“That the only authority on which any body of men can make laws and govern society, is delegation from the people.

“That as Government was designed for the benefit and protection of, and must be obeyed and supported by all, therefore all should be equally represented.

“That any form of Government which fails to effect the purposes for which it was designed, and does not fully and completely represent the whole people, who are compelled to pay taxes to its support and obey the laws resolved upon by it, is unconstitutional, tyrannical, and ought to be amended or resisted.

“That your Honourable House, as at present constituted, has not been elected by, and acts irresponsibly of, the people; and hitherto has only represented parties, and benefited the few, regardless of the miseries, grievances, and petitions of the many. Your honourable House has enacted laws contrary to the expressed wishes of the people, and by unconstitutional means enforced obedience to them, thereby creating an unbearable despotism on the one hand, and degrading slavery on the other.

“That if your honourable House is of opinion that the people of Great Britain and Ireland ought not to be fully represented, your petitioners pray that such opinion may be unequivocally made known, that the people may fully understand what they can or cannot expect from your honourable House: because if such be the decision of your honourable House, your petitioners are of opinion that where representation is denied, taxation ought to be resisted.
“That your petitioners instance, in proof of their assertion, that your honourable House has not been elected by the people; that the population of Great Britain and Ireland is at the present time about twenty-six millions of persons; and that yet, out of this number, little more than nine hundred thousand have been permitted to vote in the recent election of representatives to make laws to govern the whole.

“That the existing state of representation is not only extremely limited and unjust, but unequally divided, and gives preponderating influence to the landed and monied interests to the utter ruin of the small-trading and labouring classes.”

Second Petition of the Chartists, 2 May 1842

Context:

A British political and social movement of the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the Chartists sought universal manhood suffrage; the ballot; abolition of property qualifications for Members of Parliament; payment of MPs; equal electoral districts; and annual elections. Working people rallied to the Chartists and British women saw in the movement a means to improve their status. The Great Charter of 1842 contained more than three million signatures. The ability of the British system to vent frustration contrasted with elsewhere in Europe where the rebellions of 1848 broke out.

Questions:

1. Between 1815 and 1847 how did liberals, nationalists, and socialists choose to confront the forces of conservatism?
2. Why did Romanticism emerge as an ideology as well as such a successful artistic movement?

Assignment:

Explain the mechanics of assembling a petition to put before the House of Commons and then detail one example of such a drive.
Bibliography:


