Section 4 Unit 16
Primary Source -- Friedrich Engels

*Friedrich Engels: The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844 C.E*

Friedrich Engels was a businessman in England during the 1800’s. He is most remembered for his financial support of the economic philosopher Karl Marx. Engels supplied Marx with enough money to live off of so that he could focus on his writings and develop his theory of *Communism*. In that sense, Engels was an important figure in the development of *Communist ideology* in the 1800s C.E. By the middle of the 1900’s, Communism would spread throughout the globe and influence the history of the modern world in an enormous way. Communist thinkers developed their ideas in part due to the suffering of the working classes that the Industrial Age brought about.

![Karl Marx -- Left](image) ![Friedrich Engles -- Right](image)

In *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844 C.E*, Friedrich Engels recorded his observations of the wretched living conditions in poor areas of nineteenth-century (1800’s) England. In this excerpt, Engels describes working-class districts in Manchester. He depicts the misery and filth typical of the living areas of industrial workers.
The houses are packed very closely together and since the bank of the river is very steep it is possible to see a part of every house. All of them have been blackened by soot, all of them are crumbling with age and all have broken windowpanes and window-frames. In the background there are old factory buildings which look like barracks. On the opposite, low-lying bank of the river, one sees a long row of houses and factories. The second house is a roofless ruin, filled with refuse, and the third is built in such a low situation that the ground floor is uninhabitable and has neither doors nor windows. In the background one sees the paupers cemetery, and the stations of the railways to Liverpool and Leeds…

The recently constructed extension of the Leeds railway crosses the Irk at this point has swept away some of these courts and alleys, but it has thrown open to public gaze some of the others. So it comes about that there is to be found immediately under the railway bridge a court which is even filthier and more revolting than all the others. This is simply because it was formerly so hidden and secluded that it could only be reached with considerable difficulty (but is now exposed to the human eye). I thought I knew this district well, but even I would never have found it had not the railway viaduct (elevated roadway) made a breach in the slums at this point. One walks along a very rough path on the river bank, in between clothes posts and washing lines, to reach a chaotic group of little, one storied, one roomed cabins. Most of them have earth floors, and working, living and sleeping all take place in the one room. In such a hole, barely six feet long and five feet wide, I saw two beds--and what beds and bedding! -- these huts, as far as I could see, were completely empty, although the door was open and the inhabitants were
leaning against the door posts. In front of the doors filth and garbage abounded. I could not see the pavement, but from time to time I felt it was there because my feet scraped it.

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**Critical Thinking Questions…**

*Full sentences for Credit -- Restate The Question*

1) What was one of the major reasons that communist philosophers began to put forward their ideas about communism?

2) According to Engels, how did the development of the railways affect the working-class districts?

3) How does Engels feel about the living conditions he observes?
4) What seems to be Engels general attitude toward the Industrial Revolution?