

Socialism in Europe and the Russian Revolution

Active study

Class9history-notes

Notes of Ch 2 Socialism in Europe and the Russian Revolution| Class 9th History

5 Nov 2024

Study Material and Notes of Ch 2 Socialism in Europe and the Russian Revolution Class 9th History

The Age of Social Change

- The French Revolution opened up the possibility of creating a dramatic change in the way in which society was structured.

- Not everyone in Europe, however, wanted a complete transformation.

- Some were 'conservatives', while others were 'liberals' or 'radicals'.

Who were Conservatives?

- They resisted change.

- After the revolution, they started accepting change provided it was slow and had links and respected the past.

Who were Liberals?

- They wanted a nation which tolerated all religions.
- They argued for an elected parliamentary government, subject to laws interpreted by a well trained judiciary that was independent of rulers and officials.
- They were not Democrats.

Who were Radicals?

- They wanted a nation in which government was based on the majority of a country's population.
- They disliked concentration of property in hands of a few, not the existence of private property.

Industrial Society and Social Change

- This was the time of economic and social change.
- Men, women and children were pushed into factories for low wages.
- Most of the factory owners were often liberals and radicals and they felt that workers' efforts must be encouraged.

The Coming of Socialism to Europe

- Socialists were against private property.
- They had different visions of the future.
- Some believed in cooperatives.
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels added that industrial society was capitalist.

Support for Socialism

- By the 1870s, socialist ideas spread through Europe.
- Workers in England and Germany began forming associations to fight for better living and working conditions.

The Russian Revolution

- In 1914, Nicholas II ruled the Russian empire.
- The Russian Empire included territory around Moscow, current-day Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, parts of Poland, Ukraine and Belarus.

Economy and Society during Russian Empire

- About 85 percent of the Russian empire's population earned their living from agriculture.

- The industry was limited in number.
- Workers were divided into groups but they did unite to strike work when they were dissatisfied.
- Peasants had no respect for nobility, very unlike the French peasant.
- Russian peasants were the only peasant community which pooled their land and their commune divided it.

Socialism in Russia

- All political parties were illegal in Russia before 1914.
- In 1900, the Russian Socialist Democratic Labour Party was formed.
- It struggled to give peasants their rights over land that belonged to nobles.
- As land was divided among peasants periodically and it was felt that peasants and not workers would be the main source of the revolution.
- But Lenin did not agree with this as he felt that peasants were not one social group.
- The party was divided into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.
- Lenin led Bolshevik group.

A Turbulent Time: The 1905 Revolution

- Liberals wanted to end of the autocracy of the Tsar.
- They worked towards demanding a constitution during the Revolution of 1905.

Bloody Sunday

- In 1904, Prices of essential goods rose so quickly that real wages declined by 20 percent.
- When four members of the Putilov Iron Works were dismissed, there was a call for industrial action.
- Over 110,000 workers in St. Petersburg went on strike demanding a reduction in working hours and increase in wages.
 - This procession was attacked by the police and Cossacks.
 - Over 100 workers were killed.
 - Strikes took place as a reaction.
 - People demanded a constituent assembly.
- The Tsar allowed the creation of an elected consultative Parliament or Duma.
 - The Tsar dismissed the first Duma within 75 days and announced the election of a second Duma.
 - Tsar constituted the third Duma with conservative politicians.

The First World War and the Russian Empire

- In Russia, the first world war was initially very popular but later the support grew thin.

- Anti-German sentiments ran high.
- Russian armies lost badly in Germany and Austria.
- The war also affected the industry.
- There was labour shortage.
- By 1916, railway lines began to break down.
- The small workshops were closed down.
- There was shortage of grain and hence of bread.

The February Revolution in Petrograd

Events

- In the winter of 1917, Petrograd was grim.
- There was a food shortage in the quarters of workers.
- On 22th February, a lockout took place at a factory.
- Workers of 50 other factories joined in sympathy.
- Women also led and participated in the strikes. This came to be called the International Women's Day.

- The government imposed a curfew.

- On the 24th and 25th, the government called out the cavalry and police to keep an eye on them.

- On 25th February, the government suspended the Duma and politicians spoke against this measure.

- On 27th February, the police headquarters were ransacked.

Study Rankers

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- Cavalry was called out again.

- An officer was shot at the barracks of a regiment and other regiments mutinied, voting to join the striking workers gathered to form a Soviet or council. This was the Petrograd Soviet.

- A delegation went to meet the Tsar, military commanders advised him to abdicate.

- On 2nd March, the Tsar abdicated.
- Soviet leaders and Duma leaders formed a Provisional Government to run the country.

Effects

- Restrictions on public meetings and associations were removed.
- Soviets were set up everywhere.
- In individual areas, factory committees were formed which began questioning the way industrialists ran their factories.
 - Soldiers' committees were formed in the army.
- The provisional government saw its power declining and Bolshevik influence grow.
 - Therefore, it decided to take stern measures against the spreading discontent.
- It resisted attempts by workers to run factories and arrested leaders.
- Peasants and the socialist revolutionary leaders pressed for a redistribution of land.
 - Land committees were formed and peasants seized land between July and September 1917.

The Revolution of October 1917

Events

- On 16th October 1917, Lenin persuaded the Petrograd Soviet and Bolshevik Party to agree to a socialist seizure of power.

- A Military Revolutionary Committee was appointed by the Soviet to organise seizure.

- Uprising began on 24th October.

- Prime Minister Kerenskii left the city to summon troops.

- Pro-government troops were sent to take over telephone and telegraph offices and protect the Winter Palace.

- In response, Military Revolutionary Committee ordered to seize government offices and arrest the ministers.

- The 'Aurora' ship shelled the Winter Palace.

- Other ships took over strategic points.

- By night the city had been taken over and ministers had surrendered.

- All Russian Congress of Soviets in Petrograd approved the Bolshevik action.

- By December, the Bolsheviks controlled the Moscow – Petrograd area.

Effects

- Most industry and banks were nationalised in November 1917.

- The land was declared social property and peasants were allowed to seize the land of the nobility.

- Use of old titles was banned.

- New uniforms were designed for the army and officials.
- Russia became a one-party state.
- Trade unions were kept under party control.

The Civil War

- When the Bolsheviks ordered land redistribution, the Russian army began to break up.
- Non-Bolshevik socialists, liberals and supporters of autocracy condemned the Bolshevik uprising. → They were supported by French, American, British and Japanese troops.
- All these fought a war with the Bolsheviks.

Making a Socialist Society

- The Bolsheviks kept industries and banks nationalised during the civil war.
- Rapid construction and industrialisation started.
- An extended schooling system developed.

Stalin and Collective Farming

- Stalin believed that rich peasants and traders stocked supplies to create shortage of grains. Hence, collectivisation was the need of the hour.

- Those farmers who resisted collectivisation were punished, deported or exiled.

Global Influence

- In many countries, communist parties were formed.
- By the time of the outbreak of the Second World War, the USSR had given socialism a global face and world stature.
- By the end of the twentieth century, the international reputation of the USSR as a socialist country had declined.