

The Impact of the Bolshevik Revolution on the Development of Politics and Government System of New Countries in the 20th Century

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Abstract

The Bolshevik Revolution forced the end of the reign of the imperial government of Tsar Nicholas II in Russia. Furthermore, under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, Russia formed a new government in the form of the Republic. The main power of this government is entirely under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Changes in the form of government in Russia, especially after World War I, inspired newly independent countries in the mid-20th century to follow the same government system. Through theories about the state, politics, and government system, this study will analyze the influence of the Bolshevik revolution on the new system of government for new countries in the world in the 20th century. This study used an exploratory qualitative research method with a historical approach through literature study to strengthen the researchers' analysis of the effect of changes in the form of government. Based on a shared view of colonialism, human rights, ideology, and the strong understanding of Marxism-Leninism, several newly independent countries in the mid-20th century after the revolution, inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution, applied a Republican government system, including Indonesia.

Keywords

Bolshevik Revolution; Vladimir Lenin; Republic of Russia

INTRODUCTION

The Bolshevik Revolution was a revolution carried out by the Russian Bolsheviks under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, based in Petrograd (now St Petersburg or Leningrad). The

emergence of the idea of Revolution occurred due to Tsar Nicholas II's very authoritarian attitude. This act fostered the unity of the Russian workers, peasants, and soldiers who led to revolution overthrowing the empire.

One of the factions that became actors in

In 1903, the SDP was divided into two sects: the Mensheviks¹ (Social

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¹ The Mensheviks, an opportunist movement within the Russian Social Democrats. Formed at the Second RSDLP Congress in 1903 from opponents of revolutionary goals. In that Congress, at the election of the party's central organizations, the Leninists obtained the majority of the vote, and they were called the Bolsheviks (the majority), while the opportunists remained in the minority and called the Mensheviks

(the minority). The Mensheviks stood up against the revolutionary program of the party, against the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution, against the alliance of the working class and the peasants and supported the agreement with the liberal bourgeoisie. In 1917, the representatives of the Mensheviks entered the bourgeois Provisional Government, and after the victory of the October Socialist Revolution,

Democrats or Socialists, led by George Plekhanov and Alexander Kerensky) and the Bolsheviks² (Revolutionary Radicals or Communists, led by Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin), Leon Trotsky, and Joseph Vissarionovic (Stalin) (Krisnawati, 2013).

At least three attempts were recorded to replace the Tsarist government with the Socialist Republic. The first was the Revolution of 1905 – 1907, which began with strikes and demonstrations in various cities from January 9 to September 1905. Next was the national strike in October 1905. The third was marked by two changes to the Duma (a Russian assembly with advisory or legislative functions). The first was on April 27 – June 3, 1906. It was followed by the second with Duma II on February 20 – June 2, 1907. The following were Duma III (1907-1912) and Duma IV (1912-1916).

The second attempt was the February Revolution, often referred to as the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution. Tsar Nicholas II was successfully dethroned in this revolution on March 2, 1917. The third attempt was the Bolshevik Revolution on October 25, 1917.

The main agenda of the Bolshevik Revolution was the destruction of the monarchy, political reform, and the abolition of upper-class society. This study is intended to determine how

significant the influence of the Bolshevik revolution was for the development of politics and government systems in the new countries in the early 20th century.

B. Theoretical Review

1. Theory of the State

Theory by Thommas Hobbes (Syafiie, 2013)

According to Thomas Hobbes, the state is an organization created by society by contracting and then using it as an instrument of security and protection for society itself.

This Hobbes theory will analyze The relationship between the concept of the state as developed by the Bolsheviks and as seen through the eyes of either the civil protection or the proletariat.

Theory by Karl Mark

Karl Marx stated that the state is an instrument of human authority to oppress other classes of human beings. This theory will discuss the role of humans in the new state dreamed up by the Bolsheviks.

