

Title	Bolshevism
Author	John Spargo
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Brief Introduction	<p style="text-align: center;">PREFACE</p> <p>In the following pages I have tried to make a plain and easily understandable outline of the origin, history, and meaning of Bolshevism. I have attempted to provide the average American reader with a fair and reliable statement of the philosophy, program, and policies of the Russian Bolsheviki. In order to avoid confusion, and to keep the matter as simple and clear as possible, I have not tried to deal with the numerous manifestations of Bolshevism in other lands, but have confined myself strictly to the Russian example. With some detail—too much, some of my readers may think!—I have sketched the historical background in order that the Bolsheviki may be seen in proper perspective and fairly judged in connection with the whole revolutionary movement in Russia.</p> <p>Whoever turns to these pages in the expectation of finding a sensational “exposure” of Bolshevism and the Bolsheviki will be disappointed. It has been my aim to make a deliberate and scientific study, not an <i>ex-parte</i> indictment. A great many lurid and sensational stories about the Bolsheviki have been published, the net result of which is to make the leaders of this phase of the great universal war of the classes appear as brutal and depraved monsters of iniquity. There is not a crime known to mankind, apparently, of which they have not been loudly declared to be guilty. My long experience in the Socialist</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PREFACE</p> <p>movement has furnished me with too much understanding of the manner and extent to which working-class movements are abused and slandered to permit me to accept these stories as gospel truth. That experience has forced me to assume that most of the terrible stories told about the Bolsheviki are either untrue and without any foundation in fact or greatly exaggerated. The “rumor factories” in Geneva, Stockholm, Copenhagen, The Hague, and other European capitals, which were so busy during the war fabricating and exploiting for profit stories of massacres, victories, assassinations, revolutions, peace treaties, and other momentous events, which subsequent information proved never to have happened at all, seem now to have turned their attention to the Bolsheviki.</p> <p>However little of a cynic one may be, it is almost impossible to refrain from wondering at the fact that so many writers and journals that in the quite recent past maintained absolute silence when the Czar and his minions were committing their infamous outrages against the working-people and their leaders, and that were never known to protest against the many crimes committed by our own industrial czars against our working-people and their leaders—that these writers and journals are now so violently denouncing the Bolsheviki for alleged inhumanities. When the same journals that defended or apologized for the brutal lynchings of I. W. W. agitators and the savage assaults committed upon other peaceful citizens whose only crime was exercising their lawful and moral right to organize and strike for better wages, denounce the Bolsheviki for their “brutality” and their “lawlessness” and cry for vengeance upon them, honest and sincere men become bitter and scornful.</p> <p>I am not a Bolshevik or a defender of the Bolsheviki.</p>

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As a Social Democrat and Internationalist of many years' standing—and therefore loyal to America and American ideals—I am absolutely opposed to the principles and practices of the Bolsheviki, which, from the very first, I have regarded and denounced as an inverted form of Czarism. It is quite clear to my mind, however, that there can be no good result from wild abuse or from misrepresentation of facts and motives. I am convinced that the stupid campaign of calumny which has been waged against the Bolsheviki has won for them the sympathy of many intelligent Americans who love fairness and hate injustice. In this way lying and abuse react against those who indulge in them.

In this study I have completely ignored the flood of newspaper stories of Bolshevist "outrages" and "crimes" which has poured forth during the past year. I have ignored, too, the remarkable collection of documents edited and annotated by Mr. Sison and published by the United States Committee on Public Information. I do not doubt that there is much that is true in that collection of documents—indeed, there is some corroboration of some of them—but the means of determining what is true and what false are not yet available to the student. So much doubt and suspicion is reasonably and properly attached to some of the documents that the value of the whole mass is greatly impaired. To rely upon these documents to make a case against the Bolsheviki, unless and until they have been more fully investigated and authenticated than they appear to have been as yet, and corroborated, would be like relying upon the testimony of an unreliable witness to convict a man of serious crime.

That the Bolsheviki have been guilty of many crimes

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is certain. Ample evidence of that fact will be found in the following pages. They have committed many crimes against men and women whose splendid service to the Russian revolutionary movement serves only to accentuate the crimes in question. But their worst crimes have been against political and social democracy, which they have shamefully betrayed and opposed with as little scruple, and as much brutal injustice, as was ever manifested by the Romanovs. This is a terrible charge, I know, but I believe that the most sympathetic toward the Bolsheviki among my readers will, if they are candid, admit that it is amply sustained by the evidence.

Concerning that evidence it is perhaps necessary to say that I have confined myself to the following: official documents issued by the Bolshevist government; the writings and addresses of accredited Bolshevik leaders and officials—in the form in which they have been published by the Bolsheviki themselves; the declarations of Russian Socialist organizations of long and honorable standing in the international Socialist movement; the statements of equally well-known and trusted Russian Socialists, and of responsible Russian Socialist journals.

While I have indicated the sources of most of the evidence against the Bolsheviki, either in the text itself or in the foot-notes and references, I have not thought it advisable to burden my pages with such foot-notes and references concerning matters of general knowledge. To have given references and authorities for all the facts summarized in the historical outlines, for example, would have been simply a show of pedantry and served only to frighten away the ordinary reader.

I have been deeply indebted to the works of other writers, among which I may mention the following: Peter

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Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* and *Ideals and Realities of Russian Literature*; S. Stepniak's *Underground Russia*; Leo Deutsch's *Sixteen Years in Siberia*; Alexander Ular's *Russia from Within*; William English Walling's *Russia's Message*; Zinovy N. Preev's *The Russian Riddle*; Maxim Litvinov's *The Bolshevik Revolution: Its Rise and Meaning*; M. J. Olgin's *The Soul of the Russian Revolution*; A. J. Sack's *The Birth of Russian Democracy*; E. A. Ross's *Russia in Upheaval*; Isaac Don Levine's *The Russian Revolution*; Bessie Beatty's *The Red Heart of Russia*; Louise Bryant's *Six Red Months in Russia*; Leon Trotzky's *Our Revolution and The Bolsheviks and World Peace*; Gabriel Domergue's *La Russe Rouge*; Nikolai Lenine's *The Soviets at Work*; Zinoviev and Lenine's *Sozialismus und Krieg*; Emile Vandervelde's *Trois Aspects de la Révolution Russe*; P. G. Chesnais's *La Révolution et la Paix* and *Les Bolsheviks*. I have also freely availed myself of the many admirable translations of official Bolshevik documents published in *The Class Struggle*, of New York, a pro-Bolshevik magazine; the collection of documents published by *The Nation*, of New York, a journal exceedingly generous in its treatment of Bolshevism and the Bolsheviks; and of the mass of material published in its excellent "International Notes" by *Justice*, of London, the oldest Socialist newspaper in the English language, I believe, and one of the most ably edited.

Grateful acknowledgment is hereby made of friendly service rendered and valuable information given by Mr. Alexander Kerensky, former Premier of Russia; Mr. Henry L. Slobodin, of New York; Mr. A. J. Sack, Director of the Russian Information Bureau in the United States; Dr. Boris Takavenko, editor of *La Russia Nuova*, Rome, Italy; Mr. William English Walling, New York; and my friend, Father Cahill, of Bennington.

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Among the Appendices at the end of the volume will be found some important documents containing some contemporary Russian Socialist judgments of Bolshevism. These documents are, I venture to suggest, of the utmost possible value and importance to the student and general reader.

JOHN SPARGO,

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End of January, 1919.