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Perestroika from Below: Civil Society and Informal Associations in the Soviet Union

Jerry James Sheehan

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Perestroika from below- civil society

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(TITLE)

BY

Jerry James Sheehan

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ABSTRACT

During the 1980's the Soviet Union underwent a decade of dramatic change. The study of these changes initiated by the Gorbachev government has focused primarily on the reforms initiated by the state- perestroika from above. However, by the mid 1980's it was apparent that the state was not so much reforming society as society was drastically altering the state. Some analysts at this time began to shift to examining reforms at the grassroots level- perestroika from below.

This thesis is an examination of these perestroika from below reforms. The thesis seeks to assess the usefulness of the civil society model in describing and explaining the dramatic nature of this change. Informal associations, a key element of a functional civil society, are examined to analyze the extent of their importance to the Gorbachev era reforms.

The analysis of the usefulness of both the civil society model and its informal associations is historically grounded. The thesis analyzes the historic growth and evolution of the civil society idea from late Imperial Russia to the late Soviet period in 1989. The analysis of the Gorbachev era focuses on the changing Soviet society

and its contribution to the reform process.

The thesis concludes that the civil society model, while having some deficiencies, overall helps to explain the dramatic nature of change occurring in the Soviet Union in the 1980's. The analysis also supports the critical importance of informal associations in fostering and assisting democratization efforts. However, the work notes that there are significant obstacles in the path of further development of civil society

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother and father. Without their assistance, both emotional and fiscal, this project would have been impossible to complete.

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There are a number of individuals to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude to for their assistance in the completion of this work. I owe my largest debt of gratitude to my thesis advisor Dr. Larry Thorsen. His guidance and insight, along with his meticulous proofreading, have enabled me to complete a work I am proud of. My next thanks goes to Dr. Anita Shelton. Her assistance was invaluable in providing me with an understanding of Russian/Soviet history. Also, importantly, she acted as a sounding board for my ideas and gently guided me back to the right path when my intellect began to stray. Lastly, thank you to Jim Conley, Doug Julian, Steve Friedel and Brian Turner. Without their patience for a never ending house guest this endeavor would have been much more costly.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT. i

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF
CIVIL SOCIETY AND INFORMAL ASSOCIATIONS IN
RUSSIA 13

III. SOVIET SOCIETY UNDER GORBACHEV 69

IV. IMPEDIMENTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL
SOCIETY IN THE SOVIET UNION. 100

V. CONCLUSIONS. 108

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

When bad men combine, the good must associate;
else they will fall one by one, unpitied victims
in a contemptible battle.

Edmund Burke

The Gorbachev era will likely be remembered for its valiant effort to reform the corrupt and inept socialist state that the Soviet Union had become by the 1980's. However, Gorbachev's reforms were far more than an attempt to save a faceless political system. They were a desperate attempt to pull Soviet society back into the political system and give socialism a "human face." This attempt to unify society and state in the Soviet Union was at the core of the reforms. The importance of this attempt to heal the schism between society and state has often been minimized by Western analysts. The myopia was fueled by models that viewed the Soviet political system as monolithic and its leaders immune to the influence of public opinion. The impact of this minimization of society's importance in the Soviet system was to focus research in the Gorbachev era dominantly on official state reforms or "perestroika from above." This focus, exacerbated by problems with access to data, led to a great underestimation of the importance of the development and growth of informal organizations in the USSR, often referred to as "perestroika from below."

This thesis will analyze the utility of the civil society model by examining its usefulness in explaining the societal change that occurred under Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. This analysis of the model will be based on how well it answers the following questions. First, to what extent does the civil society model help explain the nature of change that occurred in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev? Second, to what degree, does this model have indigenous roots in the Soviet experience? Third, what, if any, predictive validity does this model show? To answer these questions it will be necessary to examine historical fact, quantitative data concerning the nature of informal associations, and political analysis of the Gorbachev era reforms. This model may be able to help explain, more than others, the complexities and subtleties of grass-roots movements in the USSR. This thesis will not focus on either the separatist movements in the former Soviet Republics in the late 1980's or on the great resurgence of religious organizations, in particular, the Orthodox Church. While both of these spheres of non-state activity are of great importance, current systematic data does not allow for their analysis. Rather, this research shall rely primarily on informal associations in the RSFSR because the most data is available concerning these groups.

Most of the data used for this thesis consists of

secondary source material. The secondary sources consulted rely heavily on primary source material from Soviet governmental and other Russian sources. Quantitative data used in this paper is based on official Soviet governmental estimates and available sociological and public opinion data. This type of quantitative data was used because within the study of Soviet informal associations it has become the standard.

The evidence examined will be cases of informal associations in Russia in the pre-Soviet, Soviet and Gorbachev periods, which displayed civic (democratic, participatory) attitudes and actions. The extent to which they displayed civic attitudes and actions will determine the applicability of the model to Russia. Precise measurement of either attitudes or the extent to which they were manifested in political action is not possible. Neither will influence be measured since it is not readily identifiable in any situation. The criteria used will therefore be whether or not the organizations attempted to participate in the political process in an open, pluralist fashion, in spite of the police state. Those that did will be considered to have been acting in a manner supportive of civic attitudes, and thus consistent with the components of the civil society model. If such activity is found to have been common among the organizations surveyed, we may conclude that, contrary

to conventional assumptions, the civil society model is applicable to the study of political interaction in Russia during these periods.

A review of literature in the field shows the evolution of thought about the importance of societal change in Gorbachev's reforms. In the first works published about Gorbachev's reforms most analysis was focused exclusively on the top down reforms, the "perestroika from above." As society took on a more activist role top analysts attempted to develop a theoretical approach to understand its role. Moshe Lewin in his 1989 book, The Gorbachev Phenomenon, is acknowledged to have been the first to suggest a philosophical basis for the change that was occurring within society. According to Lewin, this basis was that Soviet society was becoming increasingly "civil." In adopting the civil society model as a way to view social change in the Soviet Union, Lewin was invoking a concept with a diverse and deep philosophical tradition, as will be examined later. However, in Lewin's book, this, by his own admission important concept, is dealt with in only a few pages. Missing is a detailed examination of the history of the concept, its importance to democratic movements in the late 1980's in the Soviet Union, and, most importantly, an analysis of the importance of the core of civil society, informal associations. Since Lewin's writing, the term

"civil society" has been increasingly applied to explain the scope and nature of change occurring in the Soviet Union. Both Geoffrey Hosking's The Awakening of the Soviet Union, and Hederick Smith's The New Russians, used this concept throughout their analyses to demonstrate the fundamental nature of the change that "perestroika from below" caused. Their research, while using the concept, once again does not devote much attention to the actual manifestations of civil society, informal associations, that were rapidly growing in the late 1980's.

The literature on informal associations grew rapidly as the civil society model gained acceptance and actual informal associations swelled in number. These writings, such as Vladimir Brovkin's article on informal political associations in the journal Soviet Studies, or Nicolai Petro's chapter on voluntary associations contained in Alfred Rieber and Alvin Rubinstein's Perestroika at the Crossroads, dealt with the concept of civil society only in passing. They were primarily concerned with examining the manifestation of these changes, the actual associations, their numbers, demographic makeup, political views, etc. The authors did not, for the most part, analyze the broader concept of civil society. Also, this research on informal associations did not examine the roots or history of informal associations in the Soviet Union. However, their research provides important data about

the nature and extent of informal associations in the Soviet Union.

A review of the literature about civil society and informal associations in the Soviet Union reveals some deficiencies. First, the civil society concept, while widely acknowledged as illuminating the nature of change in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, has not been analyzed in great detail. Second, work on informal associations, a critical part of civil society, has tended to focus on the actual characteristics of these groups, neglecting to examine their deeper theoretical role as part of civil society. This thesis will remedy these deficiencies by analyzing the background of the civil society concept, its informal associations, and the historical development of informal associations in the Soviet Union.

In order to accomplish this goal, this thesis will focus on the origins, growth, and importance of informal organizations within the Soviet Union from late Imperial Russia until 1990, with a particular emphasis on their greatest period of growth under Gorbachev. 1990 was chosen as the cut-off point for analysis of the importance of these groups for a number of reasons. First, there is a lack of data on informal associations past 1990. The August 1991 coup, and subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union, quickly shifted most academic analysis into why the coup had occurred and the likely effects of the

dissolution of the Soviet state. Consequently, research on social movements and informal associations was minimized while many analysts shifted to more pressing policy problems. Second, most of the growth of informal associations happened in the late 1980's. Thus, analysis of this period contains the richest quality and quantity of data on informal associations, their growth and importance. Last, this 1990 cut-off date was chosen because the last discernible impact of the groups occurred then. This point is not to suggest that these groups have not and are not having an impact in the successor Commonwealth of Independent States. Rather, the impact of informal associations in creating a new pluralistic political system can not be measured because the process is still on-going.

The Civil Society Model

Civil society is not a new concept developed in recent political philosophy. Rather, the concept has been seen at least since the fourteenth century as an answer to how the "good life" can be achieved (Walzer, 1989, 29). As far back as Periclean Athens, the term was used to distinguish the civilized from the barbaric. It became a more developed concept during the Italian Renaissance

when Machiavelli and others tied it to the rule of law. After the Italian Renaissance, the term became increasingly intertwined with commercial society. Indeed, for many philosophers, from Locke to Marx, the concept of civil society could not exist independently of the ability to own private property (Howe, 1989,32). This philosophical development made civil society by definition anathema to those who wanted communism.

