

Socialism and Communism

Socialism is an ideology which adds a new dimension to the society in modern era. As a result of the industrial revolution, regular exploitation of the labourers by the capitalists was on its climax. Socialist ideology played an important role in raising the voice against this exploitation and establishing classless society. Socialism lays emphasis on the equal distribution of wealth or collective ownership in place of individual ownership. The establishment of exploitation free society is its motto. So socialist system is such an economy in which all means of production, factories and exchange are under the government. In this system the production is not meant for individual benefit but for the whole society.

The origin of socialism:

Socialism rose as a result of industrial revolution in the 18th century. Industrial revolution totally changed the economic system of all the nations. Mechanization and capitalism developed on a large scale in place of cottage industries and the lives of the labourers in all the countries gradually got hellish due to selfishness of the capitalists and anti-labourer policies of the mill-owners. Their economic and social status began to deteriorate. Labourers had no right and they were being cruelly exploited.

Thus two contradictory facts were invisible together in the countries affected with industrial revolution. Firstly, the capitalistic system was getting stronger day by day. The middle class was economically getting affluent. Secondly the economic condition of the labourers was falling rapidly. Thus a

main component of the productive process was compelled to starve. The labourers had no right to form their union. They were totally dependent on the mercy of the capitalists. Thus it can be said that the society was economically divided into two classes:

- (i) Capitalist class
- (ii) Labourer class

When the labourers were passing through the situation of economic misery and social fall, they got the guidelines from some important patriots, thinkers and writers. They expanded a new ideology in the social and economic sphere which is known as 'socialism'. The names of Saint Simon, Fourier, Luis Blan, Robert Owen, Karl Marx and Engels are remarkable. These great thinkers criticised the economic system of European countries and expanded new theories regarding industrial organisation and mutual relationship between the capitalists and labourers.

In the historical point of view, modern socialism is divided into two stages : Pre-Marxist socialism and Post -Marxist socialism. Marxist thinkers named them Utopian socialism and scientific socialism. The view of the Utopian socialists was idealistic and the nature of their programme was not practical. Most of the Utopian thinkers were French who believed in peaceful change instead of revolution that is to say that they were in favour of class-co-ordination in place of class struggle.

Utopian Socialists:

The first Utopian socialist who played an important role in the development of socialist ideology was a French thinker, Saint Simon. He believed that both the state and society should be organised in such a way that they use the gifts of nature together in place of exploiting one another. The society should work for the physical and moral development of the poor. He declared 'to everybody, according to his capacity and according to his work'. Further it became the basic motto of socialism.

Another main Utopian thinker was Charles Fourier. He was opponent of modern industrialism and he believed that the labourers should work in small cities and towns. He exposed a plan to make phalanxes for the farmers. But this planning failed.

Among the Utopian thinkers the only person who also participated in politics was Luis Blan. His improvement programmes were more practical. He believed that political reformation is necessary for making the economic improvement effective.

Outside of France, the main Utopian thinker was Robert Owen, a British industrialist. He established a factory at New Lunark in Scotland. In his factory he gave handsome payment facilities to the workers and felt that his profit increased by doing so. So he came into a conclusion that a satisfied worker is a true worker.

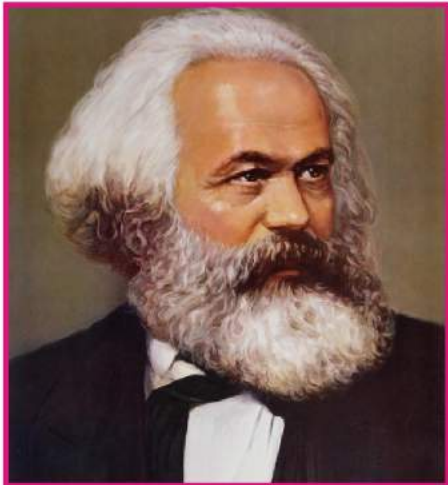


Robert Ovan

But the above mentioned thinkers unlike intellectual thinkers believed in the basic goodness of human and completeness of the world. They emphasized on class co-ordination in place of class struggle. Still these thinkers contributed a lot. Firstly, these are the first thinkers who made their efforts to solve the problems of relationship between capital and labour. Secondary, Marx got lesson from his failure and proceeded ahead of them.

