

## Chapter 2

### Socialism in Europe and the Russian Revolution

#### ❖ Liberals, Radicals and Conservatives

- **Liberals**

- Wanted secularism, safeguarding the rights of individuals against governments and opposed the uncontrolled power of dynastic rulers.
- Argued for a representative, elected parliamentary government.
- Wanted interpretation of the laws by a well trained judiciary that was independent of rulers and officials.
- Did not believe in universal adult franchise and wanted the right to vote for only the men of property.
- Did not support the granting of voting rights to women.

- **Radicals**

- Supported women's suffrage movements.
- Opposed the privileges of great landowners and wealthy factory owners.
- Disliked the concentration of power in the hands of few but were not against the existence of private property.

- **Conservatives**

- Wanted some changes that were inevitable.
- Believed that the past had to be respected.

#### ❖ Industrial Society and Social Change

- Industrialisation brought men, women and children to factories.
- Working hours increased and the wages decreased.
- Unemployment was rampant.
- No proper housing or sanitation existed.
- The liberals and the radicals encouraged trade and believed in individual effort and labour enterprise.
- Some nationalist, liberals and radicals wanted revolutions for removing the governments established in Europe in 1815.

#### ❖ The Coming of Socialism to Europe

- Socialism was well known by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe.
- Socialists opposed private property.
- Believed that if a society as a whole controlled property, more attention would be paid to collective social interests.
- Some socialists like Robert Owen believed in the idea of cooperatives.
- Others like Louis Blanc felt that cooperatives could be built only if the governments encouraged them.
- Cooperatives were associations of people who produced goods together and divided the profits equally.
- Karl Marx argued that an industrial society was capitalist which exploited the workers and kept the profits for themselves. He believed that the workers had to construct a radically socialist society where all property was socially controlled.

#### ❖ **Support for Socialism**

- Socialists formed an international body, namely the '*Second International*'.
- They set up funds for helping members in times of distress and demanded a reduction of working hours and the right to vote.
- In Germany these associations worked with the Socialist Democratic Party and helped it in winning the parliamentary elections.
- **1905:** Socialists and trade unionists formed a **Labour party in Britain** and a **Socialist Party in France**.
- Socialism however could not precede the influence of the radicals, liberals and conservatives.

#### ❖ **The Russian Empire in 1914**

- **1914:** *Tsar Nicholas II* ruled Russia.
- The Russian empire included current day Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, parts of Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Central Asian states, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the territory outside Moscow.
- The majority religion was Russian Orthodox Christianity.
- **Economy and Society**
  - About 85% of the Russian population practiced agriculture.
  - Cultivators produced for both, market and their own needs.
  - Industries were few in number. St Petersburg and Moscow were the prominent industrial areas.
  - **1890s:** Many factories were set up when the Russian railway network was extended.

- Foreign investment in industry increased.
- Coal production doubled and iron and steel output quadrupled.
- Government supervised large factories for ensuring minimum wages and limited hours of work.
- The working hour for the craft units and small workshops was 15 hours and that of the factory was 10 to 12 hours.
- Women made up 31% of the factory labour force by 1914, but they were paid between half and three-quarters of a man's wage.
- Workers associations were formed for helping members in times of financial hardships or unemployment.
- **1896-1897:** Workers strike in the textile industry.
- **1902:** Workers strike in the metal industry.
- The crown and the Orthodox Church owned large properties.
- The peasants disliked the nobility.
- Nobles got their power and position through their services to the Tsar.
- **1902-05:** In Russia, peasants wanted the land of the nobles to be given to them; they refused to pay the rent and also murdered the landlords.
- Peasants in Russia pooled their land together periodically and their commune (*mir*) was divided in accordance to the needs of individual families.