The concept of civil society holds as its core the idea that society is distinct from government and that the state is but one institution within a pluralistic environment (Starr, 1988,35). This distinction was made clear by Edward Shils in his discussion of the concept when he wrote:

The idea of civil society is the idea of a part of the state which has a life of its own, which is distinctly different from the state, and which is largely in autonomy from it. Civil society lies beyond the boundaries of the family and the clan and beyond the locality; it lies short of the state. (1991,3).

The autonomy described is protected in a full fledged civil society by the rule of law that codifies freedom of speech, protection of minority rights, freedom of association, etc. (Starr, 1988,35). It is important to note that in a Communist political system any decision to stand outside of the officially sanctioned method of

participation is necessarily a political act. Thus, regardless of the specific focus of an informal association, all of their members in a Communist state are to a very real extent taking political action by not channeling their activities into official organizations (Tismaneanu, 1990,11).

One obvious problem of the use of this concept is its applicability to the Soviet Union. A major argument used against applying the concept has been that it lacks any indigenous philosophical or historical roots in the Russian experience. Opponents argue that it is a "foreign" concept to Soviet society and thus could not possibly explain the motivations behind the changes it was experiencing. However, there are good reasons to believe that this concept is not as "foreign" as one might first think.

Put simply, civil society under Gorbachev was not a foreign concept. It became the battle cry of the democratic opposition in the Soviet Union. The informal groups that existed had overall adopted the strategy and methodology of civil society thought. Civil society was seen, by opposition groups, as a political archetype (Tismaneanu, 1990,3,182). It was the selfselected beacon for the opposition out of the fog of their socialist system. This beacon was chosen because it had roots in the Russian experience. Reformers were drawn to the

fledgling civil society that existed in the late 19th century, the short lived freedom of the Zemstva (local self-government), and the informal associations of the dissent movement in 1960 and 1979. Perhaps none stated the cries of the reforms for civil society more eloquently than Vaclav Havel:

...the original and most important sphere of activity, one that pre-determines all the others, is simply an attempt to create and support the 'independent life of society' as an articulated expression of 'living within the truth'.
(Havel, 1985,67).

Soviet reformers in particular have argued that the new diversity caused by the pluralism of informal associations was, " the sign of a search for a way out of the labyrinth." (Starr, 1988,36). An analysis of opposition groups under Gorbachev illustrates that the strongest rebuttal to the argument for the "foreignness" of this concept is that it was the vision for the grass-roots reformers in the Soviet Union. This thesis confronts the question of whether this concept, perhaps not realizable before the Gorbachev period, nonetheless illuminates many aspects of societal change during the Gorbachev period. The analysis will also examine the roots of the civil society concept in Russian society with a particular focus on the pre-Soviet and the pre-Gorbachev USSR. As Moshe Lewin expressed in his 1989 book, The

Gorbachev Phenomenon, applying the civil society model to the USSR under Gorbachev is a novel idea for a novel society (Lewin, 1989, 146).

It is important to realize however, that Soviet civil society was destined to be different from Western civil society. The culture and history of the Soviet Union have determined the shape and nature of its civil society. However, to throw the concept out because of its Western origins is to forget that although the structures in Soviet civil society might be different than those in the West their function will be similar (Starr, 1988,36).

For purposes of this thesis the civil society model shall be used to designate a political system where government and society are distinct from one another. The autonomy of society is protected by the rule of law which codifies a number of critical freedoms including speech, protection of minority rights, and most importantly, freedom of association. The codified rights also extend into the right to own private property. Informal associations are a critical element of the independent society. These organizations allow individuals of like minds and concerns to come together without the interference of the state. These associations will differ, due to their varying concerns and purposes, in their amount of political activity.

The status of civil society was fluid in the Soviet

Union in 1990. Many believed that Soviet society had moved into a new era and that prospects for the future growth of civil society were good (Lewin, 1989,147). However, regardless of prospects for its future growth in 1989, it had already become an important component of the political landscape in the Soviet Union. The body of this paper will analyze the origins, growth, and importance of informal associations as an expression of an awakening of civil society.

CHAPTER II

ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND INFORMAL ASSOCIATIONS IN RUSSIA

To understand the importance of democratic reforms' occurring under Gorbachev, it is necessary to examine the historical development of civil society and informal associations and their interaction with the state. This analysis of the origins and evolution of civil society in the Soviet Union is justified for a number of reasons. First, to appreciate fully the revolutionary nature of the changes that occurred under Gorbachev it is necessary to see the contrast between this era and others. Only when this contrast is provided, can the reforms nature be truly appreciated. Second, the focus on origins is justified because it helps to illustrate segments of the past which may be "usable" for modern day reformers. This concept of "usable" past signifies an attempt by reformers to find a historical base for their action. Put simply, it is an attempt to solidify reforms by showing their historical roots. This attempt gained great momentum under Gorbachev and thus deserves analysis. Last, it is necessary to examine the origins of civil society and its development in the Russian/Soviet state to fully analyze a nagging question about the civil society model: are the model, and its values, "foreign" to Soviet society?

Only by examining the history of civil society is it possible to determine whether if the model is too "foreign" to be applicable to the Soviet experience. The analysis of the origins and development of civil society in the Soviet Union will focus on civil society in late Imperial Russia, its fate under Lenin, with a particular emphasis on the state's retreat during NEP, Stalin's totalitarianism and its effects, and the growth and importance of the dissident movement for civil society.

Civil Society in Imperial Russia

Civil society and informal associations have had an important and tumultuous history in Russia. This history is young, starting really only at the end of the 19th century. The purpose of this section of the paper will be to examine the origins of the nascent civil society which developed at the end of the nineteenth century before being overwhelmed by the wars, revolutions, and economic hardship that beset Russia before the October Revolution. The analysis of origins of the forming civil society in Pre-Soviet Russia will focus on the state, and the changing nature of society in the early 1900's, including its rising professionalization, informal associations, urbanization, and the important development of local self-government through the zemstva.

The Nature of the Russian Autocratic State

The Russian state historically has been the central institution in Russian society. The role of the Russian state was determined in part by the natural characteristics of the territory over which it presided. The climate, with its great temperature extremes, the area's limited agricultural potential, and the lack of warm water ports, created a society that struggled to survive in conditions of scarcity (Gleason, 1991,15). Under these conditions, society did not have the luxury of worrying about matters other than those of survival. The state assumed the role of provider, although sometimes an inept one, of needed services.

The size of the Russian territory has also been pointed to as another reason for the far-reaching nature of the Russian autocratic state. The land mass over which it had to preside was so large that many of its leaders felt that only autocratic rule could hold the empire together. Catherine the Great, in her Instructions to the Legislative Commission, used this argument as justification for the absolute power of the sovereign. As Catherine noted:

The Sovereign is absolute; for there is no other Authority but that which centers in his single Person, that can act with a Vigour proportionate to the Extent of such a vast Dominion.

In the view of this monarch, any other form of government would have ruined the empire. (Riha, 1964,253). The size of the empire thus provided autocratic leaders with a strong argument for the continuation of the dominance of the power of the state.

These physical characteristics, along with others, led the Russian state in the late 1800's to encompass most areas of life. The state was the main provider of employment for individuals, it provided, although not always efficiently, needed services, and was the protector of the nation. Where the state did not or could not provide services, a vacuum existed, since any local, regional, or any decentralized autonomous initiatives were disallowed. In comparison to others, the Russian state in the 18th and 19th century played a larger role than its counterpart in any other society (Black, 1964,480). This predominant role was entrenched and protected by the autocratic czars who showed great hostility to those things that existed outside of the direct control of the state. This hostility was fostered by a suspicion that elements existing outside of the sphere of the state would threaten its power (Monas, 1991,31). This suspicion led to the state attempting to regulate heavily the public

sphere. For example, beginning in 1782, for informal associations to exist legally, Imperial approval had to be obtained. This combination of government hostility and a society which was apathetic led to a stagnant public life (Bradley, 1991, 135). However, this, as well as the nature of Russian society, was to change by the early Twentieth Century

The Changing Nature of Russian Society in the early Twentieth Century

Russia in the late Nineteenth Century experienced a tremendous explosion of economic growth due largely to the Imperial government's investment in an extensive railroad system, foreign investment in heavy industry, and the growth of agricultural production. During the 1890's, the rate of economic growth in Russia was surpassed only by Japan, the United States, and Sweden. Along with this economic boom, Russia was experiencing rapid urbanization. Within the last 50 years of the empire, the urban population grew from around seven million to over twenty million (Black, 1964, 488-489). These conditions helped to change the nature of society and the role of the state in Russia.

Between 1890 and 1917, Russian society grew and changed dramatically in a variety of ways. Of particular

importance to this analysis is the growth of merchants and entrepreneurs. The merchant class, which had previously dwindled, grew as newcomers, ranging from nobility to trading peasants, joined. A small, but important, new class of entrepreneurs developed. This group, and their support of the arts, was important in sparking the cultural growth referred to by Russian social historians as the Silver Age. The great advancement of Russian culture during this short period of time spanned the arts, medicine, science, mathematics, and engineering (Monas, 1991, 32,35). This cultural flowering was also accompanied by new ideas in society about its role in the state.

