

ed, democratic principles in organizing purchases of food. This was the beginning of the presently powerful world-wide consumer cooperative movement.

On the continent St. Simon held that captains of industry should be enlightened to bring his new society into being. Planning would promote productivity and eliminate wasteful competition. Ethically, he would have the poor treated as Jesus had treated them. Fourier on the other hand wished to establish small, self-sufficient non-political communities called phalanxes. They would share in the work of the community in accordance with their interests. The fruits of the labour would be shared in accordance with the work done.

In short, Owen, St. Simon and Fourier formulated the principles of a better society but did not look at all to political action for bringing about the changes. They believed that the desired changes could be achieved through appeals to the reason and sense of justice of those who already possessed power and wealth. They founded experimental communities and co-operative associations. But *utopia* as they were, all their attempts failed, and they were cut off, in course of time, from all contact with the main stream of history. Yet modern socialism is greatly indebted to *Utopians*. Marx and Engels drew much of the raw material from their writings. Further, the *Utopians* were the first to make socialism a genuine public issue, to spread the new ideas from England and France to Belgium, Switzerland, and Germany in the east and to America in the west.

It was again the first half of the 19th century when socialism acquired for the first time a working-class political movement and that too in England. The Chartist movement in England was a socialist movement in the sense that it was the first example in history of organized political action on the part of the working people. The Chartists for the most part agreed with the ultimate aims of the *Utopians* but they believed that a pre-condition of the realization of the proposal of the *Oeneites* was the political emancipation of the working-class. It was left to Marx and Engels to combine all these rich but scattered materials to be found all around them into a new socialist synthesis. With the publication of *Communist Manifesto* the socialist movement became political and democratic in intention.

✓ 3 Scientific socialism (or communism)

Scientific socialism (or communism) is claimed by Marxists to be a unified system of social science and a purposeful movement of social reconstruction. It was the work of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the nineteenth century. As between Marx and Engels, the chief architect was, of course, Karl Marx.

Before them there was a rich crop of socialist ideas propagated by St. Simon and Charles Fourier in France and Robert Owen in England. Marx called them the "utopian socialists" because they attacked the wrongs in the capitalist system, not the system itself, and because they speculated on future socialist society based on equality and freedom but could never say how their

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utopias could be attained or maintained. Marx and Engels made a searching study of history, political economy, and existing socialist doctrines and made socialism a science.

(By calling their socialism scientific, Marx and Engels meant, in the first place, that their vision is not Utopian, not mere wishful thinking. It is, rather, a coherent programme, as described in *The Communist Manifesto*, for a future society and a realistic aim for us now. This realism rests not in the communist vision itself but in Marx's science of society and history. Marx claimed to have discovered the laws of social change, to have formulated a theory—historical materialism—which reveals when change is possible (and indeed necessary), how that change can be brought about, and what the outcome of that change will be. Marx believed that this theory allowed socialists to be scientific in another way. His theory demonstrates that the working class is the engine of social change and this class has an immediate interest in bringing about that change (an interest rooted in their present misery). Hence the primary task of the socialists is to reveal the 'facts' to this class and the revolution will proceed. These facts centre on the 'necessity' of misery and degradation under capitalism and its 'impossibility' under socialism. Thus socialists do not have to appeal to socialist values or people's better nature. To do so is unscientific, for it assumes a change in people's moral consciousness (which recognises that capitalism is an evil) can transform society. For Marx, this is an illusion.³ Change in consciousness can only be a result of social change, not a cause of it. "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, it is their existence which determines their consciousness".)

The science of socialism rests on the basic idea that man's consciousness (his ideas on morals, politics, law and art) is a product of the ultimate social reality that is economic (productive) activity. According to Marx, "history is, fundamentally, the growth of human productive power, and forms of society rise and fall according as they enable and promote or prevent or discourage, that growth". There is an inexorable growth in productive power, man's mastery over nature. To explain social change one must, therefore, inquire into the consequences of the growth of productive power for society. The movement of history can be explained by analysing the economic structure of society, the real basis of society.

The economic basis of society comprises two elements—productive forces (machines, tools, factories and also people's technical knowledge and skills) and production relations (the relations amongst people engaged in production—for instance, master/slave, employer/employee). Productive forces grow continuously whereas production relations change seldom but radically.

In the early stage of a particular social system, production relations will be in harmony with the use of the productive forces and, for the most part, will promote their continued development. Eventually, however, the development of the productive forces reaches a stage where existing relations of produc-

tion can no longer make full use of them; the forces of production come into conflict with the relations of production. Indeed, the existing production relations become a 'fetter' on the further development of the productive forces. At this stage the necessity of continued development forces a change in the relations of production; and the old society is replaced by a new.

