

SUBJECT: POLITICAL SCIENCE I
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SOCIALISM

UTOPIAN SOCIALISM

The Utopian Socialists like Robert Owen in England, and Charles Fourier and Henri de Saint. Simon in France had already sown the seeds of Socialism. They regarded poverty as the principal source of ills of society and private property as the chief cause of poverty. They stood for renovation of society and the amelioration of the existing inequalities. They believed that changes they desired could be achieved through appeals to the reason and sense of justice of influential members of the community. They did not look at all to revolutionary action, nor primarily to political action, for bringing about the changes. “They sought rather to set up select communities, in which principles of justice, benevolence, and intelligence would rule and from the example of which the whole of society would be gradually converted to their ideals.

In utopian socialism, adherents downplay the role of class warfare and argue people of all classes can voluntarily come together to promote socialist ideals of shared ownership and working for the common good. cooperative socialism. It is based on the work of Henri de Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, and Robert Owen.

Utopian socialism is a type of ethical socialism which requires a certain ethics of those living in the community. Utopian socialism is a challenge to the conventional economic model of rational choice – the idea that individuals seek to maximise their individual utility. Under utopian socialism, it assumes that individuals will be able to put selfish ends to one side to consider the common good. Some aspects of Utopian-socialism are (a) No state ownership of means of production (b) Advocates co-operation between owners and workers – rather than adversarial workers vs capitalist /trade unions (c) Local decentralisation of decision-making process and (d) Market forces harnessed but emphasis on considering common good rather than selfish ends.

SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

Socialism has taken a long time to develop. Historically, as an economic and political doctrine, it originated as a protest against the evils of capitalism as well as exploitation of the labourers under the factory system. It opposed the prevailing individualist orders with its laissez-faire attitude and its ruthlessness.

Socialism in the present-day comprehensive and systematic forms has its definite origin principally in the works of Karl Marx, who is regarded as the father of “scientific socialism”.

Marx brought revolutionary insight to socialist thought and socialist movement. He undoubtedly brought to socialism something that it has hitherto lacked a daemonic energy. The “Communist manifesto” (1848) has been the most classical, radical, influential document in the history of socialism. Marxism’s unparalleled success had a simple cause. Marx very seriously insisted on the unity of theory and practice and he staked the whole future of his doctrine philosophically as well as politically on the rising star of a new social class, that of the modern industrial workers. Marxism provided a basis upon which the socialist movement could be built in an organized and coherent manner.

For Marx, socialism was an end-state and presupposed certain prior conditions in their associated intellectual cultures and normative systems. There was no basis in classical Marxist theory for a society to be socialist without these necessary pre-conditions first being fulfilled. Socialism in this tradition was a specific societal form constituting an advanced stage in a development sequence. It was a permanent revolution, a process that knew no terminus or closure as long as any institution of either “the base” or the “superstructure” of the existing civilisation survived. It was a dynamic revolution abolishing proletarian poverty but only by bridging the gap between the impoverishment of the individual and the creative wealth of the human species.

Marx postulated two kinds of tension or conflict one between the forces of production and the production relations, which determined the economic structure, and the other between the ruling classes and those who keep them in bondage. The development of the productive forces and the inability of the existing economic structure to contain it lead to a change in the structure, but the proletariat was asked to hasten historical process. Marx saw that the essential content of the socialist revolution was the transfer of the means of production to public ownership under the leadership of proletariat.

Marxism reviewed class struggle as the central factor behind the dialectic of history. He proved that the existence of classes was implied in each particular phase of production and that it would inevitably lead to the realization of the classless society. Marx believed in human perfectibility and held that a classless society would be the last stage in social transformation.

The dynamics of Marxian socialism took regional colourings as it travelled from one place to another, having different social, political, economic and cultural conditions. It emerged as Syndicalism in France, Fabianism and Guild Socialism in Great Britain and Bolshevism in Soviet Russia. In India after independence it matured into Democratic Socialism, and after fusion of Marxism and Gandhism, it is known as Gandhian Socialism. Variations of Marxism by itself have created various facets of Neo-Marxism, such as Leninism, Stalinism, Khrushchevism, Titoism, Maoism, Castraism and the like.

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