

3 nov 2020 - The Victorian Age

Queen Victoria

She belongs to the Hanoverians (George I, George II, William IV). She was the niece of William IV, and she took the throne when she was only **18 yo**, and she would reign for 64 years and she would become a symbol of the entire age.

When Victoria got to the throne she found a Country in difficult conditions, because there was discontent among the working classes, due to a period of *economical crisis*. A direct consequence of this economical crisis was the birth of the **Chartist Movement**: their name went from their proposal of a charter of reforms, made up of 6 points:

1. universal suffrage
2. annual parliament
3. payment for parliament member; so far the member of parliament were not paid, so only rich people could afford to stay there
4. the right for a man without proprieties to be elected
5. secret ballot
6. equal electoral districts; until that moment the electoral districts were of the same area and dimensions, without taking care of the density of population; in this way it was very easy for affluent people to control districts with a small number of people (called *rotten boroughs*)

This petition was not accepted in parliament, and so Chartist disappeared from policy in 1848, since they were considered politically immature, and their projects were doomed to failure, but with the passing of time all their reforms had been actuated, but for the *annual parliament*.

In 1825 the **Trade Unions** [sindacati] were legalized, and they became stronger and stronger. In 1868 there was the first Trade Union Congress, and a status was given to the movement.

The long reign of queen Victoria saw a succession of great Prime Ministers, some belonging to the Tories (now conservatives), and some belonging to the Wigs (now liberals; in the modern parliament is the Labour to oppose to Conservative, born in 1906). The two parties, that were Tories and Wigs, had different opinions, but they agreed for a second and a third *Reform Bill*.

The **Second Reform Bill** was passed in 1867, and it extended the right of vote to Town Labourers, while peasants and miners couldn't vote.

Only with the **Third Reform Bill**, in 1884, that the latter were given a right to vote. In this way the number of electors doubled, since suffrage had been extended to all male workers

It only refers, obviously, to men. Women couldn't vote

Many representatives of the working class may now be elected, entering the *house of commons*.

In 1897 the **independent Labour party** was formed (born as a movement), and finally the working class may compete widely for political power. They were transformed into a real party in 1900, and had a great political success in 1906.