

THE SOVIETS: The Russian Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers Councils, 1905-1921
By Oskar Anweiler, Translated from the German by Ruth Hein, Pantheon Books
First American Edition, 1974 (France 1958)

The Preface to the American edition is dated 1971 and is from
Bechum, Germany, and though he admits that a lot of new stuff did come
out on the 50th anniversary of 1917, he didn't feel he had to revise
anything fundamental, and merely included some new works published in
the 60s in the Bibliography. In any case, it wouldn't influence the one
in 1905, and I'm really interested in 1905 and not 1917.

Whereas, without admitting any philosophical basis, he does in
"Antecedents of Russian Councils" (Chapter I), what is very interesting —
though he denies that a relationship to the Paris Commune exists anywhere
except in the head of Lenin, he does quote from the 1850 Address of Marx
(Einführung) pp 79-80, and then also refers to Capital, p 362, where
Marx speaks of the need to arm "the entire mass of workers" and comments:
"This is indeed a striking anticipation of the role of the soldiers and
workers councils after the Feb. Rev'n of 1917." Marx's revolutionary
program of 1850 is interesting for still another reason. By calling for
revolutionary municipal councils in opposition to the central bourgeois
government, he seemingly became an advocate of local self-government in
opposition to the centralized state." (p. 15) But of course he is right
that it was very Russian and very new. But, again, he quotes Marx on the
Paris Commune as "a new point of departure of world historic importance opened."

Once Ch. II begins we are in 1905 and with the Soviets, and it's
very scholarly and statistical, and begins showing strikes in the 1870s,
but of course he stresses that the Soviets developed independently of the
Bolshevik Party which I don't know that anybody denied. It all is meant to
show, rightly, that the Soviets "were rooted in Russian life." The fact
that he begins with the 70s and then goes to the (2nd) wave of industrialization
in the 1890s, and stresses that there were no national trade unions until
after 1905, doesn't in the least disprove that fact that no matter how
small the Marxists were, they were always there right on the spot, and
precisely because the workers didn't have an organization, they did im-
mediately accept the Marxists, so that when, (p. 32) he gets to the formation
of the Soviets, you can see that though the demonstration of Jan. 9 was or-
ganized by Father Gapon's Union of Russian Factory Workers "a zubatovschina
affair", as there already had been a strike of the Putilov factory, which
in fact the Gaponists supported.

On p. 34, he speaks of "RL's conscious exaggeration 'the history
of the Russian General-Strike is the history of the Russian Revolution' "
he, in fact, then praises it as an apt characterization.

Peer Tretsky must be turning in his grave to find out how his famous
1909 article is used; it is to prove how the Marxist intelligentsia was in-
troducing "sectarian spirit" and "ideological fetishism" into the proletarian
movement: "Thus, the Russian intelligentsia-Marxism became the means to carry
every bias to the extreme." (LT)

Anweiler is also very good in showing the radicalization, the heightened political ~~activity~~ ^{activity} of all of all social strata.

The establishment of workers' committees becomes doubly important because there wasn't trade union (or political organizations). Leadership of these spontaneous strikes lay with workers' committees of various factories. He then goes back to Jan. 5, which was the strike in the Putilov ~~factory~~ in one of Gapon's associates participated, but the first Soviet appeared in mid-May, 1905, in Ivanevo-Voznessensk, in the Moscow textile district. (p. 40) : (called the Russian Manchester)

The strike began May 12 and in a few days 40,000 workers were participating. On May 15, the Council of representatives was constituted, where other provinces participated, and when on May 17 a prohibition was issued against assembling in the streets, the Soviet immediately kept moving among striking workers. The height was October with the St. Petersburg Soviet. Before that, however, the publication on Aug. 5 of the Tsar Manifesto creating a Duma and limited franchise, as well as a conclusion of peace with Japan on August 23 (Sept. 5), seemed to stabilize the situation but again, in fact, there had been 1) the mutiny of the battleship Potemkin in May and the specific event which led to the General Strike was the printing trade workers strike in Moscow, followed by a general work stoppage. And it was further intensified by a railroad strike. (All Russian Union of ~~the~~ Railroad workers.) On Oct. 10 the Finnish trains also came to a stop. (Moscow and St. Petersburg led the way, all other major cities followed, and even a number of the smaller towns were engulfed by the strike" (p. 44) He quotes both from LT and RL. (The reference to LT is to Russland in der Revolution, Dresden, 1909).

"From the first day, the October strike had political character. The fight for inviolability of the railroad workers Congress became overnight a struggle for personal and civil liberties, a Constitution, political amnesty and similar reforms. The dominant rallying cry was: Constituent Assembly based on a universal, impartial, direct and secret ballot. Widespread participation by non-proletarian groups turned the ~~October~~ October strike into a political protest against the tsarist system."

On p. 49, Anweiler shows that it wasn't only Workers' Councils but soldiers and peasants which became widespread in 1917. And that in 1905 the soldiers councils were formed during Nov. and Dec. "in several cities around the Siberian Railway Line, the most significant in Krasnoyarsk and Chita."

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Quoted by Anweiler from The Soviets, pp. 14-15, from Marx, Enthüllungen pp. 79-80. Also in Capital, p. 362

"During the struggle and after the struggle the workers must at every opportunity advance their own demands alongside the demands of the bourgeois democrats Alongside the new official governments they must simultaneously erect their own revolutionary workers governments, whether in the form of municipal executives and municipal councils, or of workers clubs and workers committees — so that the bourgeois democratic governments not only lose the backing of the workers, but also from the very beginning find themselves watched and threatened by institutions behind which stand the entire mass of workers." Marx further called for arming the workers and for the formation of a proletarian guard "with elected leaders and a general staff of their own" and "under orders, not of the state, but of the revolutionary municipal councils established by the workers."

Rizotki masloshnik but Total Moscow

St. 1905: "From the moment of inception, by Soviet, the revolutionary groundswell outpoured — it's done palde."

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an mistaken but it seems to me that politically the Soviet of workers deputies must be viewed as the nucleus of the provisional revolutionary government, and that the soviet should as soon as possible declare itself to be the provisional revolutionary government of all of Russia or (the same thing in another form) bring about the provisional revolutionary government.

"The Soviet of Workers Deputies, as a center of political revolutionary leadership is not too broad but on the contrary too narrow an organization. The Soviet itself must proclaim itself the provisional revolutionary government... We are not afraid of such a broad and variegated membership — we want it, for unless proletariat and peasantry unite, unless ~~the~~ the Social Democrats and revolutionary democrats fight as allies the great Russian Rev'n cannot be a complete success."

Since a's translation differs from the English one we have also regarding LP I do not quote this from the German version. The soviet from the moment of its inception to the moment of its downfall was subject to the mighty pressure of the revolutionary groundswell, relentlessly outpaced the mark set by political consciousness. Every step of the workers movement was determined beforehand; and the tactics were a matter of course.

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Khustaley-Neser was the first chairman and LP Vice chairman of the St. P. Soviet.

Lenin, on the other hand, (Vol. 8 Coll. Works) interpreted the same 1848 stand in Marx as meaning that the leadership of the proletariat needs support from the peasants and the peasants "who at present are not so much interested in the absolute protection of private property as in the expropriation of the landowners holdings were becoming the most committed and radical followers of the democratic revolution."

(Incidentally, what he doesn't bring out as fully as Schwartz when we'll summarize soon, is how very different was Lenin's position from the Mensheviks and why it was 1940 before they "found" Lenin's 1905 article. But on p. 80 he does quote from that article)