

Socialism in Europe and the Russian Revolution

The Age of Social Change:

- In many parts of the world including Europe and Asia, new ideas about individual rights and who controlled social power began to be discussed.
- In India, Raja Rammohan Roy and Derozio talked of the significance of the French Revolution, and many others debated the ideas of post-revolutionary Europe.
- The developments in the colonies, in turn, reshaped these ideas of societal change.
- Responses varied from those who accepted that some change was necessary but wished for a gradual shift, to those who wanted to restructure society radically.
- Some were ‘conservatives’, others were ‘liberals’ or ‘radicals’.
- Through the revolution in Russia, socialism became one of the most significant and powerful ideas to shape society in the twentieth century.

Liberals, Radicals and Conservatives

Liberals:

- One of the groups which looked to change society were the liberals.
- Liberals wanted a nation which tolerated all religions. We should
- Liberals also opposed the uncontrolled power of dynastic rulers.
- They wanted to safeguard the rights of individuals against governments.
- They argued for a representative, elected parliamentary government, subject to laws interpreted by a well-trained judiciary that was independent of rulers and officials.
- However, they were not 'democrats'. They did not believe in universal adult franchise, that is, the right of every citizen to vote.
- They felt men of property mainly should have the vote. They also did not want the vote for women.

Radicals

- Radicals wanted a nation in which government was based on the majority of a country's population.
- Many supported women's suffragette movements. Unlike liberals, they opposed the privileges of great landowners and wealthy factory owners.
- They were not against the existence of private property but disliked concentration of property in the hands of a few.

Conservatives

- Conservatives were opposed to radicals and liberals.
- After the French Revolution, however, even conservatives had opened their minds to the need for change.
- Earlier, in the eighteenth century, conservatives had been generally opposed to the idea of change. By the nineteenth century, they accepted that some change was inevitable but believed that the past had to be respected and change had to be brought about through a slow process.

Industrial Society and Social Change

- It was a time of profound social and economic changes. It was a time when new cities came up and new industrialised regions developed, railways expanded and the Industrial Revolution occurred.
- Industrialisation brought men, women and children to factories.
- Work hours were often long and wages were poor.
- Unemployment was common, particularly during times of low demand for industrial goods.
- Housing and sanitation were problems since towns were growing rapidly.
- Almost all industries were the property of individuals.
- Liberals and radicals themselves were often property owners and employers.

The Coming of Socialism to Europe

- By the mid - nineteenth century in Europe, socialism was a well-known body of ideas that attracted widespread attention.
- Socialists were against private property, and saw it as the root of all social ills of the time.
- Why? Individuals owned the property that gave employment but the proprietors were concerned only with personal gain and not with the welfare of those who made the property productive.
- So if society as a whole rather than single individuals controlled property, more attention would be paid to collective social interests.
- Socialists wanted this change and campaigned for it.
- Socialists had different visions of the future. Some believed in the idea of cooperatives.
- These cooperatives were to be associations of people who produced goods together and divided the profits according to the work done by members.

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

- Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) added other ideas to this body of arguments.
- Marx argued that industrial society was ‘capitalist’. Capitalists owned the capital invested in factories, and the profit of capitalists was produced by workers. The conditions of workers could not improve as long as this profit was accumulated by private capitalists.
- Workers had to overthrow capitalism and the rule of private property.
- Marx believed that to free themselves from capitalist exploitation, workers had to construct a radically socialist society where all property was socially controlled.
- This would be a communist society.
- He was convinced that workers would triumph in their conflict with capitalists. A communist society was the natural society of the future.

Support for Socialism

- By the 1870s, socialist ideas spread through **Europe**. To coordinate their efforts, socialists formed an international body – namely, the Second International.
- Workers in **England** and Germany began forming associations to fight for better living and working conditions.
- They set up funds to help members in times of distress and demanded a reduction of working hours and the right to vote.
- In **Germany**, these associations worked closely with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and helped it win parliamentary seats.
- By 1905, socialists and trade unionists formed a Labour Party in Britain and a Socialist Party in **France**.

The Russian Revolution

- Socialists took over the government in Russia through the October Revolution of 1917. The fall of monarchy in February 1917 and the events of October are normally called the Russian Revolution.

