In February 1848, the middle classes and workers in France joined together to overthrow the government of Louis Philippe. By June the two groups were at odds in their political, economic, and social thinking. Analyze what transpired to divide the groups and describe the consequences for the French politics. (1990, Question #5)

During the end of February 1848 a revolution broke out in France that was very similar to the two previous revolutions in 1789 and 1830. Revolution occurred because, King Philippe of France, was abusing his political power, by only allowing the upper class to vote for deputies. This caused a sense of unfairness and inequality between the classes. The middle class and the working class were then joined to overthrow their present government, but other than that had almost nothing in common. The 1848 revolution was very much a class war. The aristocracy and the bourgeoisie wanted at first, a constitutional monarchy, and then they agreed to a republic with universal manhood suffrage. The middle class then wanted a conservative republic, while the working class would stop nothing short of a social republic. The working and middle classes were on opposite ends of the spectrum though. Economically, and socially they had nothing in common. Though they had temporarily joined forces to overthrow King Philippe, just a few months later they were at war with one another. In one battle that was exchanged more than 10,000 people were killed or wounded. This was the start of one phase in the war called, “The June Days”. This period of the war changed the politics of France, set it up for another dictatorship under Louis Napoleon, but also was where Karl Marx drew his ideas of communism and class conflict.

1. The working and middle class united to overthrow King Philippe
   A. In February 1848 both classes were unhappy with the present form of government
      a. Working Class
i. The working class was starving because of a great potato famine
ii. There was no work for many of the people in the working class because of the famine and the government was doing nothing to help them

b. The Middle Class
i. Were upset because of class injustice
ii. Had no say in voting for government officials

B. What the two groups had in common
a. They both wanted a new form of government
b. They agreed on starting a republic and on having a constitution
c. Agreed on a democratic republic so working citizens could help to reform the government
d. They agreed on universal male suffrage and abolished the slavery in the French colonies
e. They set up a provisional, temporary government
i. The provisional government was made up of only ten men. There were three social republicans, and seven political republicans. (The political republicans were more conservative)
ii. The two most famous men in the provisional government were Lamartine, from the political republic side, and Louis Blanc of the social republicans

II. How the groups differed
A. Politically
a. Working Class
i. The working class were social republicans (more radical) and sided with other social republicans
ii. They wanted a socialist society. A socialist believed in even distribution of
wealth and that everyone, including women and slaves are equal

b. The middle class
   i. the middle class were political republicans
   ii. They supported universal male suffrage, but that was the last step they wanted to go, whereas the social republicans thought that should be the first step
   iii. They only joined the revolution because they felt excluded from the political process

B. Economically
   a. Working Class
      i. The working class was poor and joined the revolution more out of pure desperation
      ii. One of the ways the new republic guaranteed workers' rights was through workshops
         1) The workshops were created by Louis Blanc. This was his most important accomplishment during the provisional government.
         2) The workshops were unemployment aid to help the working class to recover from the depression of 1847. The government hired men both skilled and unskilled, to repair roads and complete other tasks that the country needed. The workshops however, were not large enough to employ all of the people who were out of work. In March there were only 25,000 men employed by the workshops, and by mid-June they employed over 120,000 men, but
there were another 200,000 non-employed men in Parris alone

iii. The working class saw the workshops as a major relief and with them jobs were considerably easier to come by. Although not everyone was employed, it gave most families a source of income and put food on the table.

b. Middle Class
   i. the middle class had enough money to survive
   ii. Saw workshops as only a temporary means of employing the working class and also as a threat to their businesses
   iii. Did not want to be taxed
   iv. Felt that the revolution had knocked down certain barriers and now allowed them to get rich and did not want to waste that chance by paying taxes.

III. Socially
   A. Working class
      a. Dressed badly, sometimes looked and smelled badly, and was more concerned about how to survive than what they looked like
      b. Resented the middle class for all that they had. (Money, property, rights)

   B. Middle Class
      a. Considered they better than the working class but angry they did not have the rights of the aristocracy
      b. Resented the commoners because they were viewed as, "uneducated, dirty disgraceful animals who represented the worst of French society."

IV. Lasting effects of the war
   A. Set up Louis Napoleon as a dictator
a. After the revolution a constitution was created and gave immense power to the executive branch
b. Louis, Napoleon's nephew was voted into office by a huge majority in 1848 by receiving more than 5,400,000 votes, and the second place contender only having 1,500,000
c. Napoleon, just like his uncle, became a dictator
d. During the June Days the middle class distrusted the working class and was therefore accepting to a constitutional monarchy, or even a dictatorship

B. Karl Marx
a. Marx sided with the working class of the revolution
b. said that democracy can't work and used the June Days as an example, because the separate classes can't get along. This idea he then devolved into the idea of communism
c. Marx's ideas have affected many different philosophers and countries

In conclusion, after thinking about everything that the classes had in common, or lack of things in common, it is obvious that the two classes were never really united. They started with some common interests, but in the end their differences were too strong. Politically, they were the most similar, but they were still in essentially different parties. Economically, the working class wanted money equally distributed, and the middle class wanted to hoard all that they could get. Socially, the middle class felt that the working class was inferior, and that workshops were temporary while the working class felt they were a necessity. The 1848 revolution, a class war, changed our world forever. It not only made the people of France less likely to have a democracy, it also set them up for another dictatorship. It founded, and supported Karl Marx's ideas on communism and socialism that are still
present today. It also gave many ideas to Stalin and Hitler who were major factors in modern history.

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