Russian society began to see itself as different and separate from the state. The Russian term used to describe this idea is obshchestvennost, which came to be understood as describing society's realization that the Russian nation and state were separate entities. However, this realization was never embodied in a class, but rather existed as a largely informal understanding about the nature of society (Kassow, West, & Clowes, 1991, 4). This view of the society as separate and distinct from the state was a prerequisite for the forming of any type of civil society in Russia. With this new conception of society, individuals began to act outside of the sphere of state control by forming and joining informal associations. The growth of these organizations was rapid

and unprecedented. By 1912, the Moscow City Directory listed over 600 different associations with interests ranging from sports to education. The directory is an appropriate source to use for evidence about informal associations in 1912 for two reasons: (1) The directory is one of the only governmental documents that provides quantitative data on informal associations in 1912. (2) The number of informal associations listed in the directory, 600, has been generally accepted by social historians as an adequate representation of these independent groups in Moscow. A growing work force and urbanization, described earlier, led to a division of labor that can be documented due to the formation of informal associations for specific vocations (Bradley, 1991, 136-137). Society, as well as overall culture, truly experienced a renaissance during this period. Why did this occur?

A number of conditions joined together to create the unique environment which allowed the Russian Silver Age to occur. These conditions were political, social-economic, and cultural in nature. Politically, the state had legitimized the operation of nongovernmental associations through the Great Reforms which allowed the zemstvo, which will be described in detail later, to act autonomously in the public sphere. Also, power during this time was decentralized from the autocrat to

ministries. For example, although approval from authorities was still necessary for informal associations to be legal it devolved to a number of ministries (Bradley, 1991,139-140). The state had surrendered its monopoly on power, allowing society to come alive in the vacuum.

Society was ready to come alive due to the social changes it had experienced during the late Nineteenth Century, most importantly the increased level of economic growth and increased urbanization. The wealth generated during this period, along with the tremendous explosion of city growth, led to rising expectations that municipal governments simply could not meet. Since the state was not able to meet the new demands, public associations, legitimized already by the de-monopolization of power by the state, stepped in (Bradley, 1991, 140).

Culturally, the great explosion of informal association was influenced by an increased interest in the national culture of Russia. This interest in indigenous culture led to a new examination of folk culture and art. A number of specific informal associations grew to meet this need, such as the Society of Natural Science, Anthropology and Ethnography and the Moscow Archaeological Society (Bradley, 1991, 141).

The zemstvo, rural self government, is an important break in the monopoly on power the state had wielded and deserves special examination. These self-governing bodies

were created as part of the Great Reforms of the 1860's by the Zemstvo statute of 1864. This statute created the zemstvo, primary organ of self-government, at the district and provincial level throughout Russia and empowered it to manage, "local economic and welfare needs" (Timberlake, 1991,165-166). These self-governing rural bodies were created by the state with the hope of forming a bureaucratic apparatus that would make easier the provision for the defense and welfare of the Russian people (Porter, 1992,2). To meet their obligations, these bodies were given the power to act independently with some state oversight in their areas of competence, which were many and varied (Pushkarev, 1988,52).

Due to the endemic suspicion of the state about things that operated outside of its direct control, individual zemstva were prohibited by law from coordinating their activities. During periods of crisis, such as the Russo-Turkish war, famines, or epidemic outbreaks, the law, because of necessity, was bent to allow regional congresses to convene. Moves to revise the law, to allow inter-zemstvo contacts, were met with hostility from the government. The Minister of Internal Affairs Viacheslav Plehve in 1904 thought these demands treasonous as they aspired to weaken the power of the monarch. However, after a direct appeal to Nicholas II by zemstvo leaders they were allowed to form a nationwide informal

philanthropic organization. But the law was not reformed and thus contributions of manpower and material to this organization still had to come from autonomous zemstva (Porter, 1992, 45)

The zemstvo is of importance to society in late Imperial Russia. The devolution of power to rural self government from the state was the first major break with the monopoly on power the state historically had. The zemstva grew at a tremendous pace both horizontally and vertically. The organizations grew from 392 in 1911 at the district and province level to over 483 by 1917 (Timberlake, 1991, 166). By 1912, this organization that was created to manage local economic and welfare needs was responsible for programs that included in the rural areas: public education, medicine and sanitation, building and road maintenance, agricultural programs, veterinary medicine, and philanthropic projects, to name but a few (Pushkarev, 1988,58).

The importance of the zemstvo is not confined to its important programs. These organizations also helped to change the nature of Russian society. The zemstva acted as the first transmission belt of urban ideals, such as the developing middle class identity, to the rural areas. The development of zemstva also created new conceptions of service. Increasingly, service in these organizations was seen as qualitatively different from

service to the state. This new conception of service led many individuals to join zemstva out of a sense of social obligation instead of the state. This competition between the two organizations, along with the massive employment of specialists by zemstva, some 70,000 by 1910, led to an upsurge in the education and development of specialists (Timberlake, 1991, 164-165). Last, and importantly, the zemstva took significant political action. In 1879, two independent zemstva, in Tver and Chernigov, petitioned the sovereign to allow popular representation throughout the empire. During the revolution of 1905, it was a group of zemstvo leaders who made up the majority of the historic Constitutional Democratic Party, or Kadets (Pushkarev, 1988, 53+55). Quite simply, the leaders who forced democratic change from the czar in 1905 were former zemstvo members.

Russia in the early 1900's was very alive. Society was attempting to define its existence outside of the state, as the concept of obshchestvennost illustrates. Informal associations, long looked at with suspicion by the state, were allowed to flourish and grow. This Silver Age however, was short lived, crushed by unnecessary wars, revolutions, and economic hardship. However, an important question is whether this society, before its destruction, had become truly civil. This question is important because reformers under Gorbachev were preoccupied with answering

it in their search for a historical basis for democratic initiative in the Soviet Union.

Did Civil Society Exist in Late Imperial Russia?

An examination of society and state in Russia during the early Twentieth Century shows that they underwent far reaching and fundamental change. However, was this change enough to constitute a civil society? In other words, did classes exist that advocated different demands, had a respect for the rule of law, operated outside of the control of the state, and wanted further democratic reform of the Russian state? The answer to this question can largely be found by examining the status and nature of the "middle class" in Imperial Russia. This class illustrates the problems endemic to all classes within the Russian state. Also, this class, because of its sensibilities and ability to solve problems of economic productivity, has been identified as a prerequisite for the development of any civil society (Monas, 1991,29).

In Imperial Russia, it is difficult to define any "middle class" for a number of reasons. First, it is difficult to define what a "middle class" would be in the Russian experience. Historically, there has been no middle class in Russia. Rather, there have been groups

which some have termed "middling." Second, it is difficult to define middle classes generally because of what has been called the paradox of middle class formation. According to Stuart Blumin, who analyzed the formation of the middle class in the United States, the difficulty is centered around the nature of the middle class which due to its focus on individuality is highly fragmented (Kassow, West, & Clowes, 1991, 3,4-5). With these difficulties in mind, and the lack of easily accessible social statistics about class in late Imperial Russia, the question must be reformulated. Although it would be difficult to define the exact nature of a middle class in Russia, it is possible to examine whether there was a middle class identity held by members of society.

If the primary criterion used to gauge the existence of a middle class is based on political action then it can be definitively answered that one did not exist. But, if the criterion used is not action, but society's attitudes about individual initiative, the role of the state and the rule of law, another answer arises (Kassow, 1991, 367). Russian society, in the early 1900's, came to see itself in a fundamentally new way. Through concepts such as obshchestvennost, society was creating a truly public sphere independent of the state. Critical in the formation of new attitudes about the state and individual initiative were informal associations. These associations

served in late Imperial Russia to act as transmission belts introducing to segments of Russian society what are traditionally thought of as middle class sensibilities. Along with this, informal associations were creating an atmosphere conducive to the increased professionalization of the work force, another element necessary for the creation of a middle class. In the late days of Imperial Russia, these middling elements created a grouping that, while fragmented, was aspiring to democratic liberties (Bradley, 1991, 146-7).

However, these common attitudes never led to the formation of a middle class in Russia due to the middling elements' lack of cohesion. Quite simply, there was never any coordinated action by these groups (Kassow, 1991, 367). Attempts to unify the middle around a common ideology also failed. For example, the call for the creation of a new bourgeoisie middle class advocated by an informal entrepreneurial association called the Riabushinsky circle, fell on hostile or deaf ears in society (West, 1991, 148-150). The groups which existed in the middle of society in late Imperial Russia embraced an ideology that was based on individualism producing a "class" that was as fragmented as it was unified. Many factors led to this fragmentation such as institutional, gender, and occupational rivalries, competing regional economic interests, and ethnic conflicts (Wagner, 1991, 150 & Owen,

1991,80-81).

An examination of the impact of societal change in the early Twentieth Century in Russia results in some interesting and important conclusions. First, although society was going through a period of great change, an articulate middle class never emerged. However, through the growth of informal associations, and other social changes such as increased urbanization and division of labor in the work force, middle class attitudes did develop. These attitudes, held by fragmented middling groups, were democratic and supported the idea of civil society. Even without a middle class, Russia did develop a type of embryonic civil society through the growth of "civilizing" informal associations that blossomed during the cultural renaissance of the Russian Silver Age. Unfortunately, the two wars, revolutions, and economic chaos of late Imperial Russia never allowed the middling groups to develop into a true class. In the final analysis this period may best be remembered as containing important ideas and structures that were never given a chance to develop fully. This period does suggest the potential for an alternative democratic path for Russian society. It is this idea of an alternative path of development, indigenously developed in Imperial Russia, that makes this period part of what one social historian has called, "a usable past" for modern day reformers.