#### ❖ **Socialism in Russia**

- Before 1914 all political parties were illegal in Russia.
- **1898:** The ***Russian Social Democratic Workers Party*** was founded which operated illegally due to the government policing.
- It set up a newspaper, mobilized workers and organized strikes.
- **1900:** Active socialists in the countryside formed the ***Socialist Revolutionary Party***.
- The party demanded for peasant's rights and transfer of lands from the nobles to the peasants.
- ***Vladimir Lenin*** led the **Bolshevik** group and believed that in a repressive society, the party should be disciplined and should control the number and quality of its members.
- The other socialist group named the **Mensheviks** advocated entry for all in the party.

#### ❖ **The 1905 Revolution**

- Liberals in Russia wanted the abolition of autocracy of the Tsar.
- **1905:** Liberals and the social democrats and the socialist revolutionaries along with the peasants and the workers revolted for a constitution.

- They were supported by nationalists in the empire and by *jadidists* (wanted modernized Islam to lead their societies) in Muslim-dominated areas.
- **Causes**
  - **1904:** Prices of the essential goods increased while the real income declined by 20%.
  - The dismissal of four members of the Assembly of Russian Workers at the Putilov Iron Works called for industrial action.
  - **Bloody Sunday:** 10,000 workers in St Petersburg went on strike demanding the reduction in the working day to 8 hours, and increase in wages and improvement in working conditions. Over 100 workers were killed and about 300 wounded. This incident is known as the **Bloody Sunday** and is responsible for the 1905 revolution.
- Strikes took place all over the country, universities closed down, and 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.
- The Tsar allowed the creation of an elected consultative Parliament or *Duma*.
- The Tsar 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.

#### ❖ **The First World War and the Russian Revolution**

- **1914:** First World War broke out between two European alliances-Germany, Austria and Turkey (the Central Powers) and France, Britain and Russia (later Italy and Romania).
- **1914-1916:** Russian armies lost badly in Austria and Germany.
- Industries and industrial equipment disintegrated more rapidly in Russia than elsewhere in Europe.
- Labour shortages and small workshops producing essentials were shut down as able-bodied men were called for the war.
- By 1916, riots at bread shops were common owing to the bread and flour scarcity.

#### ❖ **The February Revolution in Petrograd**

- **February, 1917:** Food shortages were deeply felt in the worker's quarters.
- The Tsar wanted to dissolve the Duma, but the revolutionaries opposed this.
- **22<sup>nd</sup> February, 1917:** A lockout took place at a factory which was followed by a workers strike in fifty factories. Women led the strikes in many factories and this day came to be known as the **International Women's Day**.

- **25<sup>th</sup> February, 1917:** The government suspended the Duma.
- Striking workers and soldiers gathered to form a 'soviet' or 'council' in the same building where the Duma met. This was the '*Petrograd Soviet*'.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1917:** The Tsar abdicated on the advice of the military commanders.
- The Soviet leaders and the Duma leaders formed a provisional Government for running the country.
- A Constituent Assembly was elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage for deciding the nature of government in Russia.

#### ❖ **After February**

- The liberals and the socialists along with the influential army officials, landowners and industrialists in the Provisional Government worked towards an elected government.
- **April, 1917: Vladimir Lenin** returned to Russia from his exile and presented his '*April Theses*'.
- April Theses contained three demands:
  - The closure of the war,
  - Transfer of lands to the peasants and
  - The nationalization of banks.
- In Industrial areas, factory committees were formed which questioned regarding the way industrialists ran their factories.
- Trade unions grew and soldier's committees were formed in the army
- The provisional government resisted attempts by workers to run factories and began arresting leaders.
- In the countryside, peasants and their socialist revolutionary leaders pressed for a redistribution of land.
- Peasants seized land between July and September 1917.