Karl Marx (1818-1883):

Karl Marx was born on 5th May, 1818 in Trier city of Rhineland in Germany in a Jew family. His father Heinrich Marx was a famous lawyer who afterward adopted Christianity. Marx got education in law at the Bonn University but in 1836 he moved to Berlin University where his life got a new turn. Marx was impressed with the ideology of Hegel. He married to his childhood friend Jenny in 1843. He studied the ideologies of Montesquieu and Russo and political and social history intensively. Karl Marx met Fredrick



Karl Marx

Engels in Paris in 1844 who became a close friend of him for the whole life. Being impressed with the ideology and works of Engels, Karl Marx also began to think about miseries of the labour class and their work situation. Marx along with Engels published a 'Communist Manifesto' in 1848 which is called the mother of socialism. Marx expressed his economic social and political ideology clearly in this manifesto. Marx is one of the thinkers of the world who immensely influenced the

stream of history. Marx wrote 'Das Capital' in 1867 which is called 'the Bible of the socialists'.

Doctrines of Marx:

1. Theory of dialectic materialism
2. Theory of class struggle
3. The materialist interpretation of history
4. Theory of value and surplus value
5. Establishment of stateless and classless society

Historical materialism:

Karl Marx presented the materialist interpretation of history. He said that history is the story of continuous struggle between two classes for the control over the means of production. According to him, economic powers are the root of every event and change in history. Social organisation changed with every change in production system. There are five stages in history upto

now and the sixth one is yet to come. Thus, according to Marx there are six stages of history.

- (i) Age of Primitive Communism
- (ii) Slave age
- (iii) Feudal age
- (iv) Capitalist age
- (v) Socialist age
- (vi) Communist age

Marx and the first international:

The establishment of the First International in 1864 was a very important event in the history of socialist movement. The credit of its establishment goes to Marx. In his inaugural speech, Marx tried to convince the workers and said 'They can achieve their freedom themselves by their own efforts. As long as the means of production are in individual hands, the improvement in machine use of science in industries and improvement in production art cannot improve the situation of workers. So their last aim should be the destruction of capitalism. In this rally, the slogan "No work without right and no right without work" was shouted.

The second International:

To unify the socialist parties of different countries under an international organisation, a conference was held on 14th July, 1889 in Paris. About 400 representatives of 20 countries participated in it. It is known as the second international. The establishment of this union signifies the rapid expansion of Marxist socialism. It was decided in this conference that the first May will be celebrated every year as a unity day of the working class. It was also decided that they would demand to fix a working day for eight hours. It

international secretariat was set up in Brussels. Lacs of workers of Europe and America went on strike on 1st May, 1890 and staged demonstration. Since then, the first May is celebrated as International Labourers' Day all over the world. The largest achievement of the second international was movements against militarism and war and emphasis on rights of national freedom and fundamental equality.

Thus the socialist movements got a strong base at international level and the workers began to hope and believe that a new world free from exploitation and harassment would come into existence.

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917:

The Russian revolution is an important incidence in the history of the



Zaar Nikolas-II

20th century. This revolution not only tried to set up democracy after dismantling the Tsarist autocracy in Russia but also ended the powers of nobles, capitalists and Zamindars in social, economic and commercial sectors and established the powers of workers and peasants.

The Bolshevik revolution in Russia took place in 1917 in a real sense. This revolution made efforts in introducing a new socio-political system - Communism and make acceptance for the powers of the proletarians.



The map of Russia

The main causes of this revolution were as follows:

1. The autocracy and disable government of Tsar:

Before 1917, the Romanov dynasty ruled over Russia. This time the emperor of Russia was called 'Tsar'. There was a drastic political structure in Russia. By the middle of the 19th century, the political structure of Europe was changed and the powers of monarchy had been restrained. But the Russian monarchy was not ready to leave its privileges. Tsar Nicholas-II believed in the divine powers of the emperor. He did not care for the miseries and happiness of the common people. The bureaucracy of Tsar was instable, insensate and disable. Appointment was not done on the basis of merit. So due to wrong advisers, the arbitrariness of the Tsar grew up and the conditions of the people got bad to worse.

