than rapid or fundamental changes. A reform movement is distinguished from more radical social movements such as revolutionary movements.

Reformists' ideas are often grounded in liberalism, although they may be rooted in socialist (specifically, Social democratic) or religious concepts. Some rely on personal transformation; others rely on small collectives, such as Mahatma Gandhi's spinning wheel and the self sustaining village economy, as a mode of social change. Reactionary movements, which can arise against any of these, attempt to put things back the way they were before whatever successes of the new movement(s), or prevent any such successes in the first place.

Great Britain/United Kingdom: late 18th century to early 20th

The Radical Movement

The Radical movement campaigned for electoral reform, a reform of the Poor Laws, free trade, educational reform, postal reform, prison reform, and public sanitation. Originally this movement sought to replace the exclusive political power of the aristocracy with a more democratic system empowering urban areas and the middle and lower classes. Following the Enlightenment's ideas, the reformers looked to the Scientific Revolution and industrial progress to solve the social problems which arose with the Industrial Revolution. Newton's natural philosophy combined a mathematics of axiomatic proof with the mechanics of physical observation, yielding a coherent system of verifiable predictions and replacing a previous reliance on revelation and inspired truth. Applied to public life, this approach yielded several successful campaigns for changes in social policy. Eventually, this reform movement led to formation of the Liberal Party in 1859. Later, wealthy business owners and high ranking officials created the Conservative Party to counter the rising strength of the liberals in Parliament.

One of the actions taken was the Reform Bill of 1832, which provided the rising middle classes more political power in urban areas while lessening the representation of districts undisturbed by the Industrial Revolution. Despite determined resistance from the House of Lords, this Bill gave more parliamentary power to the liberals, while reducing the political force of the working class, leaving them detached from the main body of middle class support on which they had relied. Having achieved the Reform Act of 1832, the Radical alliance was broken until the Liberal-Labour alliance of the mid-Victorian period.

The Chartist movement

Chartist meeting, Kennington Common, 1848

The Chartist movement sought universal suffrage. An historian of the Chartist movement observed that "The Chartist movement was essentially an economic movement with a purely political programme." A period of bad trade and high food prices set in, and the drastic restrictions on Poor Law relief were a source of acute distress. The London Working Men's Association, under the guidance of Francis Place, found itself in the midst of a great unrest. In the northern textile districts the Chartists, led by Feargus O'Connor, a follower of Daniel O'Connell, denounced the inadequate Poor Laws. This was basically a hunger revolt, springing from unemployment and despair. In Birmingham, the older Birmingham Political Union sprang to life under the leadership of Thomas Attwood. The Chartist movement demanded basic economic reforms, higher wages and better conditions of work, and a repeal of the obnoxious Poor Law Act.

The idea of universal male suffrage, an initial goal of the Chartist movement, was to include all males as voters regardless of their social standing. This later evolved into a campaign for universal suffrage. This movement sought to redraw the parliamentary districts within Great Britain and create a salary system for elected officials so workers could afford to represent their constituents without a burden on their families.

The Women's Suffrage movement

Main article: Women's suffrage

Mary Wollstonecraft

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, 1792

Many consider Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) to be the source of the reformers' long-running campaign for feminist inclusion and the origin of the Women's Suffrage movement. Harriet Taylor was a significant influence on John Stuart Mill's work and ideas, reinforcing Mill's advocacy of women's rights. Her essay, "Enfranchisement of Women," appeared in the *Westminster Review* in 1851 in response to a speech by Lucy Stone given at the first National Women's Rights Convention in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1850, and it was reprinted in the United States. Mill cites Taylor's influence in his final revision of *On Liberty*, (1859) which was published shortly after her death, and she appears to be obliquely referenced in Mill's *The Subjection of Women*.

A militant campaign to include women in the electorate originated in Victorian times. Emmeline Pankhurst's husband, Richard Pankhurst, was a supporter of the women's suffrage movement, and had been the author of the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882. In 1889, Pankhurst founded the unsuccessful Women's Franchise League, but in October 1903 she founded the better-known Women's Social and Political Union (Suffragettes), an organization famous for its militancy. Led by Pankhurst and her daughters, Christabel and Sylvia, the campaign culminated in 1918, when the Parliament of the United Kingdom passed an act (the Representation of the People Act 1918) granting the vote to women over the age of 30 who were householders, the wives of

householders, occupiers of property with an annual rent of £5, and graduates of British universities.

Reform in Parliament

Earl Grey, Lord Melbourne and Robert Peel were leaders of Parliament during the earlier years of the British reform movement. Grey and Melbourne were of the Whig party, and their governments saw parliamentary reform, the abolition of slave trading throughout the British Empire, and Poor Law reform. Peel was a Conservative, whose Ministry took an important step in the direction of tariff reform with the abolition of the Corn Laws.

William Gladstone

Benjamin Disraeli and William Ewart Gladstone, as leaders of Great Britain's Conservative and Liberal parties, respectively, served as Prime Ministers during the later years of Great Britain's era of reform. Disraeli saw British control of the Suez Canal and named Queen Victoria the Empress of India.

