**Soviet Council**

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*For other uses, see* [*Soviet (disambiguation)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_%28disambiguation%29)*.*

A **soviet** ([Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_language): сове́т, Russian pronunciation: [[sɐˈvʲɛt]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AIPA_for_Russian), "council") originally was a [workers' local council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workers%27_councils) in late [Imperial Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_Russia). According to the official [historiography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historiography) of the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union), the first Soviet (in this sense) was organized during the [1905 Russian Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1905_Russian_Revolution) in [Ivanovo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivanovo) (Ivanovo region) in May 1905. However in his memoirs [Volin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volin) claims that he witnessed the creation of the [St Petersburg Soviet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Petersburg_Soviet) in [Saint Petersburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Petersburg) in January 1905. The councils later evolved under [Bolshevik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolshevik) rule, as the main representative units of the state.

Originally the soviets were a [grassroots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassroots) effort to practice [direct democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct_democracy). Russian Marxists made them a medium for organizing against the state, and between the [February](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_Revolution) and [October Revolutions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_Revolution), the [Petrograd Soviet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petrograd_Soviet) was a powerful force. The slogan Вся власть советам (*Vsya vlast sovyetam*; "All power to the soviets" or "All power to the workers' councils") was used by the Bolsheviks to oppose the [Provisional Government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Provisional_Government) led by [Kerensky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksandr_Kerensky).

The term also came to be used outside the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) by some [Marxist-Leninist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxist-Leninist) movements, for example, the [Communist Party of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_of_China)'s efforts in the "[Chinese Soviet Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Soviet_Republic)" immediately prior to the [Long March](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_March).

Based on the view of the state implicit in the Bolshevik use of the term, the word "soviet" naturally extended, or consciously was extended, to mean in effect anybody formed by a group of soviets to delegate, up a hierarchy of soviets, the authority to express and effect their will. In this sense, Communist government bodies at local and [republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republics_of_the_Soviet_Union) levels (but in the [Russian federated republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia), local, [republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia#Subdivisions), and federated republic levels) were called "soviets", and at the top of the hierarchy, the [Congress of Soviets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congress_of_Soviets) was the nominal core of the Union government of the [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union), officially formed in December 1922. However, the Communist Party officially played the "leading role" in society and the soviets were in practice subordinate to it.

Later, in the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) local governmental bodies were named "soviet" (*sovet*: "[council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiktionary)") with the adjective indicating of the administrative level, customarily abbreviated : **gorsovet** (*gorodskoy sovet*: city council), **raysovet/raisovet** (*rayonny sovet*: [raion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raion) council), [selsovet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selsovet): rural council, **possovet** (*poselkovy sovet*: settlement council).

**Translations**

1. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_%28council%29#cite_ref-0#cite_ref-0) [Ukrainian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_language): рада ([*rada*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rada)); [Belarusian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belarusian_language): савет; [Uzbek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uzbek_language): совет; [Kazakh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazakh_language): совет/кеңес; [Azerbaijani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azerbaijani_language): *совет*; [Lithuanian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lithuanian_language): *taryba*; [Moldovan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moldovan_language): *совиет*; [Latvian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latvian_language): *padome*; [Kyrgyz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyrgyz_language): совет; [Estonian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estonian_language): *nõukogu*

**Further reading**

* Edward Acton *Rethinking the Russian Revolution* 1990 Oxford University Press [ISBN 0713165308](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/0713165308)
* [Tony Cliff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tony_Cliff) [*Lenin: All Power to the Soviets*](http://www.marxists.org/archive/cliff/works/1976/lenin2/index.htm) 1976 Pluto Press
* [Voline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voline) *The Unknown Revolution* Black Rose Books
* Rex A. Wade *The Russian Revolution, 1917* 2005 Cambridge University Press [ISBN 0521841550](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/0521841550)

**See also**

* [Congress of Soviets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congress_of_Soviets)
* [Workers' council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workers%27_council)
* [Soviet democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_democracy)
* [Council communism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_communism)
* [Participatory democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory_democracy)
* [Workers' control](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workers%27_control)
* [Rada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rada) (Ukrainian equivalent)

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