Civil Society under the Bolsheviks and NEP

Society as it had existed in the last days of Imperial Russia was quickly overwhelmed by the revolutionary change that occurred around it. In the tumultuous times of the First World War, February and October Revolutions, and the early "War Communism" of the Bolshevik regime, society underwent a complex and largely destructive metamorphosis. This section of the paper will briefly examine the nature of the Bolshevik revolution and its impacts under Lenin on society. In particular, the era of the New Economic Policy will be examined to see if it provides another segment of "usable past" for reformers moving in the direction of civil society.

One of the main guiding forces behind the Bolshevik seizure of power was Marxism. The analysis of Marxism for my purposes will be focused on the relationship of Marxism to civil society issues. This ideology served as the rationale for the revolution's primary leader, Lenin. Due to the importance of Marxism to Lenin and the other Bolsheviks, its nature seems to deserve further examination. Marx believed, as did Lenin, that the way to end the alienation of mankind was through revolution which would end class struggle (and class divisions) by elevating the embodiment of labor, the proletariat, over

the bourgeoisie. In order to reach the new epoch in human development, communism, private property would have to be abolished. In order to achieve the goals of communism, Marx took a utilitarian view of individuals, regarding them as means to obtain revolutionary ends (Ozinga, 1991,33). When communism was finally reached, the state would be unnecessary and simply wither away. Marxism was seen by Lenin as a plan for the wholesale change of society (Brzezinski, 1989,7).

Marx, importantly, was hostile to the concept of civil society. This hostility is based on Marx's analysis that civil society evolved directly out of the "production and commerce" of the bourgeoisie. According to Marx, the primary principle of civil society was egoism, which alienated individual men from mankind. Marx saw civil society as a model of the past that was in diametric opposition to socialism. As Marx wrote in his "Theses on Feuerbach", published in 1888, "The standpoint of the old materialism is "civil" society; the standpoint of the new is **human** society, or socialized humanity." (Tucker, 1978, 163,50,145). Consequently, due to Marx's views, civil society was something to be overcome, not a model to emulate.

Before leaving this brief discussion of Marxist ideology as it relates to civil society, it is necessary to examine one of Lenin's major contributions to Marxism,

the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat, while mentioned in the writings of Marx and Engels as a transition period between capitalism and communism, remained before the Bolshevik revolution largely an abstraction (Ozinga, 1991,59). Lenin, however, took this abstraction and made it the heart of Communist power in Soviet Russia. Some political theorists have gone so far as to see this as being "the linchpin of Leninism" (Tucker, 1986,165). Lenin saw the dictatorship of the proletariat as being the leadership of the proletariat by the "vanguard," a small elite group that had Marxist consciousness and would lead the working men of the proletariat to revolution (Hazard, 1964,74). In order to obtain this goal, the dictatorship would socialize the means of production, destroy capitalism, and ultimately abolish old coercive institutions (Ozinga, 1991,59). The leadership of the proletariat by a band of dedicated Marxist revolutionaries was necessary because in Lenin's views, the proletariat masses on their own were, "slumbering, apathetic, hidebound, inert, and dormant" (Lipset, 1981,115).

Lenin's view of the masses, coupled with the important role he placed on leadership of them by the dictatorship of the proletariat, molded his views on society. Lenin saw all organizations, regardless of their avowed purpose, as a type of transmission belt to transfer revolutionary

consciousness from the elite to the masses. Also, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which has strong paternalistic overtones, reflects and strengthens this belief (Von Laue, 1971, 169-170). This dictatorial paternalism led Lenin to want state guidance in all relationships, even those between individuals (Hazard, 1964, 137).

This brief examination of Marxism/Leninism should reveal the ideologies' hostility to civil society. Marxists want to abolish private property which, as discussed in Chapter One, is often seen as the essence of civil society. Marxists' antipathy towards civil society goes even further however, since they see it as part of the bourgeois past that must be swept away by revolution. Lenin's "dictatorship of the proletariat" is also hostile to the idea of civil society in its overwhelming concern for state guidance in all avenues of life. The "dictatorship" would not allow for informal associations because the masses, not having revolutionary consciousness, would mislead each other. Also, Lenin, as a dedicated Marxist would not want to embrace this vestige of the bourgeois mode of production and commerce. Overall, the Bolshevik ideology was extremely hostile to society as it was developing in Russia in the early Twentieth Century.

The October Revolution, and the following civil war,

greatly changed the face of Russia. The examination of these events that follows is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather only to illustrate the overall effect of the revolution on the embryonic civil society that existed in late Imperial Russia. In order to accomplish this goal, it will be necessary to examine the revolution's effect on democratic ideals, the civil war's effect on society, and the Bolshevik policy of War Communism.

The October Revolution, as is widely known, occurred without much violence. However, this fact should not obscure the dramatic nature of change which was about to occur. After the Bolsheviks had concentrated power in their hands they drove through a number of important economic changes. One of the most important was the nationalization of industry. This policy was carried out on a case by case basis at a rather slow pace, so slow, that by June 1918 only five hundred large enterprises had been nationalized (Kort, 1985,110). However, although the scope remained limited initially, the ultimate goal was the elimination of private property.

The liberal and democratic principles of society in Imperial Russia, already weakened by World War One, were overwhelmed by the revolution and the determination of the Bolsheviks. Once the October Revolution had occurred, it was assumed within society that a multiparty socialist government would rule. The Bolsheviks however

were not to allow this government to come to fruition. The Bolsheviks, with Lenin at their helm, took power and undertook actions to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. In November, the Bolsheviks outlawed the nonsocialist press, followed by the establishment of revolutionary tribunals to dispense justice, and the arrest of leading members of other political parties, in particular the Kadets (Kort, 1985,103-104). It was during these early days of Bolshevik power that the Cheka, or Secret Police, was created. This organization, anointed by Lenin as "directly exercising the dictatorship of the proletariat," was used against enemies of the state (Lukes, 1985,110). In order to fulfill its mission the Cheka, was able to operate outside the law (Arendt, 1968,421-2). Many analysts point to its creation as being of fundamental importance because it placed the state above the law (Medvedev, 1978,5).

The final blow to democratic ideals came on January 19, 1918 when the long promised Constituent Assembly (a popularly representative body) was dispersed by force. Lenin himself summed up the importance of this event best: it was, "complete and frank liquidation of the idea of democracy by the idea of dictatorship." (Kort, 1985,111). As the fledgling Bolshevik government matured, force and terror through the use of the Cheka became the standard. The fragile and abstract rule of law that had existed

before the revolution quickly lost out to the brutal and extreme practice of the Bolsheviks (Medvedev, 1978,5).

The consolidation of power and suspension of democratic rights by the Bolsheviks largely sowed the seeds for the civil war which was to erupt in 1918. This civil war between the anti-Bolshevik forces (Whites) and the Bolsheviks (Reds) was brutal. Neither side was able to gain a quick victory and the war dragged on for three bloody years. The conditions were so bad in Russia that the time has been likened by historians to the apocalypse, with famine, cold, terror and disease running rampant over the land. Under these crisis conditions, the Bolshevik government began to rely even more heavily on terror and force. The Cheka which had been used sparingly before was unleashed on the population as a whole. By 1921, only three years after the creation of the Cheka, the new secret police had killed far more individuals than the former Tsarist secret police, not previously known for their restraint, had in a century (Kort, 1985,115,118-119).

The fragile society which had existed before World War I, the revolution, and subsequent civil war, was destroyed. At least two million men were killed during the Russian involvement in World War One from 1914 to 1917, 3.5 million more perished under the Bolsheviks, with the famine of 1921-22 adding tens of thousands more

to the death toll. The economic power that Russia had wielded evaporated, with its gross national income falling more than sixty percent between 1913 and 1921. These economic hardships were accompanied by dramatic decreases in the productivity of Russian industry. For example, in 1924, only eleven tractors were produced nationwide. Last, and critically, the professionals that had existed before the revolution were absent from the social fabric that could be drawn on to rebuild society (Rosenberg, 1991,4-6). Moshe Lewin noted that the civil war had, "wiped out many of the advanced social, cultural, and economic sectors of Tsarist Russia." (1989,16)

One of the most important aspects of the civil war was the creation of "War Communism" by the Bolsheviks. This term was used to designate the economic policy of the government during the civil war from 1918-1920 and was based on the prohibition of private trade, the forced requisitioning of grain from rural areas, and the centralization of economic activity (Medvedev, 1978,229). This centralization of economic activity began on June 28, 1918 when the Bolsheviks nationalized all Russian industry, effectively ending the notion of private property. War Communism also involved the conscription of large segments of the population into compulsory labor for the state (Kort, 1985, 120-121). As has already been mentioned, force was used increasingly during this period

to accomplish goals, most notably the requisitioning of grain (Medvedev, 1978,153). This model was the operating economic plan for the Bolsheviks until it was abolished amidst great controversy and under crisis conditions at the Tenth Party Congress in 1921 (Kort, 1985,124).

The analysis in this section should illustrate the events that were responsible for destroying Russian society from 1914 to 1921. The fragile society that had existed before the devastation of World War One, the October Revolution and Russian Civil War, was overwhelmed by successive crises. Economically, the Russian people also suffered greatly, with their production plummeting during this time. Private property, the hallmark of civil society, was eliminated. The Bolshevik state, in part due to threats to its power, began to command and not simply lead society. These commands from 1918 to 1921 increasingly were enforced with violence. Under these circumstances, society could not develop. Civil society and informal associations increasingly became figments of the past as people strove simply to survive.