Gladstone approached politics differently. Among the reforms he helped Parliament pass was a system of public education in the Elementary Education Act 1870. In 1872, he saw the institution of a secret ballot to prevent voter coercion, trickery and bribery. By 1885 Gladstone had readjusted the parliamentary district lines by making each district equal in population, preventing one MP from having greater influence than another.

United States: 1840s - 1930s

Art -- The Hudson River School defined a distinctive American style of art, depicting romantic landscapes via the Transcendentalist perspective on nature.

Literature -- founding of the Transcendentalist movement, which stressed high thinking and a spiritual connection to all things (see pantheism).

Science -- John James Audubon founded the science of ornithology (the study of birds).

Utopian Experiments.

New Harmony, Indiana (founder: Robert Owen) -- practiced economic communism, although it proved to be socially flawed and thus unable to sustain itself.

Oneida Commune (founder: John Noyes), practiced eugenics, complex marriage, and communal living. The commune was supported through the manufacture of silverware, and the corporation still exists today, producing spoons and forks for households of the world. The commune sold its assets when Noyes was jailed on numerous charges.

Shakers -- (founder: Mother Ann Lee) Stressed living and worship through dance, supported themselves through manufacture of furniture. The furniture is still popular today.

Brook Farm (founder: George Ripley), an agriculture-based commune that also ran schools.

Educational reform -- (founder: Horace Mann); goals were a more relevant curriculum and more accessible education. Noah Webster's dictionary standardized English spelling and language; William McGuffey's hugely successful children's books taught reading in incremental stages.

Women's rights movement -- Founded by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who organized the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 and published a Declaration of Sentiments calling for the social and legal equality of women. Carried forward by Lucy Stone who began speaking out for women's rights in 1847, and organized a series of national conventions. Susan B. Anthony joined the cause in 1851 and worked ceaselessly for women's suffrage.

American labor movement -- The campaign against excessive hours of work (and for the eight-hour day) was a central issue for the labor movement during the 19th century. The Knights of Labor, organized among the skilled trades in 1869 and led by Uriah Stephens, Terence Powderly and Mother Jones, was succeeded by the American Federation of Labor, the Industrial Workers of the World, and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (now the AFL-CIO).

Child labor reform

Family planning

Abolition movement -- The addition of Mexico's former territories in 1848 at the conclusion of the Mexican-American War reopened the possibility of the expansion of race-based chattel slavery; the adaptation of the slave system to industrial-style cotton production resulted in increasing dehumanization of black workers and a backlash against slavery in the northern states; key figures included William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass.

Know-Nothing movement, also anti-Catholic, anti-Masonic, and nativist (1845-1856)

Prohibition or Temperance movement -- Characterized by Frances Willard's Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which stressed education (formed 1881, declined in 1940s) and Carrie Nation's Anti-Saloon League (established nationally by Howard Hyde Russell), which promoted a confrontational approach towards bars and saloons. Other significant organizations include the Prohibition Party and Lincoln-Lee Legion.

Mexico: La Reforma, 1850s

Benito Juárez

The Mexican Liberal party, led by Benito Juárez and Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, guided the emergence of Mexico, as a nation state, from colonialism. It envisioned a modern civil society and capitalist economy. All citizens were equal before the law, and Mexico's 1829 abolition of slavery was reaffirmed. The Liberal program, documented in the 1857 Constitution of Mexico, was based on:

Abolition of the fueros which had granted civil immunity to members of the church and military
Liquidation of traditional ejido communal land holdings and distribution of freehold titles to the peasantry (the Ley Lerdo)
Expropriation and sale of concentrated church property holdings (beyond the clergy's religious needs)
Curtailement of exorbitant fees by the church for administering the sacraments
Abolition of separate military and religious courts (the Ley Juárez)
Freedom of religion and guarantees of many civil and political liberties
Secular public education
Civil registry for births, marriages and deaths
Elimination of all forms of cruel and unusual punishment, including the death penalty
Elimination of debtor's prisons and all forms of personal servitude

Ottoman Empire: 1840s-1870s

The Tanzimat meaning reorganization of the Ottoman Empire, was a period of reformation that began in 1839 and ended with the First Constitutional Era in 1876. The Tanzimat reform era was characterized by various attempts to modernize the Ottoman Empire, to secure its territorial integrity against nationalist movements and aggressive powers. The reforms encouraged Ottomanism among the diverse ethnic groups of the Empire, attempting to stem the tide of nationalist movements within the Ottoman Empire. The reforms attempted to integrate non-Muslims and non-Turks more thoroughly into Ottoman society by enhancing their civil liberties and granting them equality throughout the Empire.

Republic of Turkey: 1920s-1930s

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Atatürk's Reforms

Atatürk's Reforms were a series of significant political, legal, cultural, social and economic changes that were implemented under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the early years of the Republic of Turkey.