2. Pitiable condition of the Peasants:

Most of the population in Russia was of peasants, but their condition was very miserable. Though Tsar Alexander II ended the agricultural slavery in 1861, but the condition of the peasants did not improve. Their farms were small and they did cultivation in old methods. They lacked capital and were suppressed with the burden of taxes. In such a situation the peasants had no option except revolution.

3. **Miserable condition of the workers:**

The conditions of the works in Russia were very miserable. They worked more but got less. They were ill-treated. So they were not satisfied with their conditions. The workers had no political right. They could not go on strike in support of their demands. The words of Marx “the workers have nothing to lose except their chains” give a true picture of their condition.

4. **Problem of industrialisation:**

The Russian industrialisation was different from the capitalist industrialisation. The main industries were centred in a few areas. There was a lack of national capital. So they were dependent on the foreign capital for the development of industries. The foreign capitalists were supporting the economic exploitation. So there was dissatisfaction all around.

5. **Russianisation Policy**

Soviet Russia was a country of different nationalities. The people of Slav caste mainly resided there. Besides them, Fin, Paul, German, Jews and many other castes lived there. They spoke different languages and their rituals were also different. But the minority grouping Russia was annoyed with the policy of Russianisation which Tsar Nicholas-II passed. According to it the Tsar tried to impose Russian language, education and culture on all the people of the country. This stirred the minorities. When the Polo rebelled against this policy, they were suppressed brutally. Thus their fury against the monarchy was growing up.

6. **Impact of Foreign Incidents:**

- i. **Creamien War:** The role of foreign incidents in Russian revolution was very important. At first the defeat of Russia in creamien war opened a new age of reforms in Russia. After that the Russia-Japan war in 1904-05 gave birth to the first revolution in Russia and lastly the First World War paved the way for Bolshevik revolution.

ii. **Defeat by Japan and revolution in 1905** :

Russia was badly defeated in the historical Russia-Japan war in 1905. Before it despotic Tsarist remained concealing his failure at different levels from the Russian people. But it was difficult to cancel this defeat from the people. When



Saint Petersburg

the rest of ragged army returned to Russia the whole country was taken aback. The confusion of greatness tattered. Russia was defeated by a small country of Asia. Really, due to this defeat, a revolution broke out in Russia in 1905. On 9th January, 1905, a mob of people was moving towards the castle in Saint Petersburg demonstrating on road and shouting the slogan 'Give bread'. But the military of Tsar fired on unarmed people and thousands of them were killed. So January 22 (January 9, 1905 by old calendar) is known as 'Bloody Sunday' (red Sunday on rearing this massacre, the whole of Russia stirred with sensation). A large number of peasants took part in this revolution. At last the government submitted and a representational institution 'Duma' was formed in 1905. But as soon as the revolution was



Duma

weakened by 1905, the Russian monarchy snatched some of the rights of the Duma. Though the revolution in 1905 failed, yet it remained inflamed inside which broke out in 1917 as a great revolution.

7. Influence of Marxism in Russia and contribution of intellectuals:

An intellectual revolution could be seen in Russia before the Russian revolution. Thinkers like Leo Tolstoy (Writer - War and Peace), Dostoyevsky, and Turgenev were encouraging a new idea. There was a great influence of Marxist socialist ideology on the industrial workers of Russia. The Marxists began to work within the workers and their organisation was growing up. The first communist of Russia was

Proletariat : Such a class of society that include farmers, labours and common poor people.

Plekhanov who wanted to establish communist system in Russia after finishing the Tsarist autocracy. He set up the Russian social democratic party in 1898. It was a precedent to the communist party. Very soon the party broke down in 1903 on the issue of facilities and discipline. Consequently, the group with majority was called Bolshevik and the minority are 'Menshevik'. The Menshevik was in favour of middle class revolution, but the Bolshevik favoured the proletarian revolution. Besides it, the socialist Revolutionary party was formed in 1901 which raised the demands of the peasants. Thus, the organisations of the workers and peasants were influenced with the Marxist ideology and became a great cause of Russian revolution.

