

Jobs and life conditions during the Victorian Age

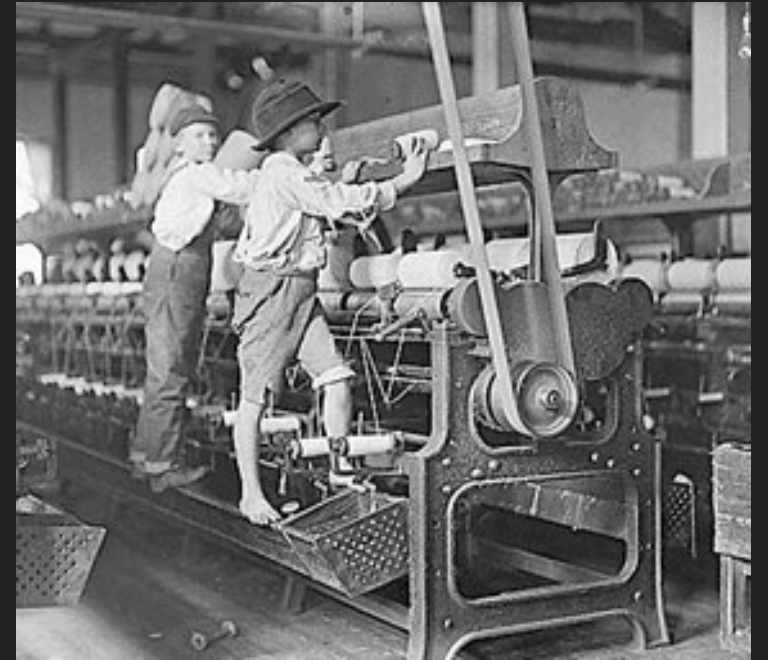
Introduction to the themes

- Charles Dickens was always critical of the Victorian society.
- In his major works, such as “Hard Times” he describes, masking the entire form of the novel (as to not offend the widespread bourgeois respectability of the time), the main problems of the time.

The biggest problems

These problems were mainly:

- **The poverty and the fear of losing the job;**
- The bad school system;
- The child exploitation.



Jobs conditions

- Unemployment widespread;
- The introduction of machinery required less and less labor (and workers).
- Rural population went to cities → The towns offered a better chance of work and higher wages than the countryside, where many families were trapped in dire poverty and seasonal employment.

Jobs conditions

- Workers were exposed to exhausting rhythms (10-14 hours per day);
- There was no safety in the workplace;
- No warranty or social pension;
- Birth of the Society of Mutual Aid and Trade Unions;
- Workers' demands → birth of the Labour Party (1900)

Unemployment factors

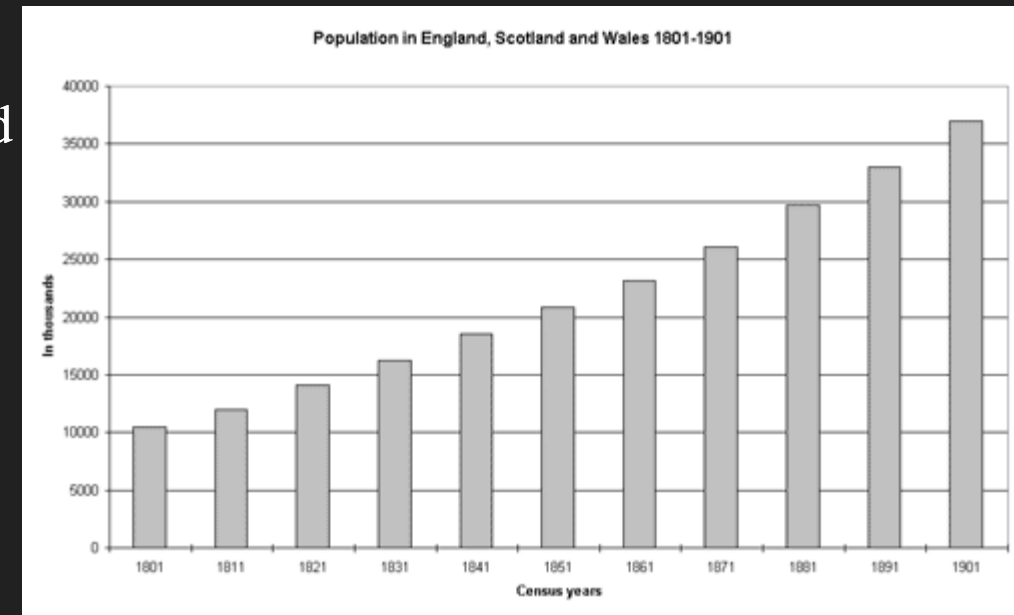
- population explosion;
- immigration both foreign and domestic.

Life conditions

- Food prices were high;
- Factory towns were dirty places with narrow streets and overcrowded houses;
- All these themes were affronted by Charles Dickens in his work “Hard Times”;
- Particularly, **Coketown** is an example of the industrial city.

Population growth

- During the Victorian Age, the population of Great Britain passed from 15000 thousands of 1831 to 35000 thousands of 1901
- The Census of 1851 revealed that more people were living in towns and cities than in the countryside;
- This rapidly growing population meant a hugely expanding market for books and newspapers.



Cities conditions

- The census of 1851 recorded half of the population of Britain as living in towns;
- Housing and hygienic conditions were precarious;
- Rural people, who came to live in the city, were housed in crumbling shacks.

