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HISTORY

SOCIALISM IN EUROPE AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

CONTENTS

- INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CHANGE
- THE COMING OF SOCIALISM TO EUROPE
- SUPPORT FOR SOCIALISM

1. INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Industrial Revolution led to changes in social and economic life, new cities came up and new industrialised regions developed. Men, women and children came to factories in search of work. But, unfortunately, working hours were long and wages were poor. There was unemployment during the time of low demand for industrial goods. Liberals and radicals made wealth through trade or industrial ventures. According to them, society can be developed if freedom of individuals was ensured, if the poor could labour, and those with capital could operate without restraint. In France, Italy, Germany and Russia, revolutionaries overthrow existing monarchs. Nationalists talked of revolutions to create 'nations' with equal rights.

2. THE COMING OF SOCIALISM TO EUROPE

Socialism was a well-known body of ideas by the mid-nineteenth century in Europe. Socialists were against private property and saw it as the root of all social ills of the time. They wanted to change it and campaigned for it. Robert Owen (1771-1858) sought to build a cooperative community called New Harmony in Indiana (USA). Louis Blanc (1813-1882) wanted the government to encourage cooperatives and replace capitalist enterprises. Karl Marx (1818-1883)

and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) added other ideas to this body of arguments. According to Marx industrial society was 'capitalist' who owned the capital invested in factories, and the profit of capitalists was produced by workers. Capitalism and the rule of private property were overthrown. Marx believed that a communist society was the natural society of the future.

3. SUPPORT FOR SOCIALISM

By the 1870s, socialist ideas spread through Europe and they formed an international body – namely, the Second International. Associations were formed by workers in Germany and England to fight for better living and working conditions. The Labour Party and Socialist Party were formed by socialists and trade unionists, by 1905.

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