

The Bolshevik Anotsky

Nowadays one often hears that a brutal blow was dealt to the anarchist movement by the Palmer reaction. This is impossible to deny, but it seems to me that in Pittsburgh the demagogy of Bolshevik agitators also delivered a debilitating blow to the anarchist movement. Everyone knows that in 1918–1919 the Bolsheviks enjoyed great popularity not only among unorganized Russian workers, but also among members of the Union of Russian Workers. The circumstances were such that it was very difficult to oppose Bolshevik phraseology. Belief in the revolutionary potential of the Bolsheviks destroyed many Russian anarchist organizations in America.

Concerning the disorganizing work of the Bolsheviks in Pittsburgh, I can say the following. Soon after America entered the War, I went off to work in a mine and didn't return to Pittsburgh until early 1919. During that time, the situation in Pittsburgh had completely changed. Many members of the Union had left for Russia, some had been arrested, others were under the threat of arrest, and the Union was almost in an illegal position. Since it wasn't easy to sign up members for an illegal organization, we started a new legal outfit under the name "Russian Labor Organization" (RLO). Within a comparatively short interval, about a hundred members were recruited.

Our main task was circulating revolutionary anarchist literature. We distributed the newspapers ***Khleb i Volya*** [Bread and Freedom], ***Rabochiy i Krestyanin*** [Worker and Peasant], and ***Golos Truzhennika***. We also distributed a large quantity of anarchist brochures, published in New York by the Federation of Unions of Russian Workers.

In the spring of 1919 two Russian communists came to Pittsburgh from Detroit: Poznyakov and Dudka. Since at that time there wasn't any Bolshevik organization in Pittsburgh, Poznyakov and Dudka came to a business meeting of the RLO and proposed that we recognize the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the "revolutionary Soviet government." This proposition was supported by some of our members and, while it didn't pass, the upshot was the beginning of dissension in the RLO.

Soon after this, Poznyakov, Dudka, and some comrades who had withdrawn from our organization invited an agitator named Anotsky from their central office to Pittsburgh. A well-attended meeting was held. I will never forget this meeting and the speech by Anotsky. In the course of two hours, he extolled Bolshevism and abused the anarchists, calling them curs, swine, traitors, counter-revolutionaries, etc.

After this fiery speech, objections were heard. The old Unionist Broido stood on a chair and began to expose Anotsky's mendacity. Anotsky couldn't restrain himself and, not allowing Broido to finish, yelled:

"Comrades! Throw this hooligan out of here, he's an enemy of the Russian workers and peasants, he's a traitor to the working class" ...

This caused a scandal, and scuffles broke out. Afterwards it was open warfare between the anarchists and the Bolsheviks.

In order to overcome the anarchist influence in Pittsburgh, the Bolshevik used lies, slanders, provocations, and strong-arm tactics. Our comrades began to say stuff like

“Why are we fighting with them? Isn’t the whole capitalist world against the Bolsheviks now?”

...

Broido and some of the other veteran anarchists were arrested, some left for Russia in 1921, and the Russian anarchist movement in Pittsburgh went into a state of decline. In 1923 it collapsed completely.

Since the communist thug Anotsky had so much to do with destroying the anarchist organizations in Pittsburgh, it seems appropriate to say a few words about his subsequent fate.

In 1921 Anotsky was deported to Russia. In 1925 I happened to meet a Communist worker who had been deported to Russia along with Anotsky. This Communist told me the following story. Their group arrived in Petrograd on the same day that revolutionary Kronstadt was suppressed. The communist-deportees were housed in a barracks. They sensed that there was a lot of tension in the city, but did not understand why.

At 11 p.m. a group of armed Chekists entered the barracks and began asking who was willing to shoot Kronstadt sailors. This caused a commotion among the deportees; they begged the Chekists not to involve them in this affair, as they had only just arrived, and had no knowledge about what was happening.

But Anotsky, cursing his own comrades and calling them cowards, announced that he was ready. The Chekists gave Anotsky a Nagan [revolver] and he went with them to shoot the imprisoned sailors of Kronstadt. For this “revolutionary” exploit, Anotsky was rewarded with a cushy job as a commissar.

However, Anotsky did not enjoy the soft life for long. A degenerate and an alcoholic, he soon embezzled a substantial sum of state funds, and was sentenced to death by the Cheka. But knowing the services Anotsky had rendered to Bolshevism in America, American Communists working in the Cheka arranged for him to escape from prison. Anotsky made his way to bourgeois Poland. And so ended the career of a Bolshevik thug who, in 1919 in Pittsburgh in a paroxysm of fanaticism and hatred, urged Russian workers to “kill the anarchist Broido – like a dog.”

Excerpted from S. Volod'kin, In *Pittsburgh 20 Years Ago*, **Delo Truda**, #100 (Dec. 1937 – Feb. 1938), pp. 62-63.

Translated from the Russian by Malcolm Archibald

[Kenyon Zimmer gives his first name as Ivan and his FBI file as OG 386232 <https://kenyonzimmer.com/red-scare-deportees/andreyev-to-archuk/>]