The Russian Empire in 1914

- In 1914, Tsar Nicholas II ruled Russia and its empire.
- Besides the territory around Moscow, the Russian empire included current-day Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, parts of Poland, Ukraine and Belarus.
- It stretched to the Pacific and comprised today's Central Asian states, as well as Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- The majority religion was Russian Orthodox Christianity – which had grown out of the Greek Orthodox Church – but the empire also included Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and Buddhists.

Economy and Society In Russia

- About 85 per cent of the Russian empire's population earned their living from agriculture.
- In the empire, cultivators produced for the market as well as for their own needs and Russia was a major exporter of grain.
- Industry was found in pockets. Prominent industrial areas were St Petersburg and Moscow.
- Craftsmen undertook much of the production, but large factories existed alongside craft workshops.
- Many factories were set up in the 1890s, when Russia's railway network was extended, and foreign investment in industry increased.
- Coal production doubled and iron and steel output quadrupled.
- By the 1900s, in some areas factory workers and craftsmen were almost equal in number.

Socialism in Russia

- All political parties were illegal in Russia before 1914.
- The Russian Social Democratic Workers Party was founded in 1898 by socialists who respected Marx's ideas.
- However, because of government policing, it had to operate as an illegal organisation. It set up a newspaper, mobilised workers and organised strikes.
- Some Russian socialists felt that the Russian peasant custom of dividing land periodically made them natural socialists. So peasants, not workers, would be the main force of the revolution, and Russia could become socialist more quickly than other countries.
- They formed the Socialist Revolutionary Party in 1900. This party struggled for peasants' rights and demanded that land belonging to nobles be transferred to peasants.

Socialism in Russia Cont.....

- Social Democrats disagreed with Socialist Revolutionaries about peasants.
- Lenin felt that peasants were not one united group. Some were poor and others rich, some worked as labourers while others were capitalists who employed workers.
- Given this 'differentiation' within them, they could not all be part of a socialist movement.
- Vladimir Lenin (who led the Bolshevik group) thought that in a repressive society like Tsarist Russia the party should be disciplined and should control the number and quality of its members.

A Turbulent Time: The 1905 Revolution

- Russia was an autocracy. Unlike other European rulers, even at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Tsar was not subject to parliament.
- Liberals in Russia campaigned to end this state of affairs.
- Together with the Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries, they worked with peasants and workers during the revolution of 1905 to demand a constitution.
- They were supported in the empire by nationalists (in Poland for instance) and in Muslim-dominated areas by jadidists who wanted modernised Islam to lead their societies.
- The year 1904 was a particularly bad one for Russian workers. Prices of essential goods rose so quickly that real wages declined by 20 per cent.
- The membership of workers' associations rose dramatically.

A Turbulent Time: The 1905 Revolutio Cont...

- When four members of the Assembly of Russian Workers, which had been formed in 1904, were dismissed at the Putilov Iron Works, there was a call for industrial action.
- Over the next few days over 110,000 workers in St Petersburg went on strike demanding a reduction in the working day to eight hours, an increase in wages
- And improvement in working conditions.

A Turbulent Time: The 1905 Revolution Cont....

- When the procession of workers led by **Father Gapon** reached the Winter Palace it was attacked by the police and the Cossacks.
- Over 100 workers were killed and about 300 wounded.
- The incident, known as Bloody Sunday, started a series of events that became known as the 1905 Revolution.
- Strikes took place all over the country and universities closed down when student bodies staged walkouts, complaining about the lack of civil liberties. Lawyers, doctors, engineers and other middle-class workers established the Union of Unions and demanded a constituent assembly.

Impact Of The 1905 Revolution On Russia

- The Tsar allowed the creation of an elected consultative Parliament or Duma.
- After 1905, most committees and unions worked unofficially, since they were declared illegal.
- Severe restrictions were placed on political activity.
- The Tsar dismissed the first Duma within 75 days and the re-elected second Duma within three months.
- He did not want any questioning of his authority or any reduction in his power.
- He changed the voting laws and packed the third Duma with conservative politicians.
- Liberals and revolutionaries were kept out.