8. Immediate cause : the defeat of Russia in the First World War:

The First World War continued from 1914 to 1918. Russia joined this war with the allied countries. The only aim of joining this war was that the Russian people should forget the internal discontentment and get involved in external issues. But the Russian army was getting defeated all around. They had neither good weapons nor enough food. In the midst of war, Tsar Nicholas II took the command of military in his own hand. Consequently, the court got vacant and in his absence, Jarina (the wife of Tsar Nicholas-II) and his so called preacher Rasputin (priest) got a chance to hatch conspiracy against him. Due to it, the dignity of monarchy fell down.

March revolution and end of despotic monarchy:

The workers and peasants organised a procession on the roads of Petrograd (presently Leningrad) on 7th March, 1917 (22 February, 1917 by Old Russian calendar). They shouted a slogan 'Give bread'. Next day on March 8, the women workers of textile mills led a strike demanding 'bread' in which other workers also joined. There were lots of red flag in the procession. When the military was ordered to fire on the mob, they also revolted. So their weapons were taken back. The most reliable troop of Tsar 'Preobrazhensky regiment' also revolted. The revolts of military grew up. Consequently being helpless, the Tsar left the throne on 12 March, 1917.

Date of Russian revolution:

The Julian calendar was followed in Russia by 1st February 1918. Afterward the Russian Govt. adopted Gregorian calendar which is now used everywhere the Georgian calendar is 13 days ahead from the Julian calendar. So the February revolution took place on 12th March and the October revolution on 7th November. Similarly the revolution of 1905 took place on 22 January.

It was a Russian revolution of February because it took place on 27 February, according to the Old Russian calendar. Thus the Tsarist autocracy of Romanov dynasty ended in Russian. Now the bourgeoisie government was formed for the first time on 15th March under the leadership of Lobar. But the Russians desired not only for political freedom but for economic and social freedom also. So this bourgeoisie government was contrary to the immediate situations. At last this government fell down and a government of liberal socialists was formed under the leadership of Kerensky. The main aims of this government were to establish a democratic and

March 8 was declared international women's day by the United Nations Organisation in 1975.

constitutional government, to protect the individual property, to solve the land problem by the constituent assembly and to bring a change in all the institutions through legal measures. But the Bolsheviks did not accept this government.

Bolshevik revolution (November 1917):

This very time Lenin came into the scenario of the Russian political forum. The Tsarist government expatriated him and he was leading an exiled life in Switzerland. When a revolution broke out in March, 1917, he reached Russia with the help of Germany when he reached Petrograd in 1917, the people of Russia were filled with zeal. Lenin declared that the Russia revolution



Lenin

had not been completed yet, so the second revolution is inevitable. He made the programmes of the Bolshevik party as famous as an 'April thesis.' Lenin gave three slogans — Land, peace and bread. Lenin decided to dethrone Kerensky government forcibly. Both the military and the public joined hands with him. The Bolsheviks took the railway station, banks, post offices, telephone centres, courts and another government buildings of Petrograd under their capture. Now the powers of government came in the hands of the Bolsheviks and Lenin was appointed President. Trotsky became the foreign minister in this government. For the first time in the world, the powers of government came into the hands of the Proletarians.

After capturing the powers of the government, the responsibilities of Lenin and Bolshevik party grew up more. There were many complicated problems before Lenin. But he made great efforts to solve these problems. At first he signed the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. By this treaty, Soviet Russia had to lose its one-fourth land. But Lenin came out of the First World War and concentrated on internal problems of Russia. This time the problem of civil

war rose in Russia. America, Japan, Britain and France interfered with this problem and attacked Soviet Russia. Lenin encountered these opponents boldly. A huge Red Army was formed under the leadership of Trotsky. The Red Army faced the foreign invasion courageously. On the other hand, a spy police organisation named 'Czeka' was formed to suppress the internal rebels. It suddenly raided the rebellions and arrested them. Lenin thus succeeded in suppressing the rebels.