#### ❖ **The Revolution of October 1917**

- **October, 1917:** Lenin persuaded the Petrograd Soviet and the Bolshevik Party for a socialist seizure of power.
- A Military Revolutionary Committee was appointed by the Soviet under *Leon Trotsky* for organizing the seizure.
- **24<sup>th</sup> October, 1917:** The uprising began.
- Prime Minister *Kerenskii* left the city for summoning troops.
- Military men loyal to the government seized the buildings of the two Bolshevik newspapers; troops were sent to take over telephone and telegraph offices and protect the Winter Palace.

- The Military Committee ordered the seizure of government offices and arrest of ministers.
- By December, the Bolsheviks controlled the Moscow-Petrograd area.

### ❖ **Results of the October Revolution**

- The Bolsheviks were totally opposed to private property.
- **November, 1917:** Most industries and banks were nationalized.
- Land was declared to be a social property and the peasants were allowed to seize the land of the nobility.
- Large houses were partitioned as per the requirements of the family.
- The use of old titles by the aristocracy was banned.
- New uniforms were designed for the army and officials.
- The Bolshevik party was renamed the '**Russian Communist Party**'.
- **November, 1917:** The Bolsheviks conducted the elections to the Constituent Assembly.
- **March, 1918:** Despite opposition by their political allies, the Bolsheviks made peace with Germany at Brest Litovsk.
- The Bolsheviks became the only party that participated in the elections to the All Russian Congress of Soviets.
- Russia became a one-party state.
- Trade unions were kept under party control and the secret police punished those who criticized the Bolsheviks.

### ❖ **The Civil War**

- The non- Bolshevik socialists, liberals and supporters of autocracy condemned the Bolshevik uprising.
- During 1918 and 1919, the '**greens**' (Socialist Revolutionaries) and '**whites**' (pro-Tsarists) controlled most of the Russian empire.
- French, American, British and Japanese troops also involved themselves as they were worried at the growth of socialism in Russia.
- A civil war broke out between these troops and the Bolsheviks.
- Supporters of private property among the 'whites' took harsh steps with peasants who had seized their land.
- By January 1920, the Bolsheviks controlled most of the former Russian empire.
- The Bolsheviks cooperated with the non-Russian nationalists and Muslim *jadidists*.

- **December, 1922:** *Soviet Union (USSR)* was created by the Bolsheviks from the Russian empire.

#### ❖ **Making a Socialist Society**

- A process of centralized planning was introduced with the adoption of the Five Year Plans.
- Prices were fixed for promoting industrial growth during the first two plans (1927-1938).
- Industrial production increased and new factories were set up.
- Rapid construction led to poor working conditions and hard lives for the workers.
- Schooling system was developed and arrangements for the education of the factory workers and peasants were made.
- Crèches were established in factories for children of women workers, cheap public health care was provided, and model living quarters were set up for workers.

#### ❖ **Stalinism and Collectivisation**

- **1927-1928:** Soviet Russia was facing an acute problem of grain supplies.
- The government fixed prices for the grain was rejected by the peasants.
- Stalin headed the party after Lenin's death.
- **1928:** Party members supervised the enforced grain collections from the producing areas and raided the '*kulaks*' - the name for well-to-do farmers.
- Stalin introduced a programme of collectivisation.
- Peasants worked on the lands of the owners of collective farms and the profit was shared.
- Those who resisted collectivisation were severely punished or deported and exiled.
- Stalin treated independent cultivation unsympathetically.
- **1930-33:** Bad harvests leading to devastating famines with 4million deaths.
- Accusations were made in the entire country, and by 1939, over 2 million were in prisons or labour camps.

#### ❖ **The Global Influence of the Russian Revolution and the USSR**

- The idea of a state of workers inspired many people. Communist party was formed in many countries.
- Many non-Russians participated in the Conference of the Peoples of the East (1920), and the Bolshevik founded the '*Comintern*' (an international union of the pro-Bolshevik socialist parties).

- In Russia, industries and agriculture had developed and the poor were being fed but it had denied the essential freedom to its citizens and developmental projects were being carried out through repressive measures.
- The USSR as a socialist country had declined.

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