Theory by Benedictus de Spinoza

Spinoza also gave the term about the state. According to Spinoza, the state is an organization that has a role in realizing peace and tranquility also eliminating fear in society. In line with Hobbes, this theory will discuss the way

the Mensheviks together with other counter-revolutionary parties waged a struggle against Soviet rule. See Vladimir Illyich Lenin, *The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution*, in. <https://www.marxists.org/indonesia/archive/lenin/1917/Tugas.htm>.

² The Bolsheviks or Bolchinstvo party was Russia's largest group that approved the formation of a

struggling party against the Tsar's rule. This group represents the oppressed and alienated from their lives because of the control exercised by the state, landlords (nobles), and the bourgeoisie (upper) of the means of production that should be the source of life for the peasants in Russia. Revolution becomes the way of an open power struggle between social forces in the power struggle.

of a new state for the Bolsheviks to realize a prosperous and wealthy state.

Theory by Oppenheim Lauterpacht

State Science expert, Oppenheim Lauterpacht, mentioned three main elements in a country: people, territory, and an independent or sovereign government. A country cannot exist without people, territory, and an independent or sovereign government. Without one of these elements, the state cannot exist. A country without a sovereign government cannot be a state, likewise with other elements. Therefore, these three elements must exist together to be called a state (Muhtada and Diniyanto, 2018).

Theory by Lenin

According to Lenin, the state is the ruling class or the organization of class power. It is the organization of oppression, or the machine for the suppression of one class by another, meaning that the state is a power that stands above society (Arif and Prasetyo, 2004).

The theory will analyze the relationship between the state principles that the Bolsheviks aspired to and the centuries-old imperial system.

2. Theory of Government

Theory by Jhon Lock

The view of John Locke, in his very famous book "Two Treatises of Government," published in 1690, provides a division of power which consists of, first, the power to form laws (legislative), second, the power to implement laws (executive), and third,

power regarding war and peace, making unions and alliances, and all actions with all people and institutions abroad (federative) (Mahfud, 2000). This thought was born as a reaction to absolutism by supporting the cancellation of the king's political power. According to John Locke, maintaining life, freedom, and the right to possess personal possessions is the reason humans enter into a social contract. The three basic models are seen as properties. This property then gives humans political status (Carias, 2010). This theory will be used to find the relationship between the power of the Imperial Monarchy and the reasons and considerations underlying the emergence of the Bolshevik desire to reform the Russian government.

Theory by Montesquieu

In his book *L'Esprit des Lois* (*The Spirit of the Laws*), Montesquieu sees where his citizens feel more secure in their rights. Hence, he divided government power into three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. These three functions are known as *trias politica* (separation of powers) (Muhtada and Diniyanto, 2018).

According to him, the three types of powers must be separated regarding the tasks (functions) and the equipment (organization) that carry them out. Montesquieu's freedom of the judiciary is prioritized because individual freedom and human rights are guaranteed and at stake here. According to him, legislative power is the power to make laws, executive power includes the implementation of laws, and judicial

power is the power to adjudicate law violations.

Theory by Hans Kelsen

In his book "General Theory of Law and State," Hans Kelsen viewed that the state must be separated from phenomena other than legal phenomena. A state is a government-imposed institution that is created by a group of people from one nation based on valid law. The formation of law in creating a state is contained in a constitution that is mutually agreed upon by the community (Kelsen, 1949: 181). Hans Kelsen's view of the state, which must be free from all phenomena except the law, makes the origin of the state not to be vigorously debated. There are many reasons why the state can come into being and some ways in which the state can be established. A constitution provides the framework for this institution or set of institutions.

This theory will explain the relationship between the position of a state built on the rule of law and the form of government over a state desired by Lenin.