The First World War and the Russian Empire

- In 1914, war broke out between two European alliances – Germany,
- Austria and Turkey (the Central powers)
- And France, Britain and Rurenaming of St Petersburg – a German name – as Petrograd.
- The Tsarina Alexandra's German origins and poor advisers, especially a monk called Rasputin, made the autocracy unpopular.
- Russia's armies lost badly in Germany and Austria between 1914 and 1916. There were over 7 million casualties by 1917.
- As they retreated, the Russian army destroyed crops and buildings to prevent the enemy from being able to live off the land. The destruction of crops and buildings led to over 3 million refugees in Russia.
- The situation discredited the government and the Tsar. Soldiers did not wish to fight such a war.

Impact Of War On Russia

- The war also had a severe impact on industry. Russia's own industries were few in number and the country was cut off from other suppliers of industrial goods by German control of the Baltic Sea.
- Industrial equipment disintegrated more rapidly in Russia than elsewhere in Europe.
- By 1916, railway lines began to break down.
- Able-bodied men were called up to the war.
- As a result, there were labour shortages and small workshops producing essentials were shut down.
- Large supplies of grain were sent to feed the army. For the people in the
- cities, bread and flour became scarce.
- By the winter of 1916, riots at bread shops were common.

The February Revolution in Petrograd

- In the winter of 1917, conditions in the capital, Petrograd, were grim.
- In February 1917, food shortages were deeply felt in the workers' quarters. The winter was very cold – there had been exceptional frost and heavy snow.
- Parliamentarians wishing to preserve elected government, were opposed to the Tsar's desire to dissolve the Duma.
- On 22 February, a lockout took place at a factory on the right bank.
- The next day, workers in fifty factories called a strike in sympathy.
- In many factories, women led the way to strikes. This came to be called the **International Women's Day**.
- Demonstrating workers crossed from the factory quarters to the centre of the capital – the Nevskii Prospekt.

The February Revolution in Petrograd Cont...

- On Sunday, 25 February, the government suspended the Duma.
- Demonstrators returned in force to the streets of the left bank on the 26th.
- On the 27th, the Police Headquarters were ransacked.
- The streets thronged with people raising slogans about bread, wages, better hours and democracy.
- The government tried to control the situation and called out the cavalry once again. However, the cavalry refused to fire on the demonstrators.
- Striking workers had gathered to form a 'soviet' or 'council' in the same building as the Duma met. This was the Petrograd Soviet.

End Of Monarchy in February 1917

- The very next day, a delegation went to see the Tsar.
- Military commanders advised him to abdicate. He followed their advice and abdicated on 2 March.
- Soviet leaders and Duma leaders formed a Provisional Government to run the country.
- Russia's future would be decided by a constituent assembly, elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage.
- Petrograd had led the February Revolution that brought down the monarchy in February 1917.

Vladimir Lenin

- In April 1917, the Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin returned to
- Russia from his exile.
- He and the Bolsheviks had opposed the war since 1914. Now he felt it was time for soviets to take over power.
- He declared that the war be brought to a close, land be transferred to the peasants, and banks be nationalised.
- These three demands were **Lenin's 'April Theses'**.
- He also argued that the Bolshevik Party rename itself the Communist Party to indicate its new radical aims.
- Most others in the Bolshevik Party were initially surprised by the April Theses. They thought that the time was not yet ripe for a

The Revolution of October 1917

- On 16 October 1917, Lenin persuaded the Petrograd Soviet and the Bolshevik Party to agree to a socialist seizure of power.
- A Military Revolutionary Committee was appointed by the Soviet under Leon Trotskii to organise the seizure.
- The date of the event was kept a secret.
- The uprising began on 24 October. Sensing trouble, Prime Minister Kerenskii had left the city to summon troops.
- At dawn, military men loyal to the government seized the buildings of two Bolshevik newspapers.
- Pro-government troops were sent to take over telephone and telegraph offices and protect the Winter Palace.

The Revolution of October 1917 Cont...

- In a swift response, the Military Revolutionary Committee ordered its supporters to seize government offices and arrest ministers.
- Late in the day, the ship Aurora shelled the Winter Palace. Other vessels sailed down the Neva and took over various military points.
- By nightfall, the city was under the committee's control and the ministers had surrendered.
- At a meeting of the All Russian Congress of Soviets in Petrograd, the majority approved the Bolshevik action.
- Uprisings took place in other cities. There was heavy fighting – especially in Moscow – but by December, the Bolsheviks controlled the Moscow-Petrograd area.

What Changed after October?

