**There was growing discontent among the working-class population in Britain during the 1830s. The electoral system was corrupt, and the poor had to endure harsh working conditions with low pay.**

**Why was reform needed?**

**“There is no need for reform… The Political system we have now has made this country great”.**

**“Large industrial towns have no MP’s to represent all the people who live there”**

**“All men who work deserve the vote”**

**“In order to vote, you need to have a stake in the country. Ownership of the Land gives you that stake”.**

**“If we allow one reform, it will be the beginning of so many changes that we will never be able to stop it”**

**“At the moment, bad laws are made which increase the suffering of the working man”.**

**“Industrialists and Businessmen are the ones that make Britain rich today. Yet we don’t have a say in how we’re Governed”.**

Unfairness

In 1830 most of the British population was still excluded from voting.

Corruption

MPs were from Britain's richest families.

A lot of Bribery.

Voting took place publicly so even those with the vote could be bullied into voting in a certain way.

Working-class people worked for and often lived in property owned by their MP, but still had no say.

Power

There were too many constituencies in rural areas and not enough in industrial towns and cities where more people lived.

Revolution

By 1832 Working-class people were unhappy because of their working conditions and low wages.

MPs became scared that a revolution might occur in Britain (as it had in France).

**What was Peterloo?**

**Working class people held large meetings to protest against the political system. One such meeting happened in Manchester at St Peter’s Fields in August 1819.**

**The protest**

**Around 50,000 people arrived at St Peter’s Fields from all around Manchester. Henry Hunt (a radical speaker) was due to make a speech calling for the change in voting. Manchester at this time had no police force, so the army were sent to prevent any disturbances. When Hunt began to speak the army attempted to arrest him, and attacked anybody who got in their way. Eleven people were killed and 400 were injured.**

**The consequences**

* The government congratulated the army and those involved in keeping order in Manchester.
* Henry Hunt was sentenced to over two years in prison.
* The government banned meetings of more than 50 people at any one time.
* Tax on newspapers was increased so that working-class people could not afford to read them and they would be less likely to publish bad things about the government.