Lenin established a powerful central government. Russia was the first country in the world to establish socialist government and it made its new constitution in 1918. Now the name of Russia was changed into 'Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)'. Lenin formed representative governments in new states. Local committees named 'Soviet' were formed at the lowest level of the political organisations. A national congress was also formed with the members of all Soviets and the working power as given to a Central Committee. Lenin was the president of this committee. It was decided that the members of ministerial board should be elected from this very committee.



Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

According to new constitution of Lenin, franchise was given to all citizens above 18 years who earned their livelihood by productive labour. Thus right to work was made a constitutional right. Individual ownership on the means of production was polished off and the industries came under the control of workers. Banks, large industries, water, transportation and railways were nationalised. The right of Church on education was ended and education was nationalised.



Trotsky

Thus Lenin changed the rules of governance and the name of the Bolshevik party was changed into the communist party. A national flag having sickle and hammer on the red flag was prepared. Afterward this flag became the symbol of communism.

Now the re-distribution of land was the problem before Lenin. He passed on order to redistribute the land of large landholders among the peasants. Though the peasants had already captured the land, this order of Lenin gave it validity only. This step of Lenin was criticised because the state has control over the land in socialist economy. But Lenin replied that the peasants were in majority and the Bolsheviks were in minority.

To solve the problem of production, Lenin implemented strategic communism. By this, Lenin controlled the technicians of the factories and production with the help of workers. Similarly the peasants were also controlled and grains were forcibly collected from the peasants. But a great reaction came forward against strategic communism in Russia. The peasants began to burn up their corns in the fear of forcible collection. Consequently the rate of production fell down in 1920-21. A great problem of livelihood came before crores of people. Somewhere there was a situation of

Starvation. In spite of help from the state and abroad, a large number of people began to die from hunger and thirst. Slogans against the revolution was also heard. So Lenin amended his policy which resulted in New Economic Policy (NEP).

New Economic Policy:

Lenin was not a visionary thinker but a skilful social thinker and practical politician. He obviously noticed that in present situation it was quite impossible to implement complete socialistic system or hit the capitalist world as Trotsky wanted. So he declared a new policy in 1921 in which he had to compromise with the Marxist values to a little extent. But really the aim of this policy was to take up practical measures taking lesson from past experiences. The main things of this policy were as follows:

1. A fixed tax was imposed in place of collecting grains from the peasants. The rest of the grains was of the peasants and they could use them as they liked.
2. Though theoretically the state possessed the land but practically it went into the hands of the peasants.
3. The industries having less than 20 employees could be run by individuals.
4. The industries were decentralised. A lot of rebate was provided for decision and execution.
5. Foreign capital was invited at a limit.
6. Individual property and life insurance were started by government agencies.
7. Banks were started at different levels.
8. The compulsory membership of trade union was disposed off.

By this new economic policy, Lenin controlled the shortage of production. As a result, agricultural and industrial production unexpectedly



Stalin

grew up. Though Lenin is criticised for this policy, he replied that going one step back after proceeding three steps is equal to be two steps ahead.

When Lenin died in 1924, the problem of his successor came up. A serious conflict was on for power among different groups and leaders. Stalin won in this conflict. Trotsky was exiled in 1929. Almost all the leaders who played important roles in and after

revolution were finished in the

decade of 1930. Political democracy and the freedom of speech and press were destroyed. The conflict at the party level was not tolerated. Stalin was the Secretary General of the communist party and continued his dictatorship till his death in 1953. These incidents affected the formation of socialism in the Soviet Union badly and some characteristic which were against Marxism and humanitarian ideals of revolution rose up. Due to the curtailing of freedom, the development of art and literature was adversely affected.

But on the other hand by the tireless effort of Stalin, Russia emerged as a powerful country on the world forum. As a result of three-year planning, the development of Russian industries reached the climax. Agriculture was modernised and science developed. Before the end of the Second World War, Russia was considered a great power. Stalin along with Roosevelt and Churchill took part in the war time conferences. Thus contemptuous fearful and weak Russia emerged as a great power of the world only in three decades and the revolution took a strong root among the laborious people there.

