

Socialism in Europe and the Russian Revolution

History- Chapter 2 -Class 9

NCERT Question Answers

Q 1. What were the social, economic and political conditions in Russia before 1905?

Answer:

Social Condition:

Workers were a divided group. Some had strong links with the villages; others had settled permanently in cities. Workers were divided based on their skills. The division among workers reflected in their dress and manners too.

Economic Condition:

Most industries were the private property of industrialists. Government supervised large factories. The industry was found in pockets. Many factories were set up in the 1890s when Russia's railway network was extended, foreign investment in industry increased, coal production had doubled, and iron and steel output quadrupled. Most industries were the private property of industrialists.

Political condition:

Russia was an autocracy. Unlike other European countries, The Tsar was not subject to a Parliament. Liberals in Russia campaigned to end this state of affairs.

Socialist Revolutionary Party struggled for Peasants rights

1905 was the year when the incident of 'Bloody Sunday' took place. 100 workers were killed, and about 300 were wounded. Bloody Sunday started a series of events that became known as the 1905 revolution.

2. In what ways was the working population in Russia different from other countries in Europe, before 1917?

Answer:

- i. The vast majority of Russia's population were agriculturists.
- ii. About 85 per cent of Russian empires population earned their living from Agriculture. This proportion was higher than in most European countries.

- iii. In France and Germany, the proportion was between 40 per cent and 50 per cent. Cultivators produced for the market as well as for their own needs and Russia was a major exporter of grain.

3. Why did the Tsarist autocracy collapse in 1917?

Answer:

- i. After 1905, most trade unions and factory committees were declared illegal. There were restrictions on political activity.
- ii. The Tsar dismissed the first 2 Dumas very quickly because he did not want his authority and powers to be questioned. The third Duma was filled with Conservative politicians.
- iii. During the 1st world war, the tsar started taking unilateral decisions without consulting the Duma. While Russian soldiers were retreating from the war, large swathes of agricultural lands were burnt and buildings destroyed by them on the orders of Tsar.
- iv. Millions of soldiers have also died in the battle. The large majority of the population were peasants, and the land was under the control of a few private people. All these factors led to the rise of revolution and the collapse of Tsar autocracy.

Q 4. Make two lists: one with the main events and the effects of the February Revolution and the other with the main events and effects of the October Revolution. Write a paragraph on who was involved in each, who were the leaders and what was the impact of each on Soviet history.

Answer:

Main events of February Revolution:

- i. In February 1917, there was a shortage of food items in workers quarters.
- ii. On February 22, a lockout took place at a factory on the right bank. The workers in fifty factories called a strike and women played a very critical role in these strikes. This day went on to be named as International Women's Day.
- iii. On February 25, the government suspended the Duma.
- iv. On February 27, Police headquarters were ransacked, people were demonstrating and raising slogans about bread, wages, better hours and democracy.
- v. Petrograd Soviet was formed.
- vi. Tsar abdicated on March 2, Monarchy was formed in Feb 1917.

- vii. Soviet leaders and Duma leaders formed a Provisional Government to run the country.

Effects of the February Revolution:

- i. Restrictions on public meetings and associations were removed.
- ii. 'Soviets' like the Petrograd Soviet, were set up everywhere, though no common system of election was followed.
- iii. The number of trade unions increased.
- iv. In Industrial areas, factory committees were formed to question the way industrialists ran their factories.
- v. Soldiers committees were formed in the Army.
- vi. The Bolsheviks' influence kept growing, and the provisional government saw its power reducing.
- vii. Land committees were formed to handle redistribution of land, which was a popular demand for peasants and their socialist revolutionary leaders in the countryside.

Main events of the October Revolution:

- i. As the conflict between the provisional government and the Bolsheviks grew, Lenin feared the Provisional Government would set up a dictatorship. Lenin began discussions for an uprising against the government.
- ii. Bolshevik supporters in the Army, Soviets and factories were brought together. On 16th October 1917, Lenin persuaded the Petrograd Soviet and the Bolshevik Party to agree to a socialist seizure of power.
- iii. A military revolutionary committee was appointed by the Soviet under Leon Trotsky to organize the seizure. The uprising began on 24th October 1917. Military men who were loyal to the government seized the buildings of two Bolshevik newspapers.
- iv. Pro-Government troops were sent to take over telephone and telegraph offices and protect the Winter Palace. In retaliation, the Military Revolutionary Committee ordered its supporters to seize government offices and arrest ministers.
- v. A ship named Aurora bombed the Winter Palace, other ships sailed down the Neva and took over various military positions.
- vi. By the end of the month, the city was under the control of committee and ministers had resigned. By December, Bolsheviks controlled the Moscow-Petrograd area.

Effects of the October Revolution.

- i. Industries and banks were nationalised by November 1917; Government took over ownership and management.
- ii. The land was declared social property and peasants were allowed to seize the land of the nobility.
- iii. In the cities, The Bolsheviks enforced the partition of large houses according to family requirements.
- iv. Old titles of the aristocracy were banned.
- v. New uniforms were designed for the army and officials.
- vi. Bolshevik Party was renamed as the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)
- vii. Bolsheviks conducted elections to the constituent assembly; however, they failed to attain the majority. The assembly rejected the Bolshevik measures, and Lenin dismissed the assembly.
- viii. All Russian Congress of Soviets became the Parliament of the country. Russia became a one-party state.
- ix. Trade unions were kept under party control. The Secret Police punished anyone who criticised the Bolsheviks. Many young artists and writers continued to support the Party, as it stood for Socialism.
- x. Many experiments were done in Arts and Architecture. But many were unhappy because of the censorship.