The mechanism that effects this change is the class struggle. Classes emerge in society as a result of the ownership of the means of production (of slaves, lands, factories, etc). The class which owns the means of production is the ruling class and is enabled to exploit and dominate the subordinate classes (non-owning classes) by virtue of its ownership. The interest of the ruling class lies in preserving the existing production relations while the oppressed and subordinate classes have an interest in changing it. The conflict of interest between these two classes, however, can develop into a successful revolution when a new social structure is possible. And for Marx, this is when the old structure becomes a fetter on the further development of the productive forces. The dialectic of the forces and relations of production leads to a revolutionary transformation of society from lower to higher. The history of mankind, Marx shows, follows the cycle of revolutions, progressive evolution of society from lower to higher forms : from ancient society (after the break down of the primitive communal system) to feudalism and then to capitalism.

The transition from capitalism to communism is also inevitable. It will take place as the capitalist economy is developed to the stage when the bourgeois production relations are a fetter on further development of the productive forces, when the contending classes (the bourgeoisie and the proletariat) can no longer accommodate one another and internal contradictions of capitalism reveal themselves in a terminal crises. The fundamental contradiction, according to Marx, is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private capitalist form of appropriation of surplus value produced by the workers. This contradiction is manifested economically in declining profit rates and rising rates of unemployment, which are frequently punctuated and intensified by crises of effective demand failure. It is manifested socially in the polarisation of classes, the formation of solidaristic social relations within the proletariat and the increasing conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The increasing misery and deprivations forced upon the working class by virtue of its position within capitalism, coupled with its struggle against the bourgeoisie, makes the members of this class to recognise that their interest, i.e., freedom from wage slavery and deprivations can be realised only through the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist mode of production and the bourgeoisie form power. The workers organised as a class would dislodge the bourgeoisie from power and establish its own rule, the dictatorship of the proletariat. This proletarian state, through socialisation of capital and other means of production, will free the production forces from the prison-house of bourgeois property relations, and put an end to the system of exploitation of man by man. As soon as the gross inequalities and all forms of class distinctions will completely disappear from

society and the people will be accustomed to observe the elementary rules of social conduct, as soon as a "society of cooperative producers" (a classless communist society) will emerge the proletarian state will "wither away". The state is an organ of class rule. Hence with the abolition of classes the state ceases to exist. In the words of Engels, "government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the process of production" In the communist society there will be true freedom for all and "where freedom exists there will be no state".

Thus communism or scientific socialism is not something invented by dreamers but the necessary result of the development of society, the necessary outcome of the struggle between historically developed classes: the bourgeoisie and the working class. Marx's socialism is scientific because it predicts when socialism is possible and it emphasises the only possible means to its realisation—the intensification of class struggle. Marx's theory does not manufacture a system of perfect society but examines the historical and economic events, from which the classes and their conflicts have arisen, and discovers in the economic conditions thus created the means of ending the conflict.

4 Democratic socialism

Democratic socialism is a variant of socialist doctrine which is evolutionary as opposed to Marxian socialism or communism which is revolutionary. It aims at securing by the action of the central democratic authority a better production and distribution of wealth and gradual transition to a socialist society. It does not envisage, like Marxian socialism, a sudden breach with the present system, that is capitalism, involving a violent transition to a socialist regime.

Historically, democratic socialism developed within the German Social Democratic Party in the late nineteenth century. The German Social Democratic Party (SPD), in its formative years had been under the strong influence of Karl Marx. But it soon became a bulwork of liberalism, as against Marxian revolution, through the work of three socialists – J. K. Rodbertus (1805–1875), F. Lassalle (1825–1864) and Edward Bernstein (1850–1932). "These men", to quote Gettell, "were instrumental in revising Marxian philosophy to conform with a milder pattern of social, but democratic reform."

Rodbertus agreed with Marx that the legal freedom given to the workers after the revolution of 1848 had no meaning in the existing capitalist system unless the state could bring about a better distribution of production and achieve social justice. But he differed from Marx in believing that this could be accomplished without class struggle. Rodbertus socialism was a curious mixture of the ideas of French utopian socialists with those of the German idealists who emphasised the value of the state.

Lassalle, a brilliant leader of German workers, believed that mankind could realise a high degree of freedom and culture when the workers could control the state and direct economic life. But in contrast to Karl Marx, he held that these changes could be brought about through democratic channels and he demanded the introduction of universal suffrage.