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Bol·she·vik  (bōl shə-vīk', bōl -)

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n. pl. **Bol·she·viks** or **Bol·she·vi·ki** (-vē kē)

1.

a. A member of the left-wing majority group of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party that adopted Lenin's theses on party organization in 1903.

b. A member of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party that seized power in that country in November 1917.

c. A member of a Marxist-Leninist party or a supporter of one; a Communist.

2. often **bolshevik** An extreme radical: *a literary bolshevik*. In all senses also called *Bolshevist*.

[Russian *Bol'shevik*, from *bol'she*, comparative of *bol'shoĭ*, large; see **bel-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

Bol she·vik' *adj.*

Word History: The word *Bolshevik* derives from the Russian word *bol'she*, "bigger, more," the comparative form of *bol'shoĭ*, "big." In Russian, the plural *Bol'sheviki* was the name given to the majority faction at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party in 1903. The smaller faction was known as *Men'sheviki*, from *men'she*, "less, smaller," the comparative of *malyĭ*, "little, few." The *Bol'sheviki*, who sided with Lenin in the split that followed the Congress, subsequently became the Russian Communist Party. In 1952 the word *Bol'shevik* was dropped as an official term in the Soviet Union, but it had long since passed into other languages, including English.

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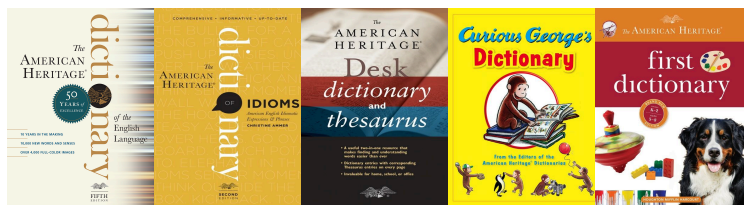
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