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The Age of Social Change

The French Revolution opened up the possibility of creating dramatic changes in the way society was structured. Through the Revolution in Russia, socialism became one of the most significant and powerful ideas to shape society in the twentieth century.

View of Liberals, Radicals and Conservatives

Liberals: Liberals wanted a nation which tolerated all religions and opposed the uncontrolled power of dynastic rulers. They aimed to safeguard individual rights against governments and argued for a representative, elected Parliamentary Government, subject to laws interpreted by an independent judiciary. However, they did not support Universal Adult Franchise.

Exam Question: What were the main demands of the liberals during the age of social change?

Answer: Liberals wanted religious tolerance, opposed dynastic rulers' uncontrolled power, safeguarded individual rights, and supported a representative parliamentary government with an independent judiciary but did not support universal adult franchise.

Radicals: Radicals wanted a government based on the majority of the population. They opposed the privileges of big landowners and wealthy factory owners. While not against private property, they disliked its concentration in the hands of a few.

Exam Question: How did the views of radicals differ from liberals regarding property and government?

Answer: Radicals opposed privileges of landowners and factory owners and wanted majority-based government, while liberals supported individual rights and parliamentary government but did not challenge property concentration as strongly.

Conservatives: Conservatives opposed radicals and liberals. After the nineteenth century, they accepted changes but believed that the past needed respect and change should be gradual.

Exam Question: What was the conservative approach to social change?

Answer: Conservatives accepted change but believed it should be slow and respectful of past traditions.

Industrial Society and Social Change

New cities and industrial regions developed during the Industrial Revolution. Railways expanded, but unemployment was common, especially during low demand. Housing and sanitation were problematic due to rapid urban growth.

Exam Question: What were some social problems caused by industrialization in Europe?

Answer: Unemployment, poor housing, and sanitation problems due to rapid urban growth.

The Coming of Socialism to Europe

By mid-nineteenth century, socialism was a well-known ideology opposing private property, which socialists saw as the root of social ills. Robert Owen promoted

cooperatives, Louis Blanc advocated government support for cooperatives, and Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels argued that industrial society was capitalist and that workers were exploited.

Exam Question: What were the main ideas of socialism in Europe during the nineteenth century?

Answer: Socialism opposed private property, promoted cooperatives, and argued that capitalism exploited workers, advocating for a society where property was socially controlled.

Idea of Communist Society

Marx believed industrial society was capitalist, with capitalists owning factories and profiting from workers' labor. He argued that workers could only improve their conditions by creating a socialist society with social control of property, leading to a communist society, which he saw as the future natural society.

Exam Question: What did Karl Marx mean by a communist society?

Answer: A society where all property is socially controlled, abolishing capitalist exploitation, and where workers have triumphed over capitalists.

Support for Socialism

By the 1870s, socialist ideas spread across Europe. Socialists formed the Second International to coordinate efforts. Workers in England and Germany formed associations for better conditions. By 1905, Labour and Socialist parties were formed in Britain and France, but socialists did not form governments before 1914.

Exam Question: What was the Second International and its significance?

Answer: The Second International was an organization of socialist and labour parties coordinating efforts to improve workers' conditions and spread socialism.

Key Dates

- 1870: Spread of socialist ideas through Europe.
- 1905: Formation of Labour Party in Britain and Socialist Party in France.

The Russian Revolution

Socialists took over the government in Russia through the October Revolution of 1917. The fall of monarchy in February 1917 and the October events are collectively called the Russian Revolution.

The Russian Empire in 1914

Tsar Nicholas II ruled Russia and its vast empire including present-day Finland, Baltic states, parts of Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Central Asia, and Caucasus regions. The majority religion was Russian Orthodox Christianity.

Exam Question: Describe the extent of the Russian Empire in 1914.

Answer: It included Russia around Moscow, Finland, Baltic states, parts of Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Central Asia, and Caucasus regions under Tsar Nicholas II.

Economy and Society

Most people were agriculturists; Russia was a major grain exporter. Industry was limited to areas like St. Petersburg and Moscow, mostly privately owned but supervised by the government. Nobility, Crown, and Orthodox Church owned large lands. Peasants wanted land from nobles.

Exam Question: What were the main features of Russian economy and society before the revolution?

Answer: Predominantly agricultural society with limited industry, land owned by nobility and church, peasants demanding land, and government supervision of factories.

Socialism in Russia

The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was founded in 1898, respecting Marx's ideas. The Socialist Revolutionary Party formed in 1900, fighting for peasants' rights and land redistribution. Lenin led the Bolshevik faction, advocating a disciplined party controlling membership.

Exam Question: Who were the main socialist groups in Russia before 1917?

Answer: The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) and the Socialist Revolutionary Party.