Even with their victory in the civil war, Bolshevik power was still not on firm moorings. After their victory the policy of War Communism was still raising discontent among the rural areas and a majority of Soviet society. At the beginning of the Tenth Party Congress, a former military stronghold for the Bolsheviks, Kronstadt naval base, revolted against the government. The rebellion was put down after yet another brutal battle but a clear signal had been sent to the Bolshevik government. War Communism had not solved the problems that beset society and without significant change the state faced more civil conflict. It was at this Tenth Party Congress that the provisions of the New Economic Policy (NEP) were adopted as a "tactical retreat" from the forced and massive march the Bolsheviks had taken towards a socialized economy (Kort, 1985,179). The NEP allowed for private property and industry, at controlled levels, to come back into the economy. The state during this period decreased its use of force drastically, leading to the suspension from 1921-1929 of terror as a primary political tool (Cohen, 1985,7-6). As state domination of societal interactions subsided, society became more self-expressive and witnessed something of a cultural rebirth (Van Laue, 1971,161). This period of the NEP has been scrutinized as a possible alternative existing in Leninist socialism to the totalitarianism of Stalin (Cohen, 1985,7). However, a

closer examination of the NEP period is necessary to evaluate its usefulness as part of the "usable past" for civil society.

The NEP period can best be thought of as a transitional period. New research has revealed that it was during this transition that the Soviet nation was built (Rosenberg, 1991,317). In other words, it was during 1921-1928 that Soviet society began to take the form that we know today. There are a number of reasons for this. First, after the devastation of the First World War, the two 1917 revolutions, the civil war, and War Communism, society was largely "declassed." Society had been so severely hit by the crisis that stretched from 1917 to 1921 that the idea of social classes had become meaningless because no distinguishable ones existed. The NEP period, due to Bolshevik power, led to an increased importance being put on both the social and political importance of social class. Even during the relatively free period of the NEP, it was still more socially and politically advantageous to be a member of the proletariat than of the frowned on bourgeoisie. Consequently, during the early 1920's, although classes still had slippery divisions, they began to acquire some true form (Fitzpatrick, 1991, 11,13,25,28-29). Second, private trade greatly expanded during this time. In particular, the small trader, who had been eliminated during war

communism by the prohibition on private trade, now flourished. So important was private trade under NEP that by 1922 governmental figures estimated it to account for eighty percent of all retail sales occurring in the Soviet Union. Even the socialist government was increasingly dependent on the private traders to get their products to society. A 1927 study done by the Supreme Council on the National Economy estimated that fifty percent of consumer goods produced by the state was reaching individuals through private trade. It was this growing importance of capitalist trade that led the government in the fiscal year 1926/27 largely for political and ideological reasons reasons once again to crack down on private trade. This new crackdown that grew in 1928 did not so much eliminate private trade as it forced it underground, consequently laying the foundations for the later black market in the Soviet Union (Ball, 1921, 90,94,96,98-99). However, while private trade was allowed to flourish, it helped to rebuild the economic base for the Soviet state. Third, due to the relative permissiveness of the government under NEP, culture experienced a limited rebirth. The cultural flowering that occurred under NEP from 1921-1929 has been likened by a top analyst to a "Moscow Spring" for society (Cohen, 1985,75). A perceptive analyst explained a possible rationale for why this period seems so bright when he

wrote,

Perhaps culture during the NEP years appears to shine so brightly because of the stark contrast with the pitch darkness that followed under Stalin (Kort, 1985,136).

Even with the permissiveness of the state under NEP, things were still far from being free or democratic. In the summer of 1921, in the early days of NEP, the first extensive political purges took place in the Soviet Union. It was also at this time that Lenin called for "model trials" (show trials) of political dissidents to show enemies of the state what the punishment would be for their treasonous activity. The impact of the political purges and model trials was to swell the number of prisoners, supported dramatically by the fact that concentration camps in Russia tripled in number from 1921-1923 (Kort, 1985,141-142,144). Also, critically for democracy in the Soviet Union, it was at the Tenth Party Congress, the same party congress at which NEP was adopted that the infamous ban on factionalism (Lukes, 1985,110). This prohibition outlawed the creation of differing factions within the Communist Party and applied strict compliance and unanimous support for decisions taken by the majority. This limited examination of political conditions under NEP should serve to highlight the fact that the period was neither "free" nor

"democratic" as thought of in the West.

It is difficult to assess the usefulness of this period for civil society due to the conflicting currents which occurred during the NEP period. For example, class structure was rebuilt, with a small but important entrepreneurial component, private property came back into existence, and there was some cultural freedom. However, political dissent against the regime was not allowed. Governmental control of societal interactions still occurred. However, the NEP period is important in that it was the nation building period of the Soviet state. Although the Soviet state was largely authoritarian, it had not reached the destructive totalitarianism of Stalin. The possibility still existed under NEP for Soviet society to develop in different directions. But, with the death of Lenin, and Stalin's destruction of NEP, this was not to be.

The Effects of Stalinism on Informal Associations

Josef Stalin seized power in the Soviet Union shortly after the death of Lenin. Stalin eliminated the policies of the NEP and quickly sought to create a totalitarian state. The economic freedom which had existed under NEP was replaced by the state dominated economy as enunciated in the first five year economic plan by the state. The use of terror and force, both of which had been relaxed during NEP, swelled under Stalin to proportions unseen before in Soviet history. Increasingly, the state began to intrude into all aspects of life. The purpose of this section of the paper is to examine the totalitarianism of Stalin and its effect on the formation of civil society. This examination is necessary for a number of reasons. First, the Soviet Union under Stalin (1929-1953) was transformed into a totalitarian state. The totalitarian system was in diametric opposition to the values championed by civil society. In a totalitarian state there is little, if any, room for society to act independently. Second, Soviet society during this period underwent profound changes that have had lasting effects on both its nature and its characteristics. These changes altered society and subsequently affected its attitudes towards informal associations and civil society.

Totalitarianism is a system of government in which the state is of paramount importance. Society in this system does not exist to be served by government, but rather, to serve it. One of the more precise definitions of totalitarianism was provided by Stanislaw Andreski:

Totalitarianism is the extension of permanent governmental control over the totality of social life...Totalitarianism in this sense is, of course, an ideal type to which concrete cases can only approximate, since no government can control every instance of social interaction (1967,31).

This definition highlights an important fact, that the totalitarian model is an ideal type. In other words, it is impossible for a government ever to control all aspects of social life. Thus, the term refers more precisely to the goal of governments attempting to dominate all aspects of social life (Buchheim, 1968,38).

Stalin made the Soviet Union into a totalitarian system by a number of different measures. After Lenin's death, a collegial leadership of the Soviet Union was to rule. This leadership group was to be composed of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin (Ulam, 1989,236). However, before this group could come to power, Stalin was able to consolidate his own power and take control of the state (Bracher, 1981,13). Regardless of whether the collegial group would have ever truly ruled, its removal was necessary for Stalin to construct the totalitarian state.

This action was necessary because totalitarian systems are recognized for their "personal leader" who commands the state with his ideological insight. Thus, for Stalin to build his system, he first had to gain personal and sole control of the state.

One of the pre-conditions for the existence of a totalitarian state is a society of atomized/isolated individuals (Arendt, 1958,323). Soviet society, during NEP, was in a transitory stage as has already been discussed. Society was not isolated, but neither was it yet unified. Stalin, however, took grand steps to ensure that Soviet society would never under his leadership unify. In order to force the atomization of society, Stalin undertook a variety of different measures. These measures were aimed at destroying any "class identity" that could exist outside of the state and threaten its monopoly on power. The first target for Stalin's attacks were the Soviets. This organization, the central element of national representation in 1929, still played an active role that prevented the complete domination of the state by the Communist party. Stalin undermined the Soviets by introducing Bolshevik cells which alone had the power to appoint higher functionaries to central committee positions. This requirement, and its success, eliminated by 1930 any non-Bolshevik power in the Soviet state (Arendt, 1958,320).

After consolidating his power in the Soviet state, Stalin turned his attack to society, in particular property owning peasants, also known as "kulaks." The attack against the peasant class, which had been potentially one of the most powerful before the purges, was more severe than for any other class. Millions were killed in the effort to "de-Kulak" the Soviet Union. The remaining peasants were forced into collective farms, a form of agricultural servitude to the state. The impact of this push for collectivization and purge of kulaks was to convince many individuals that their lives depended not on what group they belonged to, but rather, on the whims of the state (Arendt, 1958, 320). Stalin succeeded through the mass slaughter of innocent peasants in reducing this potentially powerful group to an amalgamation of isolated and suspicious individuals.

Even the proletariat during this time was not immune from attack. The introduction of the Stakhanovite work brigades in the early 1930's fractured unity among the working class in two ways. First, the system broke up worker solidarity through intense competition to obtain ever increasing production goals. Second, the Stakhanovites were socially distinguished from other workers. Any resentment in the work place was focused on these special workers and not on management. The effect of the Stakhanovite system was to displace resentment

to specific workers and not the state. As a last note, even the bureaucracy of the state was not immune from attack by Stalin. From 1936 to 1938, almost every administrative office in the Soviet state was ideologically cleansed. The results of this cleansing were a replacement of around half of all administrative personnel and the death of more than 8 million party members (Arendt, 1958,322).