Theory by Jimly Assiddiqie

Jimly Assiddiqie argued that the form of the state (*staats vorm*) and the form of government (*regerings vorm*) are two different things. The form of the state is the form of the organizations that exist within the state as a unit. The form of government is the form of state administration. Jimly Assiddiqie argued that the form of state is in the form of a union state (*unitary state/eenheidsstaat*), a federal state

(*federal/bonds staat*), and a confederation state (*confederation/ staten bond*). The form of government is in the form of a monarchy and a republic.

This theory will analyze the form of government desired by the Bolsheviks with the use of political reforms in carrying out their goals.

3. Theory of Politics

Theory by Plato and Aristoteles

According to Plato and Aristotle, politics is an attempt to achieve the best political community (*polity*). In such *polity*, humans will live happily because they can develop talents, associate with a close sense of community, and live in an atmosphere of high morality (Budiarjo, 2007).

This theory will explain an ideal state that the Bolsheviks wanted to establish where the happiness and welfare of the people could be realized by building a social community full of community without any barriers between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Theory by Peter Merkl

Meanwhile, Peter Merkl argued that Politics at its worst is a selfish grab for power, glory, and riches (Merkl, 1972). In contrast, politics, at its best is a noble quest for a good order and justice. In short, politics is the struggle for power, throne, and property (Budiarjo, 2007).

This theory will be used to analyze the two goals of the Bolsheviks: to eliminate poverty and to improve Russia's economic prosperity through the establishment of a new state system.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research is the exploratory qualitative type with a descriptive historical research approach or data collection by describing data that have been collected systematically (Moleong, 2007). The researchers conducted qualitative research because the characteristics of the research problem are more related to the process of conducting qualitative research (looking for meaning in a phenomenon). In lay terms, researchers were attempting to figure out what is hidden (Zuldafrial, 2012).

The insights can be strengthened with the use of a historical approach called Heuristics, the research process by tracing historical sources, verifying triangulation (source criticism) by selecting the sources obtained, and interpreting some of Lenin's writings as the aim of the research journal is to explore the considerations of Lenin's and the Bolsheviks' revolutionary processes in order to understand the possibilities of changing the government.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The factors that underlie the Bolsheviks carrying out the revolution

The Russian Empire was 196 years old which lasted from 1721 to 1917. In 1866, the Russian Empire's territory extended from Eastern Europe to Asia to North America. With a vast territory, Russia has been the most extensive monarchy in the world since the early 19th century. Their territory is from the Arctic Ocean in the north to the Black

Sea in the south. The Baltic Sea in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east is also Russian territory. With a population of 176.4 million, this empire had the third-largest population in the world at its time after the Qing Dynasty in China and the British Empire (Madariaga, 1981).

If a revolution took place in 1917 in Russia, this could not be separated from external and internal factors. Internal factors were mainly the unhappy domestic political situation that has existed with the emperor's intrusive power. In this case, two things have a very dominant influence: the Tsar's leadership towards running the wheels of government in authoritarian ways and those that are more militaristic and bureaucratic. To have power, the Tsar's power had to be exercised indefinitely, resulting in exploitation of the people, both for workers through industrial activities and against farmers through land ownership. The second factor is Russia's involvement in World War I as part of Tsar Nicolas II's Foreign policy, which caused suffering, poverty, and demoralization of soldiers who had been involved in many years of war.

Due to this situation, the consciousness of the proletariat emerged in the society of the proletariat to revolt. The proletariat society wanted to replace the emperor with a new leader. They preferred a leader who was more in favor of the proletariat based on a new system of administration and government. Such preference could only be achieved through a revolutionary social movement in Russia (Sabari, 2013).

Russia faced not only many defeats but also tremendous fatigue due to the situation and development of the war, which involved them on several battlefields. At that time, the Bolsheviks noticed some unfavorable acts from the empire. The empire tended to impose its troops without being followed by a fair fighting arrangement in applying its troops to war. Not to mention, they also gave poor treatment to the workers. Such treatments from the empire gave rise to the desire of the Bolsheviks or the proletariat to fight against Emperor Nicholas II.

In general, the factors that contributed to the Bolsheviks' desire to carry out a revolution can be described as follows.

