Radicals And Reformers 1832-1848
RADICALS AND REFORMERS: THEMES

• Reforming the State: the Reform Act 1832
• Reforming the State: the New Poor Law 1834
• Expanding the State: factory laws
• Chartism 1838-1848
• Repeal of the Corn Laws 1846
Reform Act of 1832
Reforming the State: the New Poor Law 1834

- What was the poor law and why did it need reform?
- Changing the behavior of the lower class in the labor market
- Thus, the social welfare policy of deterrence: the workhouses, “bastilles”
New Poor Law: the workhouses
New Poor Law: the bastilles

- Preston Workhouse 1900
Expanding the State

The new Police: London
1829 Sir Robert Peel
Expanding the State

- Factory and Mine Acts of 1833, 1842, 1847
But why should Reform stop there?

What about the Workers? [an old British slogan]

How about some Reform in THEIR interests?

Which is what the Chartists were all about
REFORM!!

A LECTURE

CHARTER

Market Place, Wallingford,
On WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 6th, 1848.
BY MR. KYDD,
OF LONDON.
TO COMMENCE AT HALF PAST SIX.
Chartism 1838-1848

- The first proletarian movement; the greatest social movement of the century
- What did they want?
- The Six Points
  - Equal electoral districts
  - Universal male suffrage (note the male bit)
  - Payment of Members of Parliament
  - Annual parliaments
  - Abolition of property qualification for being MP
  - Secret Ballot
Chartism 1838-1848

• What would that have meant if enacted?
• The power of Chartism:
  – National organization
  – Millions involved; petitions with 6 million signatures
  – The threat of physical force
But, Chartism collapsed in 1848 Why?

- Internal division: moral versus physical force
- April 10th. 1848 meeting: government called the bluff of the physical force chartists
Chartist Meeting April 10th. 1848
Kennington Common
By Contrast, some reform movements that were successful:

- Abolition of Slavery in British colonies 1838
- Humanitarianism in British politics reaches highpoint.
- Reform of charities
Repeal of the Corn Laws 1846

- Corn laws a symbol of aristocratic, landed gentry dominance of the political system
Repeal of Corn Laws

• Urban middle class campaign against them; led by these men, Cobden and Bright
Repeal of Corn Laws

- Irish Famine: 1845-46
- Sir Robert Peel, again
- Repeal 1846; the triumph of free trade ideology
This marked the end of the “age of reform”

• An end to the demand for reform of policies and institutions that had first been raised by John Wilkes in the 1760s.