Impact of Russian revolution:

1. After this revolution, the powers of workers i.e. proletarian class was established and it encouraged movements in other areas also.
Mikhail Gorbachev became president in 1985. He presented the conception or perestroika (reformation) and glasnost (openness)
2. After the Russian revolution, the world was divided into two ideological factions. Communist world and capitalist world. After it, Europe was also divided into two parts East Europe and West Europe. After the religious reformation movement and before the communist revolution, such a division on ideological basis had not been seen.
Soviet Union was dissolved in December 1991.
3. After the First World War, a cold war began between the capitalist world and Soviet Russia and for the four decades the emulation of weapons continued between the two lobbies.
**Cold War:
This is an ideological war in which America was the leader of capitalist lobby and Soviet Russia of the communist lobby.**
4. A new economic model existed as an economic planning after the Russian revolution. Further the capitalist countries also adopted this modal in a reformed way. Thus the nature of capitalism also changed.
5. This revolution encouraged freedom from colonial system in Asia and Africa because the communist government of Soviet Russia gave ideological support to the national movement in the countries of Asia and Africa.

EXERCISE

Objective type questions:

1. When did the agricultural slavery system in Russia come out of practice?
(a) 1861 (b) 1862
(c) 1863 (d) 1864
2. What does Tsar mean in Russia?
(a) An utensil for drinking
(b) A clay pot to put water
(c) A feud of Russia
(d) Emperor of Russia
3. Where was Karl Max born?
(a) England (b) Germany
(c) Italy (d) Russia
4. Where was the first experiment of the communist government started?
(a) Russia (b) Japan
(c) China (d) Cuba
5. Who was not a Utopian socialist?
(a) Luis Clan (b) Saint Simon
(c) Karl Marx (d) Robert Owen
6. Who wrote 'War and Peace'?
(a) Karl Marx (b) Tolstoy
(c) Dostoevsky (d) Engels
7. When did the Bolshevik revolution take place?
(a) February, 1917 (b) November, 1917
(c) April, 1917 (d) 1905
8. Who formed the Red Army?
(a) Karl Marx (b) Stalin
(c) Trotsky (d) Kerensky

9. When did Lenin die?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| (a) 1921 | (b) 1922 |
| (c) 1923 | (d) 1924 |

10. Which countries were involved in the treaty of Brest-Litovsk?

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| (a) Russia and Italy | (b) Russia and France |
| (c) Russia and England | (d) Russia and Germany |

Fill in the gaps:

1.was the ruler during Russian revolution.
2. led the Bolshevik revolution.
3. New Economic policy was implemented in
4. Robert Owen was the resident of
5. was considered the father of scientific socialism.

Very short answer type questions (Answer in about 20 words):

1. What is capitalism?
2. What do you mean by Bloody Sunday?
3. What is October revolution?
4. What do you mean by the proletariat class?
5. What was status of Russian peasants before the revolution?

Short answer type question (Answer in about 60 words):

1. Describe any two causes of the Russian revolution?
2. To what extent was the policy of Russianisation responsible for the revolution?
3. Communism was a new economic and social system. How?
4. How was the new economic policy a compromise with Marxist ideologies?
5. How can you say that the defeat of Russia in the First World War paved the way for revolution?

Long answer type questions (Answer in about 150 words):

1. Discuss the causes of Russian revolution.
2. What do you mean by New Economic Policy?
3. Discuss the impact of Russian revolution.
4. Describe the life and ideology of Karl Marx.
5. Mention the ideologies of Utopian socialists.

Match the following:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Das Capital | (a) 1953 |
| 2. Czeka | (b) Karl Marx |
| 3. New Economic Policy | (c) 1833 |
| 4. Death of Karl Marx | (d) Spy police organisation |
| 5. Death of Stalin | (e) Lenin |

Classroom discussion:

1. Discuss the need of socialism and communism in present context in your classroom in the presence of year teacher.
2. Organise a debate on the impact of socialism in Indian ruling system.