- a. Utilization of workers who work in the industry in large numbers and do not participate in wars to conduct large-scale demonstrations due to the discrimination they feel
- b. The power of the masses becomes very effective to reduce the power of tyranny and as a political and social pressure force
- c. The strengths of the workers who are still very fit from the physical and moral aspects are very effective in supporting the success of the revolutionary demonstration
- d. The demoralization of Russian soldiers who were tired of fighting from the war with Japan from 1904 to 1905 and food shortages prompted these soldiers to become part of demonstrations against the government.
- e. The unity between workers and soldiers who are tired of fighting

creates a new idea in a war that united, we stand, divided, we fall.

2. Thoughts of Vladimir Lenin on Reforming the Russian Government System

In his book, *The State and Revolution*, Lenin described how to build a power to rule over the state. His way to build power is by giving proper education to the workers' party. Marxism gave a lesson to educate the vanguard of the proletariat who can hold power, lead the whole people towards socialism, steer and organize the new order, become teachers, guides, leaders of all workers and who are sucked into the task of building their social life without profit and against the bourgeoisie (Lenin, 1917).

We can find the Marxist concept of the state as put forward by Lenin in the book *'The State and Revolution,'* but again, there is not a single paragraph, sentence, or word that speaks of the dictatorship of the communist party of a specific nature. What exists is Lenin's statement that the dictatorship of the proletariat is no longer a special unit of oppression but is a general unit of oppression of the majority of the people against the minority of the bourgeoisie. In other words, the dictatorship of the proletariat is a form of organization of the proletariat's resistance against the bourgeoisie. It is just that this organization is bigger in power and stronger than the proletariat organization before seizing the country. Following the logic of the political philosophy of Marxism, this organization of proletariat resistance

(dictatorship of the proletariat) will disappear along with the disappearance of the state (Arif and Prasetyo, 2004).

Therefore, Lenin encouraging the Bolsheviks to carry out revolution and reform in the political field took the following steps.

- a. Established *the Union of The Struggle for The Liberation Working Class* to distribute pamphlets, illegal newspapers, support workers' strikes, and infiltrate the workers to be educated on the basic teachings of Marxism.
- b. Founded *Russion Social Democratic Workers Party* (RSDWP). Lenin explained a need for a party as the proletariat's vanguard in charge of injecting socialist consciousness into the proletariat because the proletariat would not spontaneously have a socialist consciousness and become revolutionary. It is necessary to have a strict and disciplined party to lead the workers' struggle through the revolution indeed. According to Lenin, the party must also follow the pattern of absolute centralism (Haryadi, 2000).
- c. Published the publication "Iskra" in Munich with Plekhanov and Martov with Lenin as editor and in charge of all Iskra activities. Published articles from Iskra were also smuggled into Russia
- d. Developed a plan that is very famous as "*April These*." The points were the destruction of capitalism as the only way to end the war, there was no more support for the Provisional Government, the Soviet

power had to be upheld, and the Soviets had to be dominated by the Bolsheviks (Moedjanto, 1975).

From the facts, the plan of Lenin and the Bolsheviks to replace the government system in Russia is based on the theory of government. The theory says power lies in the sovereignty of the people, which is exercised through a single party as the people's representative in running the government. Even though the people's representatives run the government, its authority is limited by the constitution.

This limitation includes legislative and executive powers, as in *The State and Revolution* by Lenin (1917). It follows the theory popularized by Montesquieu, which divides power over three parts of executive, legislative, and judicial powers. The three powers are exercised with their respective authorities in their respective responsibilities.

Lenin's struggle to change the Russian system of government was carried out by forming a party that houses the Bolsheviks. The party was then used as an engine for state formation to create justice and prosperity for all Russian people, especially the workers and peasants. The formation of a party that is intended to run the government or power to achieve prosperity is a concept that is in line with the theory of politics delivered by Plato and Aristotle, who regard *politics* as an attempt to achieve the best political community (*polity*). In *polity*, such humans will live in a happy mind because they have the opportunity to

develop talents, associate with a close sense of community, and live in an atmosphere of high morality.

