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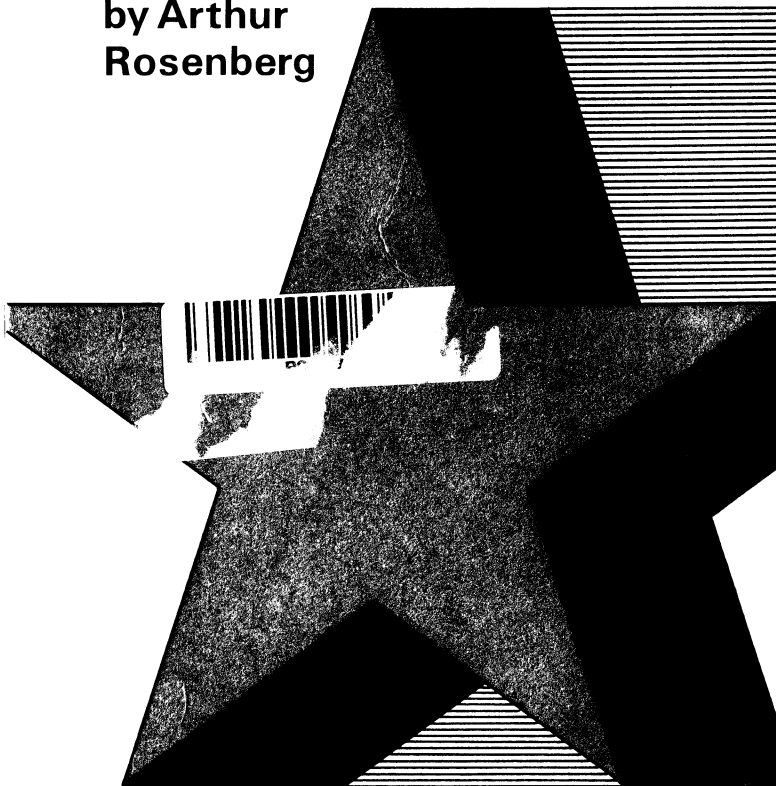
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# A History of Bolshevism

From Marx to the First Five Years' Plan

by Arthur  
Rosenberg



Introduction by Samuel J. Hurwitz

*A History of*  
**BOLSHEVISM**

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BOLSHEVISM  
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*First Five Years' Plan*

BY ARTHUR ROSENBERG

*Introduction by Samuel J. Hurwitz*

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

*by Ian F. D. Morrow*

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**ARTHUR ROSENBERG** was born in Berlin in 1889. He left Germany in the early '30s and taught first at the University of Liverpool and then for several years at Brooklyn College. He is well-known as a historian in the fields of both ancient and modern German history. Rosenberg died in 1943.

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## PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

This translation of the original German edition of my *Geschichte des Bolschevismus* (published in 1932) is an exact rendering and does not contain any alteration of any kind whatsoever. Events that have occurred since the appearance of the German edition fully confirm the views expressed in these pages. The collapse of the KPD without any show of resistance proved that the Communism of the Third International could no longer be looked upon as a living revolutionary force. The ruin of the KPD sealed the fate of the Third International, which has ceased, together with its affiliations in Czechoslovakia, France, &c., to be a factor in international politics. Moreover, the attitude displayed by the Soviet Government towards Hitlerite Germany shows that Stalin is no longer interested in the so-called world revolution. The Soviet Government did not in its negotiations with Nazi Germany allow itself to be actuated by any other consideration than that of self-interest, and displayed no regard whatever for the German Communists or the Communist International. Stalin thus indirectly proclaimed the dissolution of the Third International as an independent and active Labour movement. In Soviet Russia the course followed by events has been that indicated in the original German edition. At the same time the Soviet Government has revealed itself powerless to resolve the glaring contradictions in its governmental system

ARTHUR ROSENBERG.

Zürich,  
August, 1933

## PREFACE

An immense literature exists on the subject of Soviet Russia and the Russian Revolution—documented and journalistic, scientific and sentimental, condemnatory and adulatory. This book does not attempt to compete with what has already been written and instead seeks to fill a definite gap. Up to the present there has not been available any history of the evolution of Bolshevism from its roots in Karl Marx through the individual stages traversed by Lenin, down to the theories and tactics of Stalin in 1932. It has thus come about that false notions are common in the widest circles on the subject of Bolshevism. It is either under-estimated or over-estimated and never appreciated for what it really is.

Ideas are the products of actual conditions and not of a vacuum. It is therefore necessary here to take note of the factors in the development both of Russia and the world in so far as they are essential for a proper understanding of Bolshevism. It would have been beyond the scope of this book to have attempted to describe fully any one event in the Russian Revolution or—for example—to analyse the Five-Year Plan in detail.

The problem which I have attempted to solve in this book is scientific and not a problem of Party politics. At the time of the split in the Independent Social Democrat Party in Germany in 1920 I joined the Communist Party in common with the majority of the USPD. I was for years a member of the Berlin Committee, the Central Committee of the KPD, and the Executive of the Third Interna-



tional. I was forced to resign from the Communist International in 1927, as so many Communists of all countries have been forced to do before and since. Since then I have not belonged to any political Party nor to any of the small groups comprising the Communist Opposition. I have not written this book to please any Party or group, and I am not conscious of any desire to make 'revelations' or to 'settle accounts'. Those who hope to find in this book anecdotes about Stalin and the 'torture chambers' of the GPU will be bitterly disappointed.

It is obviously necessary for scientific and political reasons to remove the problem of Bolshevik Russia from the atmosphere of petty strife and political debate. It will be shown that important issues depend upon our judgement of Bolshevik Russia, such as German-Russian relations, proletarian unity, and the relations between Russia and the international proletariat. It must be clearly understood that despite everything that has happened Soviet Russia is progressing and the Third International is irretrievably heading towards destruction. This book seeks to explain how this unique twofold situation has arisen.

As far as possible I have used Bolshevik sources. At the same time I have not hesitated to state my own opinions. I have throughout avoided giving this book an autobiographical character which would have been unsuitable for the task I had in view. Among German literature on Bolshevism I am specially indebted to the works of Karl Korsch

ARTHUR ROSENBERG.

*Berlin-Zehlendorf,  
June, 1932*

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