

CBSE Class 09 Social Science

NCERT Solutions

Chapter 2 History

Socialism in Europe and the Russian Revolution

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

Answer : The Social, economic and political conditions in Russia before 1905 was backward:

→ Social Conditions: 85% of Russia's population was agriculturist. Industry was existent, but rarely in which most of was privately owned. Workers were divided on the basis of their occupation. They mainly migrated to cities for employment in factories. The peasant community was deeply religious, but did not care much about the nobility. They believed that land must be divided amongst themselves. Social inequality was very prominent among the working class. Workers whose jobs needed skill and training considered themselves on a higher plane than the untrained worker. Workers had strong links to the villages they came from and this also caused a social divide among workers.

→ Economic Condition: Russia was going through bad period economically. Prices of essential good rises while real wages decreased by 20% leading to the famous St. Petersburg strike, strike started a series of events that are together known as the 1905 Revolution. During this revolution, there were strikes all over the country, universities closed down, and various professionals and workers established the Union of Unions, demanding the establishment of a constituent assembly.

→ Political Condition: Political parties were illegal before 1914. The Russian Social Democratic Workers Party was founded in 1898 by socialists who respected Marx's ideas. In 1903, this party was divided into two groups - Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks, who were in majority, were led by Lenin who is regarded as the greatest thinker on socialism after Marx.

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

Answer : Industrial Workers

The working population in Russia was different from other countries in Europe before 1917 in the following ways

Many workers had settled in cities permanently but many had strong links with the villages from which they came and continued to live in villages. They went to the towns to work daily and then returned to their villages in the evenings.

Workers were a divided social group. Workers were divided by skill. Divisions among workers was visible in their dress and manners also.

Metal workers considered themselves aristocrats among workers as their occupations demanded more training and skill.

Women made up 31 per cent of the labour force by 1914, but they were paid less than men. Some workers formed associations of help in times of unemployment or financial hardship. The workers did unite to strike work when they disagreed with the employers about dismissals or about work conditions.

Workers got low wages and they had long working hours. They had very few political rights; in short, their life was miserable.

Agricultural Workers

About 85 per cent of Russia's population earned their living from agriculture but most of them were landless farmers.

Most of the land was owned by the nobility, the crown and the orthodox church.

In France, during the French Revolution in Brittany, peasants respected and fought for the landowners, but in Russia peasants wanted the land of the nobles to be given to them.

They refused to pay rent and even murdered landlords.

Russian peasants were different from European peasants in another way. They pooled their land together periodically and their commune divided it according to the needs of individual families.

Like industrial workers, the condition of the agricultural workers or farmers was also very miserable because of low wages, doing free labour and paying high rent and revenue.

Question 3. Why did the Tsarist autocracy collapse in 1917?

Answer :The Tsarist autocracy collapsed in 1917 due to the following reasons

(a) Miserable Condition of the Workers

The industrial workers in Russia got very low wages.

They had very long working hours, sometimes up to 15 hours.

A large number of workers were unemployed.

The workers demanded higher wages and reduction in working hours but their demands were not met and they became dissatisfied.

(b) Miserable Condition of Peasants

Most of the peasants were landless and very poor.

They also had to do free labour for the landlords

Socialism in Europe and the Russian Revolution

The small farmers who possessed land had to pay high land revenue, leaving very less for them to survive on.

The landless farmers demanded that the land of the nobles should be given to them.

They wanted reduction of land revenue.

However, their demands were not fulfilled and they too became dissatisfied.

(c) Russia's Defeat in the First World War

Initially, the people rallied around Tsar Nicholas II; however Russian armies suffered defeats and a large number of soldiers were killed in the war.

The Russian population wanted to withdraw from the war, but the Tsar was not willing to do so. This turned the Russian people against him and encouraged them to revolt.

Role of Philosophers like Karl Marx Karl Marx put forward the idea that the capitalists were responsible for the misery of the workers and that the condition of workers could only improve if the land and the industries were controlled by the society. He inspired the workers to oppose the landlords and the capitalists.

