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Left to right: Leon Trotsky, Vladimir Lenin, and Lev Kamenev

The Bolsheviks, founded by Vladimir Lenin and Alexander Bogdanov, were by 1905 a mass organization consisting primarily of workers under a democratic internal hierarchy governed by the principle of democratic centralism, who considered themselves the leaders of the revolutionary working class of Russia. Their beliefs and practices were often referred to as Bolshevism. They ultimately became the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The Bolsheviks came to power in Russia during the October Revolution phase of the Russian Revolution of 1917, and founded the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic which would later in 1922 become the chief constituent of the Soviet Union. Stalin suggested the Bolshevik party be renamed the Communist Party of Soviet Union. Since that time, the term Bolshevik has been regarded as obsolete, and relevant only to the pre-Revolutionary times, during the Russian Revolution itself and the Russian Civil War which followed.

Bolshevik revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky commonly used the terms "Bolshevism" and "Bolshevist" after his exile from the Soviet Union to differentiate between what he saw as true Leninism and the state and party as they existed under Joseph Stalin's leadership

*ris Kustodiev's 1920 painting "*Bolshevik*".

**Left to right: Leon Trotsky, Vladimir Lenin, and Lev Kamenev