Another fact is that the revolution in Russia was an accumulation of the desire of Lenin and his friends. They had the desire to liberate Russia from the oligarchy and autocracy. From this perspective, there are thoughts of the Bolsheviks regarding the Bolshevik ideal of establishing *All-Russian Congress of Soviet* (Suseno, 2017)³:

- a. The expropriation of land from the feudal lords;
- b. The development of science and technology in Russia at that time;
- c. The growth of the workers due to industrialization;
- d. The formation of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP);
- e. Horizontal conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (Putri, 2013).

With the description as the basis, Lenin and the Bolsheviks wanted to create a state that involved the people at a new level of progress but necessitated the involvement of the proletarian people, including the Bolsheviks, workers, and peasants, in state life. The ideals of the Bolsheviks, as mentioned, are in line with what Lenin thought in his view of the state that the state is a power that stands above society and which "is alienating itself more and more from

that society." Hence, it is crystal clear that the liberation of the oppressed class is not only with violent revolution but also with the destruction of the apparatus of state power created by the ruling class, which is the embodiment of that "exile" (Arif and Prasetyo, 2004).

Lenin had a belief that the power of the people was an essential element that remarkably determined the formation of a state as *Oppenheim Lauterpacht* stated that the elements in a state consisted of three main elements: the existence of a people, territory, and an independent or sovereign government. It is impossible for a country to exist without people, territory, and an independent or sovereign government. It is connected to one and another.

Lenin was aware of the fact that Russia already had a vast expanse of territory under the previous empire compared to Great Britain and Mongolia's kingdoms. What they relatively needed was a strong government with a system of sovereignty entirely in the hands of the proletariat. With this simple formula, Lenin succeeded in building a large country with a large population that sustains a Republican system of government. The country Lenin built had a different system of government compared to the previous country.

However, if we saw it in-depth, the differences were not only for the system.

³ Soviet" means the Council. The workers' council for the first time spontaneously formed in St. Petersburg on the eve of the 1905 revolution. Trotsky was then elected as the chairman of the workers' councils of St. Petersburg. Petersburg and became a brilliant leader. In 1917 again the workers' councils of St. Petersburg built-up pressure that forced the Tsar to abdicate. These councils were generally led by the Bolsheviks

and became institutions against the official Russian parliament ("Duma"). The council was called the "council of workers and soldiers" because more and more soldiers were leaving their troops and joining the council. In October 1917 Trotsky was again elected as the chairman of the Soviets in Petrograd. It was the Petrograd Soviets who carried out the October Revolution.

For comparison, the table below shows the basic differences between a Monarchy Government and a Republican Government.

Table 1. Differences between Monarchy and Republic

Category	Monarchy	Republic
Basis of power	Elected by descent	Elected by people
Head of State	Occupied by an emperor, sultan, king, or queen	Served by a Head of State/President
Prime Minister	Constitutional Monarchy	
Government	As Symbol of State	As Head of Government and Head of State
Period	Unlimited	Limited to 4/5 years
State	UK, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Spain, UEA, Jordan, Oman, Morocco, Malaysia, Brunei, Bahrain, Qatar, Japan, Thailand,	Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Myanmar, Vietnam, China, USA, France, Russia, Germany, Portugal, Greece, Italy, Turkey,

Cambodia, Lebanon, Bhutan, and others and others

Source: <https://brainly.co.id/tugas/2069391>.

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The table shows the basic difference between a monarchy and a republican government. The republican government was more acceptable to almost all newly independent countries in the 20th century, where one of the reasons is that the monarchy government system at that time tended to be absolute and not in favor of the working-class people.