This examination of the purges that occurred under Stalin is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, this analysis has served to highlight the methods that Stalin used to create the atomized/isolated society the totalitarian state demanded. The purges further isolated society by the method of determining guilt which was used. Guilt during this time was not dependent on evidence, but rather on "objective guilt." In other words, regardless of one's actions, one still might harbor capitalist thoughts in one's mind and thus be guilty of treason against the state. Social ties were further fragmented during this time by the use of "guilt by association." This type of "guilt" meant that as soon as one person was arrested all of his associates were also suspect. In order for the associates to prove that they were not guilty also, they were often coerced into turning against their former friends to save their own lives. The effect of this "guilt by association" was

to make members of society extremely cautious and suspicious about forming any ties with one another. It is this method of guilt, so perfected by Stalin, that was one of the most powerful forces in creating the atmosphere of suspicion that permeated Stalin's state (Arendt,1958,323).

Soviet society under Stalin underwent a great process of social change. Within the first decade of his leadership, Stalin was able to transform society through draconian measures from a mostly backwards rural entity into an increasingly industrial, urban, and literate populace. This transformation was accomplished through the collectivization of agriculture and heavy industrialization (Cohen, 1985,94,56). The first five year plan attempted to integrate all aspects and resources of the Soviet state to accomplish its goals. Industrialization was of pre-eminent importance to Stalin; some eighty percent of all investments in the first plan were designed to obtain this goal. As industrialization proceeded, the numbers of workers rose dramatically, from eleven million in 1928 to thirty eight million by 1933 (D'Encausse, 1981,21-22). Soviet society during this period, due to increased employment opportunities in the cities and rural flight caused by collectivization, became increasingly urban. Within a decade, some 27 million Soviets moved from rural areas to the cities (Lewin,

1985,22). The great industrialization of the Soviet Union was not without its costs. As has already been discussed, the human toll was great, an estimated 10 million died at Stalin's hand. The economic toll on society was also great, from 1929 to 1932 the Soviet standard of living fell almost forty percent, bringing the economy to the same crisis levels it had been at before the end of War Communism (D'Encausse,1981,23). Collectivization had severely wounded agricultural production; output levels had fallen to lows reminiscent of the tsarist period (Lewin, 1989,101). Society, not the state, endured the hardships of the transformation into a modern entity.

The impact of Stalinism on informal associations and on Soviet society is far reaching and important. The totalitarian system that Stalin developed destroyed the basis for informal associations in the Soviet Union from 1929-1953. The state was so completely involved in social life that freedom of association was severely limited (Buchheim, 1968,15). The totalitarian system was in opposition to any type of group existing outside of its direct control. To ensure that no classes could develop which could articulate demands on the state, Stalin constantly purged society. Consequently, the memberships of groups was constantly changing as members were simply liquidated. It was these purges, and their "guilt by association" methods, that in large part fragmented Soviet

society. This fragmentation was accompanied by furious collectivization and industrialization that increased the havoc in the Soviet system. Moshe Lewin has characterized society during this time, due to its state of flux and anomie, as a "quicksand society." (Lewin, 1989,22) This "quicksand" did not provide any solid foundation on which to build civil society or informal associations.

Soviet society also experienced great social changes during the leadership of Stalin. Economically, society was rushed into industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture. Industrialization and collectivization did transform the Soviet Union into a modern nation but at a horrific, and likely unnecessary, high cost. With millions dead from Stalin's leadership and World War II, society was largely depopulated. The remaining population was no longer predominantly rural, but increasingly urban. The economy lay in ruin from the disastrous policies of Stalin and the war. Society, while advanced from earlier stages, was not prepared to challenge the power of Stalin's state.

Overall, during this period Soviet society experienced a number of lasting changes that would affect the formation of attitudes towards civil society. First, society became increasingly modern and urban. The urbanization of Soviet society is important, as will be discussed in the next

chapter in detail, because it fosters attitudes of individuality. Second, society was scared by Stalin's totalitarianism. One of the manifestations of this scaring was an endemic suspicion towards forming groups outside of state control. Individuals were afraid to act outside of the state for fear of punishment. "Guilt by association" tactics led to a society that was distrustful of its members. Although this condition was not permanent, it was a definite obstacle to the unification of various individuals and groups in society. Last, the totalitarian system established by Stalin did not disappear with his demise. Rather, attempts to move away from totalitarianism and towards democracy had to be accomplished by dismantling the system he had built.

The Rise and Importance to Civil Society of the Dissident Movement

After the death of Stalin, society began slowly to rebuild itself. This rebuilding occurred in an atmosphere of relative freedom under Khrushchev's leadership. In the intellectual sphere, society was allowed far greater freedom than it had been given during Stalin's days. This freedom was in part spawned by Khrushchev's secret speech to the Twentieth Communist Party Congress where the crimes of Stalin were first officially recognized. The questioning of the actions of the state in the past by Khrushchev motivated others in society to re-examine and criticize the past also. However, there were limits to what was permissible to discuss as members of society who pushed too far soon discovered. The intellectual freedom of Khrushchev's leadership quickly disappeared during the invasion of Hungary in 1956. The "thaw" that had begun was quickly refrozen by harsh measures (Rubenstein, 1985,4-5,10). The importance of the thaw was best summed up by the American poet and historian Peter Viereck who wrote of the period: "An intellectual revolt, a revolt of the heart? Yes. Political freedom? Hardly." (Brumberg, 1970,5) The intellectual revolt was important, however, because for the first time since Stalin's days segments of society had begun to think and

speaking openly about their ideas.

The thoughts of society were quickly turned into action under the Brezhnev regime when the dissident movement was born. The catalytic event causing the formation of the first dissent group was the "show trial" of the two authors Sinyavsky and Daniel (Kowalewski, 1980,7). A segment of the intellectual community protested the trial of the two authors as a sham and decried the new attempt by the regime to limit intellectual freedom. The regime's response to the protest was to arrest anyone who had associated with the protesters and the protesters themselves (Fireside,1980,39). However, an important step had been taken. No longer was society willing to murmur its discontent in private. Rather, the intellectual community was prepared to struggle for a legal movement that would operate in the full and open view of the authorities. This trial was the spark that ignited the minds and passions of what was to become the dissident movement (Medvedev, 1984,97). This section of the thesis will examine the dissident movement's characteristics, response by the Soviet government, and importance to civil society and informal associations.

Members of the dissident movement in the Soviet Union were drawn primarily from the intelligentsia of society (Kowalewski, 1980,18). The intelligentsia is composed of professionals in all fields who are active in society

and are widely acknowledged as cultural, intellectual, and moral leaders. In his statistical analysis of the dissent movement from 1965-1978, David Kowalewski noted a trend in the dissent movement towards a slightly increased intellectualization of its members (1980,18). The dissidents were involved in dissent groups because they held a moral commitment to improving the system they lived in. This commitment was often lifelong since the label of dissident was not easily removed once given by the government. In other words, in the state's eyes, "once a dissident, always a dissident." (Fireside, 1980,34+43).

David Kowalewski's analysis of statistical trends in the human rights protest movement from 1965 to 1978 allows an interesting portrait of dissent in the Soviet Union to be drawn. Most of the members of the dissident movement that engaged in active protest were under thirty years of age. The individuals were primarily from the intelligentsia, as has already been mentioned. Most demonstrations by groups, during this time, involved between 50 and 150 people. The frequency of protest fluctuated depending on a number of variables, repression/thaws, but was centered in urban areas and averaged around 42 demonstrations a year (1980,19-20,18,15). This urbanization of protest was to be expected since demonstrations in the cities would draw greater attention, both world wide and nationally,

than those in the rural areas.

The types of groups which fall under the category of dissident groups are varied. They include religious, national, professional, social, political, cultural, and humanitarian groups. All of these groups share in common their operation outside of state control. The motivation behind the creation of most of these groups had been to address and attempt to cure injustices in Soviet society (Reddaway, 1983,15). A content analysis of their self published literature, called samizdat in Russian, reveals a focus on the arbitrariness of state rule, police repression, and calls for an increase in the rule of law (Bromberg, 1970,10). Importantly, dissidents were attempting to change the system from within, not attempting to create a new system. This distinction is important because it distinguishes their movement from being revolutionary in nature (Fireside, 1980,40).

Dissent groups were unified by their deep respect for human rights and freedom. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the United Nations in 1948 became one of the most important documents for the dissent movement. In 1975, the Soviet Union, by signing the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation, legally obligated itself to honor this declaration. Specific human rights watchdog groups, known as Helsinki Groups, were formed by the intelligentsia around the Soviet Union

to monitor regime compliance with the treaty. The treaty had a twofold importance to the dissidents. First, the document unified groups around a core set of values and beliefs. Second, it justified dissidents' right to act independently of the state without harassment. Thus, it served as an important tool for legitimizing the existence of various groups (Kowalewski, 1980,57).

The intelligentsia composition of the dissident movement fostered a lack of support for the movement from workers in Soviet society. This lack of support occurred in part because of anti-individualist, and anti-intelligentsia beliefs among workers (Fireside, 1980,39). The anti-intelligentsia bias was based on hostility directed towards the class due to its privileges (Rubenstein, 1985,322). On top of the negative beliefs of workers towards the intelligentsia, support for dissent was limited further by strong police regulation of dissident groups and political propaganda directed against them (Reddaway, 1983,14). The composition of the dissident movement was also of some benefit. The most important effect of the composition of the movement was that the high status of individuals involved made it difficult to suppress. The state at times was hesitant to crackdown on dissent because it needed the active support of the intelligentsia, as a class, for its own plans to succeed. Lastly, the schism between the workers and dissidents

may have been largely artificial. Roy Medvedev noted that the heart of the dissidents' message had strong appeal not only throughout the intelligentsia, but also with blue collar workers. However, the state attempted to limit the meeting of the two audiences, intelligentsia dissidents and workers, for fear of the power of the two groups combined (Medvedev, 1984,98,100). The regime thus had a vested interest in attempting to emphasize, and if possible widen the gap between the two classes.