5. What were the main changes brought about by the Bolsheviks immediately after the October Revolution?

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6. Write a few lines to show what you know about:

Kulaks

Answer:

- i. Wealthy peasants who Stalin believed were hoarding the grains to gain more profit.
- ii. When the towns faced acute shortage of grains, Kulaks were thought to be responsible behind it.
- iii. Stalin thought it was necessary to eliminate them so that farms could be modernised.

The Duma

Answer:

In 1905, Tsar allowed the creation of an elected consultative Parliament or Duma. The Tsar dismissed the first Duma within 75 days and re-elected the second Duma within three months. The Tsar did not want anyone to question his authority or undermine and reduce his powers. The Tsar changed the voting laws and packed the Third Duma with conservative politicians. Liberals and revolutionaries were kept out.

Women workers between 1900 and 1930

Answer:

- i. Their wages were less than the wages of men.
- ii. They formed 31% of the factory workforce.

The Liberals

Answer:

- i. They considered all religions as equal.
- ii. They believed only men who have property had the right to vote
- iii. They wanted an elected form of Parliamentary governance.

Stalin's collectivisation programme.

Answer:

- i. He began this program in 1929.
- ii. He believed this program would help in improving grain supplies.
- iii. All peasants were forced to cultivate in collective farms called 'Kolkhoz'.
- iv. On the contrary, this worsened the food supply situation.

Extra Question Answers

Q.1 Describe the views of radicals.

Answer:

The following were the viewpoints of the radicals.

- (a) Radicals wanted a nation in which government was based on the majority of a country's population.
- (b) Many supported women's suffragette movements.
- (c) They opposed the privileges of great landowners and wealthy factory owners. Though they favoured private property, they disliked concentration of property in the hands of a few.

Q.2 What were the viewpoints of the conservatives?

Answer:

The conservatives had the following viewpoints.

- (a) In the beginning of the eighteenth century, they were opposed to the idea of change.
- (b) Later in the nineteenth century, they accepted that some change was inevitable.
- (c) At the same time they believed that the past had to be respected and change had to be brought about through a slow process.

Q.3 Why were socialists against private property and saw it as the root of all social ills?

Or

To what changes did the socialists campaign for?

Or

Explain the Socialist view on private property.

Answer:

The socialists were against private property because of the following reasons.

- (a) They believed that private property was the root cause of all social evils.
- (b) Individuals who owned property, did provide employment but at the same they are much more concerned with personal gains.
- (c) They did not bother about the welfare of the people. .
- (d) Socialists also felt that if society controlled property, more attention would be paid to collective social interests and concentration of wealth in the hands of a few could be restricted.

Q.4 What was the difference between Bolshevik and Menshevik group.

Or

Who were the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks?

Answer:

The Bolsheviks were the majority group led by Vladimir Lenin who thought that in a repressive society like Tsarist Russia, the party should be disciplined and control the number and quality of its members. They were the group who conducted the Russian Revolution.

Mensheviks, on the other hand, were the minority group who thought that the party should be open to all. They did not believe in revolution but wanted to bring changes through democratic means.

Q.5 What made the Tsar the ‘autocrat of all the Russians’? Describe the steps he took just before the Russian Revolution.

Answer:

Russia followed autocracy. The Tsar was not subject to Parliament. This made the Tsar the autocrat of all Russia. The liberals in Russia campaigned to end this state of affairs.

The following steps were taken by the Tsar just before the Russian Revolution to ascertain his authority.

- (a) All political parties were declared illegal in Russia.
- (b) Every possible effort was taken to crush the rebellion and revolution against the Tsar.

Q.6 Describe the incident known as ‘Bloody Sunday’.

Answer:

The following events gave way to the incident known as Bloody Sunday.

- (a) The dismissal of four members of the Assembly of Russian Workers called for an industrial action by the workers.
- (b) Over 110,000 workers in St Petersburg went on strike in 1905, demanding a reduction in the working day to eight hours, an increase in wages and improvement in working conditions.
- (c) When this procession led by father Gapon reached the Winter Palace it was attacked by the police and the Cossacks. Hundreds of the workers were killed and many hundreds wounded. This incident came to be known as Bloody Sunday. It started a series of events that later resulted in the 1905 Revolution.

Q.7 Discuss Lenin's 'April Theses'.

Or

What were the demands referred in Lenin's 'April Theses'?

Answer:

The following were the demands referred to in Lenin's April Theses'.

- (a) World War I should be brought to an end.
- (b) Land should be transferred to the peasants.
- (c) Banks should be nationalised.

Q.8 Describe the circumstances which were responsible for the Russian Revolution.

Answer:

The circumstances which were responsible for the Russian Revolution as given below :

- The Russian peasantry was in a miserable condition. The farmers could not get even two square meals a day. Their land holdings were very small and they had to pay heavy taxes.
- The Russian as well as the foreign capitalist industrialists exploited the workers by taking 12-14 hours of work and paying very low wages to them. The workers had no right to form trade unions or seek reforms. They led a miserable life.
- The Tsar Nicholas II was a despotic and autocratic ruler. He enjoyed unlimited powers and rights. The people of the higher strata enjoyed great privileges. The bureaucracy was corrupt and inefficient. The common people who suffered most, were fed up with the absolute rule of the Tsar and wanted to get rid of him.

- Karl Marx propagated 'Scientific Socialism'. He strongly opposed capitalism which meant untold exploitation of the common men.