3. The Impact of Changes in the Russian Government System on New Countries in the 20th century

Entering the final stages of World War I, since the Bolsheviks took over the reins of government, Russia was definitively in the form of a Republic, a government based on popular sovereignty, and abandoned the monarchical government system that had been practiced for centuries by the Russian empire. These changes have inspired new countries born after the Bolshevik Revolution with the same form of government, although the ideology of each country varied between communist, nationalist, democratic, and fascist. The countries that adopted the same form of government after the Bolshevik Revolution were the governments of Austria, Albania, Angola, Bulgaria, Bolivia, Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, Philippines, North Korea, Poland, the

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Germany (east), Mozambique, Egypt, Nicaragua, Romania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Turkey, Singapore, Syria, and Vietnam (Prabowo, 2021).

As a result of the Bolshevik Revolution, the changes in the system and governance in the new countries in the 20th century were mainly caused by several factors:

- a. There is a common destiny in the grip of the oppression of authoritarian rulers (colonialism).
- b. There is a commonality of views and ideologies of the proletariat and workers (communism).
- c. After World War I and II, almost all countries in the world have adopted the issue of democratization, where the world at that time was introduced to the issue of human rights in the political struggle in their respective countries (Democratization).
- d. The teachings of Marxism-Leninism are still very influential in the period after World War I until the end of World War II.

4. The Influence of the Bolshevik Revolution on Indonesia in Achieving Independence

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Bolshevik Revolution had many impacts, such as significant changes to the system of government for countries born after World War I. The Bolshevik revolution has inspired countries that have just gained their independence to follow a system of

government in the form of a republic or a system of government based on the interests of the people. In this system, the power of government ultimately branched out from the people, not from the principle of noble descent. A president often leads countries with this system. Indonesia eventually followed the changes that occurred in Leningrad.

However, for the fighters and founding fathers of the nation at that time, changing the government system was not a priority. For them, as the founder of a new nation, the priority was strengthening nationalism and the spirit of the founding fighters of our nation to unite against colonialism and expel colonialism in order to gain independence. As a result of the Bolshevik Revolution, the spirit of nationalism flourished in the hearts of the young fighters and figures of the archipelago. The spirit of nationalism was very much needed by youth in Indonesia to fight for their country's independence.

In addition to nationalism and fighting spirit, the Bolshevik revolution also instilled another meaningful understanding into the newborn countries, for example, Indonesia. The revolution made the people of Indonesia understand the importance of national unity and integrity. To fight a powerful force, what one needs is not only weapons but also a solid foundation that is agreed by all communities involved. The unity and integrity under the same nation were able to act as the foundation for the power of people against the tyranny of the imperial power minority.

For the people of Indonesia, the change in the government system from an absolute monarchy to a republic in Russia was not an essential thing at that time. What the people of Indonesia longed for at that time was freedom and independence in their own country. For the youth of the Indonesian nation, the union of two forces, both the spirit of nationalism and the spirit of unity, is more critical to achieving the country's ideals of independence. This situation served as an illustration of how powerful the Bolshevik Revolution was, with the strength of the proletariat, dominated by the workers, other oppressed people, and supported by the red armies who were tired of fighting, was managed to overthrow the imperial power that ruled for 196 years from 1721 to 1917 (Madariaga, 1981).

The news of what was happening in Russia was heard everywhere. It also reached people of Indonesia who were abroad for specific occasions. Young Indonesian figures studying in the Netherlands were very impressed by what was happening in the Monarchy government in Russia. As the young Indonesian figures were brave and curious, they were also inspired by the situation. They were aware of the fact that the Russian Monarchy ruled for almost 200 years. Its destruction of power inspired the young leaders of Indonesia. They aspired to do the same in their efforts to achieve independence in their country. Twenty-eight years later, in 1945, Indonesian independence was proclaimed. It marked the great effort of the Indonesian people in order to gain independence for their country.

The proclamation of Indonesian independence is also one of several events to illustrate the massive influence of the Bolshevik revolution in new countries.

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