As the dissident movement aged it grew more unified. Evidence of the increased cohesion of the movement could be seen in increased verbal and financial support between groups, and individual joint membership in a number of groups. Three reasons have been pointed to for the increased unity of Soviet dissident groups: (1) All groups were unified around a core set of beliefs embodied in the United Nations Declaration on Universal Human Rights; (2) All dissident groups shared a common enemy, the state; and (3) A subculture of dissent was built in gulags among political prisoners (Kowalewski, 1980,24+26). However, even this unity among dissidents was not enough ultimately to defend these groups from the power of the state.

The state's reaction to the dissident movement, after the trial of Daniel/Sinyavsky and arrest of dissidents who had protested at the trial, consisted primarily of ignoring the dissent movement. The state rejected or

ignored most of the specific demands that groups advocated. The rationale behind not engaging in a dialogue with the groups was to deny them legitimacy. In the eyes of the state, since these groups worked outside of official guidelines, they could not possibly be "legitimate" spokesmen for Soviet society (Reddaway, 1983,23). However, this passive toleration of dissent did not last for long. The Soviet state suppressed dissidents in an almost cyclical manner. The worst years for suppression of dissent were 1972, 1976, and the breaking of the dissent movement in 1979. The cycle of action and reaction between the state and the dissident movement was summed up by Alan Brumberg who wrote:

For it is the regime that is unwilling to "draw the appropriate conclusions": that discontent breeds restrictiveness; that restrictiveness creates "alarm"; and that alarm leads to reprisals-and thus to more restrictiveness, defiance, and dissent-a story as old as Russia itself (1970,13).

The analysis that follows will be focused on the patterns of regime reaction to dissent that occurred under Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov/Chernenko. This analysis will serve to highlight the tone of acceptance/rejection of dissent that occurred under each leader.

As has already been mentioned, the intellectual birth of the dissident movement occurred during the "thaw" in state control during Khrushchev's rule. This "thaw"

was not long lived, and was followed up by repressive measures taken against dissidents after the Soviet invasion of Hungary. However, Khrushchev had a crucial role in creating conditions that would be conducive to active dissent under Brezhnev. The most important action that Khrushchev took in this regard was his speech to the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 regarding the crimes of Stalin. Although this speech did not detail, or admit, most of the crimes Stalin committed against the Soviet people, it did signal an attempt by the state to distance itself from the totalitarian policies of the past. The re-examination of the past that Khrushchev began set loose political, social, cultural, and judicial forces that he could not control (Rothberg, 1972,5-6). These forces sought to ensure that the power of the state would never again reach the levels of control that it did during Stalin's day. The groups were also important in establishing the boundaries of what was safe to critically examine under Khrushchev.

Khrushchev also affected the dissident movement by his reform of Soviet criminal law. Under Khrushchev's leadership, the Soviet legal system was substantially modified. Critical changes included a decrease in the use of the death penalty, decreases in the maximum sentence permissible for many crimes, and reductions in the authority and power of the KGB. One of the most important

changes was the creation of a new legal rule that stated that only a court could find individuals guilty of crimes, or subject them to punishment . . . Previous to this new law, Soviet citizens could be found guilty of crimes and punished without ever having a trial in a court of justice (Rubenstein, 1985,23). The effect of these changes was to encourage the intellectual community to become even more independent of the state. Khrushchev's tenure as leader of the Soviet state can best be remembered as being a period of relative permissiveness. It was during the reforms of Khrushchev that society again began to find its voice. This vocalization of demands was to turn to action under the Brezhnev regime and greater repression by the state.

The Brezhnev regime realized that it was necessary for the Soviet state to revitalize society, but believed this could be done without fundamentally altering the nature of the relationship between state and society. Important in Brezhnev's plans to reinvigorate society was keeping the "anti-offical" ideas of the dissent movement from infecting Soviet society (Breslauer, 1982,176). He believed that the campaign against dissent should be vigorously waged. In his own words, defending society from the dissidents was a "sacred duty." (Parchomenko, 1986,170)

Brezhnev did not rely on the overwhelming terror

and repression that Stalin had used so effectively. Rather, he relied on selective intimidation of key dissident groups and individuals. The rationale for this selective intimidation was that the arrests of key sections of the dissident movement would frighten others into inaction (Fireside, 1980,36+39). The greatest periods of selective intimidation occurred in 1972, 1976, and 1979 under Brezhnev; but, during two peaks of repression by the Soviet state, in 1972 and 1976, the regime retreated in its coercive tactics against dissidents in the face of international humanitarian pressure. Up until 1979 all of the actions taken by the government against the dissident movement had been relatively limited. However, this policy was to change with the wave of crackdowns that occurred in 1979. In 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and world attention was shifted away from human rights in the Soviet Union. Incidentally, it was during this year that the Soviet Union decided to effectively eliminate dissident groups. The new coercion by the state resulted in a doubling of the arrest rates of dissidents, increases in the length of their sentences, and an increasing reliance on the use of physical violence against them. This new wave of attacks on dissident movements effectively eliminated organized dissent. By 1980, all of the former dissident groups operating above ground were destroyed, had gone underground, or were simply

silent. The success of the regime's policy was so great that by 1983 only one dissident group operated above ground in the Soviet Union (Reddaway, 1983,1013). Even the Helsinki monitoring groups, which had survived earlier suppression by the state were overwhelmed by the 1979 crackdown (Medvedev, 1984,98). The independent voice of society had been once again gagged by the state. Brezhnev and his policies of selective intimidation had prevailed over society and had succeed in creating an atmosphere of repression reminiscent of Stalin (Brumberg, 1970,13).

The Andropov (1982-84) and Chernenko (1984-85) regimes were thus in a position of only having to keep dissident groups from reappearing. The back of the movement had already been broken by the policies of Brezhnev. Andropov, in particular, was not content to rest on the laurels of the past, and moved to harass dissident groups in new ways. The KGB began to broaden its policy of repression by arresting not only individuals involved in the dissident movement, but also, those who read its literature (Rubenstein, 1985,329). A long awaited amnesty for prisoners of the Soviet state was expected to occur in 1983 during the Soviet Union's sixth anniversary. This amnesty many expected would release dissidents and give the dissent movement a new surge. However, Andropov did not extend amnesty to any political prisoner, not even

those with relatively small sentences, or to religious dissidents. Instead, the Soviet state kept amnesty from this group as it did for skyjackers and murderers. The message being sent by Andropov was clear: dissent was not acceptable and would not be tolerated (Medvedev, 1984,101). This pattern of nonacceptance of dissent was continued under Chernenko. Under his leadership, human rights abuse in the Soviet Union continued to worsen (Rubenstein, 1985,3236-7).

One of the effects of the increased repression by the state started under Brezhnev and extending into Andropov and Chernenko's regimes, was to strengthen the power and status of the KGB (secret police). A number of candidate members of the Politburo who had worked for the KGB were elevated to the status of full member under Andropov. The composition of the Politburo under Andropov had more representation of the secret police than ever before in the history of the Soviet state. This new status for the KGB further served to entrench the state's hostility to dissent and hardened its repressive tendencies. Chernenko was to continue on this course of increasing the status of the KGB by giving, for the first time since the death of Stalin, the title of Marshal to a chairman of the KGB (Rubenstein, 1985,330).

The Soviet state has consistently, under various leaders, been hostile to the dissent movement. This

hostility was based on the operation of these groups outside of direct state control. The coercion and harassment by the Soviet state, launched with a vigor in 1979, was enough to decimate most dissident groups. However, it did not completely destroy these groups but rather drove many of them deep underground. These groups continued to operate because their concerns were based on true problems in Soviet society. The state suppressed the dissidents but the problems they addressed went unsolved and consequently new groups and individuals continued the battle. Even with the crackdown on dissent and subsequent damage to the movement dissident groups still assisted the growth of civil society in the Soviet Union, as will be examined next.

The dissent movement and the various informal groups of which it was composed were a response by the intelligentsia to the forced social atomism that occurred under Stalin. The groups attempted to halt the social atomism that had occurred by rebuilding social ties outside of the reach of the state. To protect these new social ties the dissident movement asserted two fundamental rights: freedom of association and freedom of expression (Reddaway, 1983,1+5). The dissidents personally defined limits around their lives so portions of them could be kept from the state's control. In this self-definition, society was trying to establish for itself yet another

fundamental right, the right to be left alone (Fireside, 1980,32-33).

Apart from specific rights being demanded by the dissident movement, dissent in and of itself, was an elementary freedom. Hannah Arendt, the well known analyst of totalitarian systems, explained the underlying importance of dissent when she wrote:

The point is simply and singly whether I can say and print what I wish, or whether I cannot; whether my neighbors spy on me or don't. Freedom always implies freedom of dissent. (Fireside, 1980,33)

The underlying demand of the dissent movement was freedom. By demanding freedom in various forms, the movement was able, for a short time, to voice its concerns and insight into problems facing the Soviet nation. This voice, although muzzled quickly by the Soviet state, was able to break the monopoly that the state had exercised on ideas about the future of the peoples of Soviet Union (Medvedev, 1984,98). By acting outside of the state, and constructing various solutions to problems facing the nation, the dissident movement was beginning to sow the seeds for future political opposition (Reddaway, 1983,15). These seeds were to bloom into real political opposition under Gorbachev as will be examined in the next chapter of this paper.

