

Spring 2024  
Modern Europe  
Assignment 1 – The Twin Revolutions

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***This assignment is due on Blackboard by end of day on Monday, March 4. Questions 1 through 15 should be in short-answer format of four or five complete sentences (not bullet-points or sentence fragments). They are worth five points each.***

**Questions 1-6 are based on Klemen's von Metternich's *Letter to Czar Alexander of 1820* posted on Blackboard 5 points each (*the text of this letter is in the Content section of Blackboard*)**

1. Why does Metternich believe that human beings' "presumptuousness" contributed to the outbreak of Revolution in France in 1789?

Metternich believes that humans being' presumptuousness contributed to the outbreak of the Revolution in France because of conflicting ideas. Those revolting believed in their own faith and trusted their own knowledge. This idea brought together a revolution against the "controlling" government over them. Metternich mentions how knowledge with a lack of experience was a factor in presumptuous humans in that it gives them false guidance, leading to a conflict between what they believe is self-governance and the existing authority controlling their lives. This presumptuousness then spread rapidly and eventually led to the revolution in 1789.

2. What were some of the reasons given by Metternich for the rise in "presumptuousness" in his own era?

Metternich describes how the extremely fast progression of the human mind and the growth of wisdom fed into the rise of presumptuousness. He explains how "the natural effect of the rapid progression of the human mind towards the perfecting of so many things" led many humans "lost" or led to "presumptuousness". New discoveries and new inventions would be the greatest factor in this rapid progression of the human mind because of the new ways to obtain knowledge alongside a much larger array of knowledge to choose from. Additionally, Metternich mentions how outside factors such as the American revolution would inspire the outbreak of the French Revolution.

3. Why according to Metternich did some members of the aristocracy support the Revolution?

According to Metternich, some aristocrats supported the Revolution because they are "falsely ambitious men", or "lost spirits". The disease of presumptuousness has overtaken them, and they do not hesitate to take advantage of it. The aristocrats, or the middle class, have learned from the past and declared themselves the masters of the future. Being in between the nobles and the commoners, they are essentially a bridge between the oppressed and the oppressors. This middle position, having more "power" than the lower classes but not being noble enough for the higher classes, is a door to bring the "presumptuous" ideas directly into the ruling class, controlling the future because it will benefit them.

4. What impact does Metternich think ideas such as "the Social Contract" had in the outbreak of Revolution in 1789?

Metternich thinks that ideas such as “the Social Contract” by philosopher Rousseau had a very lasting and large impact on the outbreak of the Revolution in 1789. The basic idea of the Social Contract was to question the authority of the government. This idea led to wanting a reform in the way the government has been functioning. Questioning the authority led to new philosophized “idealistic” governments that function on the general will of the commoners, or those who represent the larger population. This is a primary factor in the end goal of the Revolution, as it would overthrow Monarchs and attempt to restructure the government to better fit the needs of the lower and middle class.

5. What according to Metternich are the true bases of government?

Metternich believes that public morality, laws, customs, rights, duties, and above all religion are the true bases of government. Without religion, there would be no order, no faith, and no operating government that controls chaos. Metternich mentions how “centuries of darkness followed the irruption of the barbarians”, and that they “could not return to barbarism”. He then says how “the Christian religion had appeared” and that just its existence was enough to “disperse the darkness and establish civilization on new foundations, applicable to all times and all places, satisfying needs, and establishing the most important of all on the basis of a pure and eternal law”. Essentially, Christianity gave to the people a form of peace in being governed, as it would provide the people all that is needed and avoid any barbarism to arise.

6. Identify three recommendations offered by Metternich on how kings should respond to demands for constitutional government.

The first recommendation offered by Metternich on how kings should respond to demands for constitutional government is to stay strict. Kings should trust the government in that laws should be followed strictly, and no new laws giving too much freedom should be passed. Secondly, Metternich recommends to reduce “Doctrinaires”, which would reduce the spread of “presumptuousness”. Without people spreading false ideas, the justice of the government will not longer be revolted against, and peace will be ensured. Lastly, Metternich recommends kings to form unions between monarchs to “save society from total ruin”, as more control and governance means less chaos and support for a constitutional government.

**Questions 7-9 are on Andrew Ure's *Philosophy of the Factory System* of 1835 5 points each**  
<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1835ure.asp>

7. Identify the arguments given by Andrew Ure for rejecting claims that the new factory system had negative effects on the physical and mental health of workers employed in that system.

Andrew rejects the claims that the new factory system had negative effects on the physical and mental health of workers employed in that system by bringing up valid claims about the direct positive effects on said physical and mental health of workers. Andrew mentions that the new factory system eases the laborer's work by using machines carefully adjusted for a worker to do the minimum work needed. This reduces their physical fatigue by demanding less hard work. Mentally, this eased their labor mentality because of less physical fatigue, alongside fair wages for the work put into production/manufacturing.

Ultimately, the new factory system actually helped workers physically and mentally by replacing the hard labor with automated machines.

8. Identify some of the reasons given by Andrew Ure for his support replacing human labor with machines in the factory system of early 19<sup>th</sup> century Great Britain.

Andrew wants to replace human labor with machines because they make production more effective without increasing the need for humans. Machines could manufacture and fabricate goods that would be impossible for humans to make. Machines could output a greater amount of work and production without requiring more time, labor, and the quality of the work – machines have no “mental” reason to stop working, and many machines could be put to use to do more repetitive labor. This repetitive labor is rapid because they require less skill, and machines will take care of this aspect. By replacing the unskilled workers, the skill required to operate/maintain the machines would be another working opportunity.