A Turbulent Time: The 1905 Revolution

Russia was an autocracy. In 1904, rising prices and poor conditions led to strikes. The Putilov Iron Works strike escalated, culminating in Bloody Sunday on 22 January 1905, when peaceful protesters were shot by police, sparking the 1905 Revolution. The Tsar allowed the creation of the Duma, an elected consultative parliament.

Exam Question: What was Bloody Sunday and its significance?

Answer: On 22 January 1905, peaceful workers were fired upon by troops at the Winter Palace, leading to the 1905 Revolution and the creation of the Duma.

The First World War and the Russian Empire

1. War broke out in 1914 between Central Powers and Allies including Russia.
2. Initially, the war was popular in Russia.
3. Russia suffered severe military defeats between 1914 and 1916.
4. Industry was limited and disrupted by war and German control of the Baltic Sea.
5. Railways began to break down by 1916.
6. Labour shortages occurred as men were drafted, shutting down small workshops.

Exam Question: How did World War I affect Russia's economy and society?

Answer: Military defeats, industrial disruption, railway breakdowns, and labour shortages

caused economic and social strain.

Key Words

Duma: The Russian Parliament or legislature.

Bloody Sunday: The 1905 massacre of peaceful protesters at the Winter Palace.

Key Dates

- 1904: Strike at Putilov Iron Works.
- 22 January 1905: Bloody Sunday.

The February Revolution in Petrograd

In winter 1917, Petrograd faced food shortages and harsh weather. Strikes began in factories, led by women on International Women's Day. The government suspended the Duma on 25 February. Demonstrations grew, and soldiers joined workers to form the Petrograd Soviet. The Tsar abdicated on 2 March. A Provisional Government was formed by Soviet and Duma leaders.

Exam Question: What events led to the February Revolution in Petrograd?

Answer: Food shortages, strikes led by women, suspension of the Duma, mass demonstrations, formation of the Petrograd Soviet, and the Tsar's abdication.

After February

The Provisional Government included army officials, landowners, industrialists, liberals, and socialists working towards elected government. Lenin returned from exile in April 1917 with his April Theses demanding Soviet power, land to peasants, and nationalisation of banks.

Exam Question: What were Lenin's April Theses?

Answer: Soviets should take power, land should be given to peasants, and banks should be nationalised.

The Revolution of October 1917

Lenin feared the Provisional Government would become a dictatorship. On 16 October, he persuaded the Petrograd Soviet and Bolsheviks to seize power. The Military Revolutionary Committee, led by Trotsky, organised the takeover. The All Russian Congress of Soviets approved the Bolshevik action.

Exam Question: How did the Bolsheviks seize power in October 1917?

Answer: Lenin persuaded the Soviet and Bolsheviks to act; the Military Revolutionary Committee organised the seizure; the Congress of Soviets approved it.

Key Words

Soviet: Council of workers.

The April Theses: Lenin's directives upon returning to Russia in April 1917.

Bolsheviks: Lenin's faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party that seized power in 1917.

Key Dates

- 22–27 February 1917: February Revolution.
- 2 March 1917: Abdication of the Tsar.
- 3 April 1917: Lenin's return and April Theses.
- 5 May 1917: Formation of Provisional Government.
- 3 June 1917: First All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

Example

How was a Socialist State established by Lenin? Explain.

Answer:

1. Centralised planning with five-year plans.
2. Abolition of private property and social control of property.
3. Development of extended schooling system.

Changes after October and the Global Influence

Changes after October

The Bolsheviks opposed private property, nationalised industries and banks in November 1917, declared land social property, and allowed peasants to seize noble lands. Large houses were partitioned, aristocratic titles banned. The party was renamed Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). Elections to the Constituent Assembly failed to give them majority, but they became the only party in the All Russian Congress of Soviets, making Russia a one-party state.

Exam Question: What changes did the Bolsheviks introduce after October 1917?

Answer: Nationalisation of industries and banks, land redistribution, partition of large houses, banning aristocratic titles, and establishment of a one-party state.

The Civil War

Between 1918 and 1919, the Greens (Socialist Revolutionaries) and Whites (Pro-Tsarists) controlled much of Russia. Civil war caused looting, banditry, and famine. By 1920, Bolsheviks controlled most of the empire, aided by cooperation with non-Russian nationalities and Muslim Jadidists. Non-Russian nationalities were given political autonomy in the Soviet Union formed in 1922.

Exam Question: Who were the main groups in the Russian Civil War and what was the outcome?

Answer: The Greens and Whites opposed the Bolsheviks; the Bolsheviks won and formed the USSR with political autonomy for non-Russian nationalities.

Making a Socialist Society

Centralised planning was introduced with Five Year Plans. Industrial production doubled between 1929 and 1933 in oil, coal, and steel. Education expanded, with factory workers and peasants entering universities. Crèches were established for children of women workers, public health care was provided, and model living quarters were built.

