

## SOCIALISM STUDY GUIDE

French Revolution during National Convention (Committee of Public Safety): first time in European history where the government tried to totally plan the economy (e.g. Robespierre’s **Law of Maximum** sought to freeze prices for certain goods)

### Early French Socialists:

Characteristics:

- Believed in Enlightenment idea that people were not evil by nature. They could be virtuous in a suitable environment.
- Against private property and competition
- Equality for women

Idea	Application
Henri de Saint-Simon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sought cooperation between intellectuals and industrial managers</li> <li>• Gov’t would vanish as it would no longer be needed.</li> </ul>	None
Charles Fourier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sought small model communities of 1,620 people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Untested in Europe</li> <li>• Followers established communities in U.S.</li> </ul>
Robert Owen (English) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like Fourier, sought cooperative communities</li> <li>• Attempted to start union movement in England</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Untested in Europe</li> <li>• Founded New Harmony, Indiana</li> <li>• Union movement failed during Owen’s time</li> </ul>
Louis Blanc <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gov’t had responsibility for welfare of citizens</li> <li>• Competition is evil.</li> <li>• Gov’t workshops financed by gov’t but owned and operated by workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gov’t workshops established in France after Revolution of 1830.</li> <li>• Closing of workshops in 1840s led to ugly class conflict during Revolution of 1848 (“June Days”)</li> </ul>
Pierre Proudhon, <i>What is Property?</i> (1840) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value of labor was stolen by the bourgeoisie</li> <li>• Private property should be abolished.</li> <li>• Considered by some to be an anarchist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influenced Marx and Engels</li> </ul>

## SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM (KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS)

*The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Das Kapital* (1861): Intended to replace utopian hopes and dreams with a brutal, militant blueprint for socialist working class success.

### Karl Marx: Theory of dialectical materialism

- The economic interpretation of history: all human history has been determined by economic factors (mainly who controls the means of production and distribution).
- The class struggle: Since the beginning of time there has been a class struggle between the rich and the poor or the exploiters and the exploited.
- Theory of Surplus Value: the true value of a product was labor and, since the worker received a small portion of his just labor price, the difference was surplus value, “stolen” from him by the capitalist.
- Socialism was inevitable: Capitalism contained the seeds of its own destruction (overproduction, unemployment, etc.)
- Violent revolution:
- The increasing gap between proletariat and bourgeoisie will be so great that the working classes will rise up in revolution and overthrow the elite bourgeoisie.
- Will create a “dictatorship of the proletariat.” *WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!*”
- Creation of a classless society: Will result as modern capitalism is dismantled.
- “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs,” will take place.

Marxism led the negative response to industrialization

- Socialists united in 1864 to form the First International (Marx one of the principal organizers)
- Growth of socialist parties after 1871 was phenomenal (esp. Germany--S.P.D.; also France, Belgium, Austria-Hungary)
- 1883, Socialists exiled from Russia formed Russian Social Democratic party in Switzerland and it grew rapidly after 1890.

**Revisionism**: became the dominant form of socialism in late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe until the Russian Revolution

- As workers gained right to vote and to participate politically in the nation-state, their attention focused more on elections than on revolutions
- Workers’ standard of living rose gradually but substantially after 1850 (no need to revolt)
- Growth of labor unions reinforced trend toward modernization
- Increasingly, unions focused on bread-and butter issues--wages, hours, working conditions—rather than pure socialist doctrine.
- Genuine collective bargaining, long opposed by socialist intellectuals as a “sell-out” was officially recognized as desirable by the German Trade Union Congress in 1899.
- A series of strikes proved effective in gaining concessions from employers.
- **Edward Bernstein**: *Evolutionary Socialism* (1899) argued Marx’s predictions of ever-greater poverty for workers & ever-greater concentration of wealth in fewer hands had been proved false.

Impact of socialism on European politics became profound by late 19<sup>th</sup> century

- **Germany: Social Democratic Party (S.P.D.):** Marxist; advocated sweeping social legislation, the realization of genuine democracy, and the demilitarization of the German gov't.
  - Bismarck forced to institute sweeping reforms in order to minimize the threat from the left
    - 1879, a protective tariff instituted to maintain domestic production
    - Modern social security laws established
    - National sickness and accident insurance laws passed in 1883 & 1884.
    - Old-age pensions and retirement benefits established in 1889
    - Regulated child labor
    - Improved working conditions
- **France:** Socialists led by **Jean Juarès** gained seats in Chamber of Deputies from 1905 to 1914
- **England:**
  - **Fabian Society** (1883) advanced a form of revisionist Marxism
    - Sought political democracy and economic socialism
  - 1893, **Keir Hardie's Independent Labor Party** rapidly became a vocal 3rd party.
    - Attracted trade unionists, socialists, and those who thought that Conservative and Liberal Parties had no genuine interests in the needs of the general public
  - Foundations for social welfare state created in decade before WWI (meant to guarantee each citizen with a decent standard of living)
    - Right of unions to strike was put into law.
    - Gov't insurance was provided for those injured on the job
    - unemployment insurance & old-age pensions enacted.
    - Compulsory school attendance law went into effect.
    - Taxes increased on the wealthy (to help fund the welfare state)

#### **Russian Revolution:**

- **Vladimir Lenin** seeks to create a Marxist society (**communism**)
  - Differs from Marx in that he believes revolution will have to be initiated by a small group of elite professional revolutionaries.
  - **NEP:** Lenin forced to take a “necessary step backwards” and incorporate some capitalism in order to help Russia recover from civil war.
- **Stalin** imposes ruthless communist dictatorship during **Five-Year Plans**

#### **1919ism:**

- Communists (“Spartacists” led by Rosa Luxembour) temporarily took control of Berlin
- Inter-war Period: leftist groups became a major political force
- Popular Front in France led by Leon Blum in mid-1930s
  - Mussolini was a leading socialist writer in Italy before turning to fascism.
  - Communists were the major target of Nazis in 1933

#### **Post-WWII:**

- Communism spreads to Eastern Europe (1945), North Korea (1945), China (1949), Cuba (1959), Vietnam (1950s) and others.
- Welfare state established in a number of Western European countries: England (under Atlee and the Labour Party), West Germany, France

Influences “**New Left**” student movements of 1960s (e.g. Paris student revolts in 1968)

1989-1991, fall of communism in Eastern Europe