9. Identify the reason given by Ure for favoring using women and adolescents as workers over adult men, and for using untrained workers over skilled artisan workers in the new factory system.

Andrew favors using women and adolescents as workers over adult men because it would save wages. Doing so would “save 50l. a week in wages in consequence of dispensing with nearly forty male spinners, at about 25s. of wages each...”. He reasons that most cotton mills and spinning is done mostly by young females. By removing the many men spinners for a “common mule” and keeping the women, adolescents, and untrained workers, there would be a saving in wages without decreasing the quality of work.

**Questions 10-11 below are based on the *Women Miners in the Coal Pits* report from the British parliament from 1842 5 points each**

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1842womenminers.asp>

10. Identify some of the issues with labor conditions in the British coal mining industry uncovered by the British parliament’s investigations of that industry in 1842

The labor conditions uncovered by the British parliament’s investigations of the British coal mining industry in 1842 were outright immoral. They found the working conditions to be barely manageable, in that the mining occurs in cramped spaces that requires sitting or lying down. The workload was tiring, especially for the women who were employed. Men, women, boys, and girls were all given the same treatment. It is especially horrible for young women, as they encounter the sexual vices and desires of men who work with them. There is little to no regulation on work hours and the work environment, especially between the genders.

11. Identify some of the negative social effects on female coal miners described in the British parliamentary investigation of 1842.

There existed many negative social effects on female coal miners described in the British parliamentary investigation of 1842, including physical and mental exhaustion. Female coal miners deal with taking care of their families and children but have to work during the day. Working consisted of very tiring shifts, going “15 to 20 times a day into a dark chamber, which is often 50 yards apart from anyone to a man working naked, or next to naked...”. They also have to deal with these men and their “sexual vices”. Female coal miners have to deal with this every day, only to receive barely enough food for themselves and their families.

**Questions 12-15 are based on “The Defense of Laissez-faire” 5 points each**  
<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1840laissezfaire.asp>

12. What according to the 1840 “Defense of Laissez-faire”, does experience show about the effects of economic regulation?

According to the 1840 “The Defense of Laissez-faire”, experience shows that economic regulation led to lasting negative effects on itself and its people. According to the text, “in our attempts to improve, by legislation, the condition of the poor, we have not only multiplied the number, but reduced them to a state of degradation before unknown”. The experience of repeated failures has taught us that economic regulation meant less regulation and more constraining.

13. What according to this “Defense” should be the goal of economic legislation?

The goal of economic legislation should be to improve upon past laws. Through experience and failures, improvements may be made, but not just any improvement. The text mentions that it is not just better laws that need to be passed but repealing bad laws. Building upon old laws would lead to more failure and needs more than being “better” – it should fix problems with old ones.

14. Why does the author of the “Defense” see the first British laws regulating child labor in 1802 as a bad?

It was bad because the bill was limited to apprentices working in cotton mills, and not to all apprentices. Additionally, the bill regulated child labor and did not attack the unethical use of child labor. This bill meant to keep children in the workforce by regulating their hours to ensure they are not overworked. The bill did not tackle the root of the problem, which includes unethical parenting and imposing the duties of parents unto their own child by having them work for food.

15. How according to this author should child labor be controlled?

The author suggests sending the children to school, which would count as “work” time as well. By additionally limiting labor hours of children, this school-work balance would be a better way to control child labor. It educates the child, which therefore trains them for the work they are doing, while also giving them physical experience in the workforce. Experience and education would lead to better men in the future.

*Question #16 requires an extended response of approximately one two to three full paragraphs giving your analysis of the claims made by Robespierre defending extreme measures to advance his concept of a just society.*

16. **Examine the speech of French leader Maximillian Robespierre defending the Law of 22 Prairial Year II (10 June 1794) for the question below – 10 points. The text of that speech is here:**  
<https://revolution.chnm.org/d/439/>

Critics of Robespierre and the French Revolution claim that this law and policy laid the foundation for repressive modern governments' justification of repression and even mass atrocities in defense of "equality" and "justice." Others claim that genuine progress toward greater equality and justice sometimes requires extreme measures against existing injustice and unjustifiable inequality such as those used by Robespierre. Explain your view on this debate and WHY you have your particular opinion.

The Law of 22 Prairial Year II is a very ambitious one. It aims to suppress any type of criticism of the government and give no chance to those suspected of going against the revolution. In the law itself, it seems to make sense to be as strict as possible to first rid and cleanse of any opposers of the revolution. However, I think extreme control is very counterintuitive, especially in conjunction with the liberal ideas of the revolution. Firstly, the revolution aimed to free the commoners from the government, but now that they have control, they want to do the exact thing the previous government has done – hold true justice and control over the population in which most cases create inequality over time.

To sacrifice freedom and equality for a time to promise freedom and equality later on seems very falsely reasoned – remove the "pests" from society so that only those who agree with the revolutionists exist. This sounds awfully similar to Metternich and his letter about "presumptuousness" and is uncanny in reasoning. Creating a temporarily repressive government goes against the liberalist ideals and only accomplishes sameness – freedom and equality only because the entire population agrees. In the real-world people change their minds, and no one will unanimously, as a whole population, believe in the same ideas. This is why repressive governments, even when they purposely root out those against their ideals of freedom and equality, intrinsically create inequality that progressively increases overtime, which can trigger more revolutions.