Exam Question: What were the key features of the socialist society built by the Bolsheviks?

Answer: Central planning, industrial growth, expanded education, childcare facilities, public health care, and improved housing.

Stalinism and Collectivisation

By 1927–28, grain shortages led Stalin to enforce collectivisation of farms. Peasants were forced to join collective farms (Kolkhoz). Resisters were punished, many deported or exiled. Despite collectivisation, production initially fell and famine caused over 4 million deaths between 1930 and 1933.

Exam Question: What was collectivisation and what were its effects?

Answer: Forced consolidation of farms into collectives; caused resistance, repression, and famine with millions of deaths.

The Global Influence of the Russian Revolution and the USSR

Communist parties formed worldwide, such as the Communist Party of Great Britain. Non-Russians participated in the Conference of the Peoples of the East (1920) and the Comintern, an international union of pro-Bolshevik socialist parties. By World War II, the USSR had given socialism a global face and stature.

Exam Question: How did the Russian Revolution influence global politics?

Answer: It inspired communist parties worldwide, led to international socialist organizations, and gave socialism global prominence.

Key Words

The Bolsheviks: Communist party of Russia formed in 1917 by Lenin.

Jadidists: Muslim reformers in the Russian Empire.

Key Dates

- 1917–1920: Russian Civil War.
- 1919: Formation of Comintern.
- 1929: Beginning of collectivisation.
- 1991: Break up of the Soviet Union.

Solved Examples

Example 1: Explain the main causes of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Answer: Causes included autocratic rule of the Tsar, poor working and living conditions, food shortages, military defeats in World War I, and the influence of socialist ideas.

Example 2: Describe the role of Lenin in the Russian Revolution.

Answer: Lenin led the Bolshevik faction, returned from exile in 1917, issued the April Theses, and organised the October Revolution to establish a socialist state.

Practice Set

Easy

- What was the significance of Bloody Sunday in 1905?
- Who were the Bolsheviks?

Moderate

- Explain the differences between liberals, radicals, and conservatives during the age of social change.
- What were the main features of the Provisional Government after the February Revolution?

Challenging

- Discuss the impact of collectivisation on Soviet agriculture and society.
- Analyze the global influence of the Russian Revolution on socialist movements worldwide.

Answer Key

Easy

- Bloody Sunday was a massacre of peaceful protesters in 1905 that sparked the 1905 Revolution and led to the creation of the Duma.
- The Bolsheviks were the communist party led by Lenin that seized power in the October Revolution of 1917.

Moderate

- Liberals wanted religious tolerance and parliamentary government but limited franchise; radicals wanted majority rule and opposed property concentration; conservatives wanted slow change respecting tradition.
- The Provisional Government was formed by liberals and socialists aiming for elected government but faced opposition from Bolsheviks.

Challenging

- Collectivisation forced peasants into collective farms, caused resistance and repression, led to famine and millions of deaths, but aimed to increase agricultural production.
- The Russian Revolution inspired communist parties worldwide, led to international socialist organizations like Comintern, and gave socialism global stature.

Quick Reference

- **French Revolution:** Inspired social change and new political ideas.
- **Socialism:** Ideology opposing private property and capitalism.
- **Russian Revolution:** Overthrow of Tsarist autocracy and establishment of socialist state.
- **February Revolution:** Led to abdication of Tsar and Provisional Government.
- **October Revolution:** Bolshevik seizure of power.
- **Collectivisation:** Forced consolidation of farms under Stalin.
- **Comintern:** International communist organization.

Glossary

Autocracy

A system of government where one person has absolute power.

Bolsheviks

The communist faction led by Lenin that seized power in Russia in 1917.

Collectivisation

Policy of consolidating individual landholdings into collective farms.

Duma

The elected consultative parliament established in Russia after 1905.

Provisional Government

Temporary government formed after the abdication of the Tsar in 1917.

Socialism

Political and economic theory advocating social ownership of the means of production.

Soviet

Council of workers or soldiers in Russia.

Tsar

Emperor of Russia before the revolution.

Year	Event	Significance
1789	French Revolution	Inspired ideas of social change and equality.
1870	Spread of socialist ideas in Europe	Socialism became a major political ideology.
1905	Russian Revolution of 1905 and Bloody Sunday	Led to creation of Duma and political unrest.
1917 (February)	February Revolution	Abdication of Tsar and formation of Provisional Government.
1917 (October)	October Revolution	Bolsheviks seized power, establishing socialist state.
1918–1920	Russian Civil War	Bolsheviks consolidated power and formed USSR.
1929	Start of Collectivisation	Forced consolidation of farms under Stalin.
1991	Break up of Soviet Union	End of USSR and socialist state in Russia.