Rasputin's Role The people were also against the policies of the monk named Rasputin.

Question 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 February Revolution:

- 22nd February: Factory lockout on the right bank took place,
- 25th February: Duma was dissolved.
- 27th February: Police Headquarters ransacked. Regiments support the workers. Formation of Soviet.
- 2nd March: The Tsar abdicated his power. The Soviet and Duma leaders formed a Provisional Government for Russia.

The February Revolution had no political party at its forefront. It was led by the people themselves. Petrograd had brought down the monarchy, and thus, gained a significant place in Soviet history. Trade Unions grew in number. Both men and women workers were involved. There were no particular leaders. The effect was that it brought down the autocratic monarchy.

October Revolution:

- 16th October: A Military Revolutionary Committee was appointed by Soviet.
- 24th October: The uprising against provisional government begins. Military Revolutionary Committee controls the city by night and ministers surrender. The Bolshevik gained power. The October Revolution was primarily led by Lenin and his sub-ordinate Trotskii, and involved the masses who supported these leaders. It marked the beginning of Lenin's rule over the Soviet, with the Bolsheviks under his guidance. Bolsheviks were the main people involved. Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky were the main leaders. The effect was that it brought the Bolsheviks to power to form a communist government for the first time in the world.

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

Answer : The main changes which were brought about by the Bolsheviks immediately after the October Revolution:

- Banks and Industries were nationalised.
- Land was declared social property, thereby allowing peasants to seize it from the nobility.
- In urban areas, houses were partitioned according to family requirements
- Old aristocratic titles were banned, and new uniforms were designed for the army and the officials.

→ New uniforms were introduced for the army and the officials. The famous soviet hat (budeonovka) was introduced.

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

kulaks

(i) It is the Russian term for wealthy peasants who Stalin believed were hoarding grains to gain more profit. By 1927-28 the towns of Soviet Russia were facing an acute problem of grain supplies. Kulaks were thought to be partly responsible for this. Also to develop modern farms and run them along industrial lines the Party under the leadership of Stalin thought it was necessary to eliminate Kulaks. Well-to-do peasants were called 'kulaks' during Stalin's leadership. As food shortage continued Stalin decided to introduce the Collectivisation Programme. Under this programme, 'kulaks' were eliminated. That is, land from these well-to-do peasants was forcibly taken and large state-controlled farms were established. This was done to modernize farming and increase production.

the Duma

(ii) During 1905 Revolution, the Tsar allowed the creation of an elected consultative parliament in Russia. This elected consultative parliament in Russia was called Duma. Though the Duma was accepted by the Tsar, they were constantly dismissed by the Tsar and new ones were set up. After the February Revolution when the Monarchy was overthrown, Duma leaders and Soviet leaders formed a Provisional Government in Russia.

women workers between 1900 and 1930

(iii) They made up 31% of the factory labour force by 1914, but were paid almost half and three-quarters of the wages given to men. However, interestingly, it were the women workers who led the way to strikes during the February Revolution.

During the February Revolution in 1917, many women worker led the strikes. The condition of the women workers continued to be grim until the 1930s. Slowly conditions improved and crèches were set up in factories for the children of women workers.

the Liberals

(iv) After the French Revolution people wanted a transformation in the society. Many groups were formed with this intention. One such group was the 'Liberals'. They espoused a nation that was tolerant towards all religions; one that would protect individual rights against the government. The Liberals wanted a nation with religious tolerance and individual rights. Though they wanted an elected parliamentary government, they wanted only men of property to have the right to vote. They were against women voting.

Stalin's collectivisation programme.

(v) Stalin believed that collectivization of agriculture would help in improving grains supplies in Russia. He began collectivization in 1929. All peasants were forced to cultivate in collective farms (kolhoz). The bulk of land and implements were transferred to the ownership of collective farm. Many peasants protested such attempts and destroyed livestock to show their anger. Collectivization did not bring the desired results in the food supply situation turned even worse in subsequent years.