- The Bolsheviks were totally opposed to private property. Most industry and banks were nationalised in November 1917.
- This meant that the government took over ownership and management. Land was declared social property and peasants were allowed to seize the land of the nobility.
- In cities, Bolsheviks enforced the partition of large houses according to family requirements. They banned the use of the old titles of aristocracy.
- To assert the change, new uniforms were designed for the army and officials.

What Changed after October? Cont....

- The Bolshevik Party was renamed the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik).
- In November 1917, the Bolsheviks conducted the elections to the Constituent Assembly, but they failed to gain majority support. In January 1918, the Assembly rejected Bolshevik measures and Lenin dismissed the Assembly.
- He thought the All Russian Congress of Soviets was more democratic than an assembly elected in uncertain conditions.
- In March 1918, despite opposition by their political allies, the Bolsheviks made peace with Germany at Brest Litovsk.
- In the years that followed, the Bolsheviks became the only party to participate in the elections to the All Russian Congress of Soviets, which became the Parliament of the country.
- Russia became a one-party state.

What Changed after October? Cont....

- Trade unions were kept under party control.
- The secret police (called the Cheka first, and later OGPU and NKVD) punished those who criticised the Bolsheviks.
- Many young writers and artists rallied to the Party because it stood for socialism and for change.
- After October 1917, this led to experiments in the arts and architecture.
- But many became disillusioned because of the censorship the Party encouraged.

The Civil War

G. Civil War in Russia

1. Not everyone was happy with the new communist government and Allies wanted Russia back in the war
2. The Bolshevik Red Army fought anti-Bolshevik forces known as the White Army – White Army defeated
 - i. Red Army a disciplined unit while White Army was disorganized and not unified – wanted different ends
 - ii. Red secret police, the Red Terror known as the Cheka, stopped any opposition
 - iii. “War communism” – nationalized banks and industries, grain from peasants, and state centralization
 - iv. Against the foreign invaders of the Japanese, French, British, and American who were stationed in Russia – appealed to Russian patriotism
3. Tsar and his family murdered and burnt down in a mine shaft.

Making a Socialist Society

- A process of centralised planning was introduced.
- Officials assessed how the economy could work and set targets for a five-year period.
- On this basis they made the Five Year Plans.
- The government fixed all prices to promote industrial growth during the first two 'Plans' (1927-1932 and 1933-1938). Centralised planning led to economic growth.
- Industrial production increased (between 1929 and 1933 by 100 per cent in the case of oil, coal and steel). New factory cities came into being.

Stalinism and Collectivisation

- Stalin, who headed the party after the death of Lenin, introduced firm emergency measures. He believed that rich peasants and traders in the countryside were holding stocks in the hope of higher prices. Speculation had to be stopped and supplies confiscated.
- To develop modern farms, and run them along industrial lines with machinery, it was necessary to 'eliminate kulaks', take away land from peasants, and establish state-controlled large farms.
- From 1929, the Party forced all peasants to cultivate in collective farms (kolkhoz).
- Enraged peasants resisted the authorities and destroyed their livestock. Those who resisted collectivisation were severely punished. Many were deported and exiled.

Stalinism and Collectivisation Cont...

- In spite of collectivisation, production did not increase immediately. In fact, the bad harvests of 1930-1933 led to one of most devastating famines in Soviet history when over 4 million died.
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The Global Influence of the Russian Revolution and the USSR

- However, the possibility of a workers' state fired people's imagination across the world.
- In many countries, communist parties were formed – like the Communist Party of Great Britain.
- The Bolsheviks encouraged colonial peoples to follow their experiment.
- Many non-Russians from outside the USSR participated in the Conference of the Peoples of the East (1920) and the Bolshevik-founded Comintern (an international union of pro-Bolshevik socialist parties).
- Some received education in the USSR's Communist University of the Workers of the East.
- By the time of the outbreak of the Second World War, the USSR had given socialism a global face and world stature.

The Global Influence of the Russian Revolution and the USSR Cont....

- Yet by the 1950s it was acknowledged within the country that the style of government in the USSR was not in keeping with the ideals of the Russian Revolution.
- In the world socialist movement too it was recognised that all was not well in the Soviet Union.
- By the end of the twentieth century, the international reputation of the USSR as a socialist country had declined though it was recognised that socialist ideals still enjoyed respect among its people.
- But in each country the ideas of socialism were rethought in a variety of different ways.