The founders of interest group analysis of Communist

political systems have noted another important role of dissent. The dissent movement, by advocating various demands and attempting to pressure the state to accommodate them, was engaging in activities that approximate the role played by interest groups in democratic societies. Almost all dissident groups in the Soviet Union were formed for the "defense of specific or more general interests." However, these "interests" were not allowed to voice their demands to the state without fear of harassment or imprisonment. The impact of this repression by the state on these "interests" was to push the dissidents out of the system and thus transform what was originally intra-structural dissent into extra-structural criticism. This extra-structural dissent, caused in large part because of the response of the regime, served further to undermine the state's power (Skillling, 1983, 23-24).

The ideas advanced by the dissent movement are also important to the future growth of civil society and informal associations in the Soviet Union. Andrei Sakharov served in large part as the moral beacon of the dissent movement from the mid 1970's until his death. Sakharov was overwhelmingly concerned with bettering the conditions for society. However, unlike many dissidents who took only negative action—that is pointing out problems, Sakharov took positive steps to suggest remedies. For example, in his famous Memorandum sent to Brezhnev,

Sakharov suggested that democratization and liberalization were urgently necessary in society to save the nation from falling economically further behind the Industrial world (1990,643). The tone of this message and its justification sound remarkably like those used later by Gorbachev to launch his economic policy of perestroika. Sakharov also advocated the use of "glasnost", public disclosure, as a tool to reveal the fundamental nature of the problems that beset the nation (1990,362). This term, and its effect on openness were critical in allowing the growth of informal associations under Gorbachev. However, at the most basic level Sakharov simply was a decent individual. This decency and its respect for each individual was perhaps the greatest ideal of Sakharov's and of the dissent movement as a whole. This concept was most eloquently explained by Sakharov himself when in response to why he, a non-Jew, was concerned about Jewish emigration said, "I am not supporting them as Jews, but simply as fellow human beings."(1990,135)

The dissent movement critically influenced the formation of attitudes towards civil society and informal associations. The dissidents were attempting to gain control back over their own lives and importantly over their associations. These actions were pre-conditions for the existence of any type of civil society. By removing part of their life from the state's control,

dissidents were carving out an area for informal associations to exist in. Indeed, the various groups in the dissent movement were informal associations. These associations are important because they were the first sign of a truly independent society since the days of Stalin. Although suppressed in the end by the state, these groups showed society that it was possible to challenge the power of the state. The importance of their success in showing society what was possible should not be underestimated. The groups also are important because they show how society could articulate its interests to the state. The few successes of the groups to change policy should not overshadow their importance as a new mechanism society had for communicating with the regime. In the end, these groups were not destroyed, but rather, during the "winter" of repression by the state, driven into hibernation. The ideas they inspired did not simply fade away. Instead, they were a fertile bed for new democratization efforts.

The democratic nature and practices of the dissident movement once again show an indigenous alternative in society to the authoritarian state. The movement presented society with another path to follow, that of democratic civil society. The dissidents, without explicitly mentioning the term, were calling for civil society. Their demands for a space for society outside of state

control, for the right to associate freely, to be able to articulate specific interests, and to be protected by the rule of law are all the pillars of any functional civil society. Although these demands were largely not granted, their desire for these rights makes the dissent movement rich with "usable history" for future democratic reformers.

CHAPTER III SOVIET SOCIETY UNDER GORBACHEV

The Soviet state by the 1980's was in a sharp decline fostered by governmental stagnation that occurred during the Brezhnev era. Many Western analysts also believed that Soviet society was in a state of malaise. However, while Soviet society was apathetic about political matters, it would be a mistake to conclude that the society was stagnant. To mistake official stagnation for societal stagnation would be not fully to appreciate the fact that Soviet society by the mid-1980's was already moving in the direction of becoming a distinct and separate entity from the state. The most obvious measure of the society's quickening pulse was the surging second economy or black market that took hold in the late 1970's and early 1980's. In response to the lack of wanted goods and services from the Soviet state, entrepreneurial citizens filled the gap. The power of this "twilight economy" should not be underestimated since data showed it to account for about one-seventh of all non-agricultural production in the Soviet Union. Also, society was active in a number of other areas. For example, Soviet adolescents forced their way into the global youth culture, much to the dismay of state officials. Samizdat publications, self-published writings, always a component of non-governmentally

controlled communications, rose dramatically as society began to define itself in the late 1970's-early 1980's. Pockets within Soviet society, when Gorbachev ascended to power, were not passive, but rather, very active outside of the state (Starr, 1988,27,26).).

Society was not directing its energies in ways the regime would have liked. Rather than helping to build the socialist state, society was attempting to escape from it. The growing disenchantment with the Soviet state was caused by many factors, not the least of which was the stagnation of the regime itself (Lapidus, 1991, 137). Increasingly, in the 1980's, society wanted out of the social contract into which the Soviet state had forced it. The disillusionment and apathy toward politics reached to the highest levels of society. The lack of real political participation for even party members had become so great that even they were becoming apolitical. It was this pervasiveness of political apathy at all levels of society that signaled to Western analysts the "crisis" condition that the Soviet state was in (Lewin, 1989,123).

In contrast to the lack of political engagement that Soviet society faced, it was beginning to experience the impact of slow social changes that had been developing for years. These changes included: increased urbanization, increased literacy, and increased communication technology. All of these changes had

important and far reaching effects on society and for the future of civil society.

The process of urbanization in the Soviet Union had been occurring since the Bolshevik revolution. However, its long term impacts were just beginning to be felt in second and third generation urban dwellers in the late 1970's. A top Soviet scholar, O.N. Ianitskii, has argued that one of the main impacts of urbanization has been the development of workers as individuals. This individualism was caused in part by the emphasis on personal life in cities and a high degree of autonomy within the urban family (Lewin, 1989, 64-66). Soviet society experienced the growth pains associated with the shift from a rural society to an urban one. One of the most important side-effects of this change was the inoculation of the ideas and the practices of individualism within the urban populace.

The growing education level of the Soviet populace served to further emancipate society from the state. It created a society more critical of official propaganda and governmental policies. Consequently, increased education levels were accompanied by a loss of faith in the government's ability to manage political and societal matters (Starr 1989,29). The increasingly critical view that society took regarding official propaganda reduced the ideological pull that the state once had. Society

had gradually begun to see itself not as a homogeneous whole, as official ideology prescribed, but rather, as a heterogeneous mixture of multiple interests (Lapidus, 1990, 141). This recognition of diversity was one of the critical elements which propelled individuals to join informal organizations that best represented their views.

Soviet society was also besieged in the 1980's by the communications revolution that was occurring world-wide. The effect of this change was two fold:

- (1) There was substantially easier access to outside information as communication technology advanced. Western broadcasts, beamed across borders, such as the BBC, the Voice of America, and Radio Liberty, gained a substantial audience in the Soviet Union. Radio Liberty estimates for the late 1970's indicated that around 67.3 million adults, or about 37 percent of Soviet adults, listened to foreign broadcasts yearly (Benn, 1992, 63). This increased information from foreign sources further discredited governmental propaganda in the eyes of an increasingly cynical Soviet society (Lewin, 1989, 71);
- (2) The advancement of communications technology allowed for communication between individuals and groups that was difficult for the state to control. For example, tape recorders, never subject to official regulations, led to the dissemination of "dissident" music and speeches. So large was the influence of this device that by 1985,

Soviet surveys were showing that around 63 percent of adolescents were making musical recordings for themselves (Benn, 1992,35-36). Videotape recorders and personal computers, although more regulated than tape recorders, also opened other avenues for communication beyond state oversight. This enhanced communications ability allowed groups increasingly to network themselves, thus increasing their power and resources (Starr 1988, 33). These technical changes added mechanisms for society to communicate with itself without the interference of the state.

The last change that affected Soviet society was its growing population. Although population growth is a normal phenomenon in societies, it has had particular consequences for the Soviet system. The Soviet state had attempted to control almost every aspect of the individual's life. However, with the increasing population this task became impossible. The level of control for which the state has striven is impossible in modern societies. Also, in the post-Stalinist period, the political will to use terror as a primary instrument for societal control greatly diminished. Consequently, due to the decreased fear of surveillance and regimentation, fear as a mechanism for societal control was not as strong as it once had been (Starr, 1988, 30).

Gorbachev faced a society unlike any that his

predecessors had faced. While withdrawing from official matters and becoming increasingly apathetic at all levels about politics, society was fermenting in areas out of the state's control. Many of these long-term changes were being expressed in new realizations about society and the individual. These changes coupled with the impact of technological change produced a society that increasingly threatened to take the initiative out of the Party and put it into the hands of the people (Petro, 1991, 128). Society was changing and beginning to feel the pressures of dragging the decaying Soviet state into the twenty-first century. This was the situation into which Gorbachev stepped and within which his reforms were conceived and tried. It is important to realize that he was not, as Frederick Starr noted, "creating change so much as uncorking it." (1988,27).

What was Gorbachev's Position Towards the Core of the Civil Society Movement, the Informal Groups?

Gorbachev's position toward informal groups evolved as the political atmosphere within which he was operating changed. Initially, Gorbachev and top Soviet leaders were extremely cautious about experimenting to bring about civil society. They were neither sure that civil society

was what they wanted, nor that it was the best mechanism to transform Soviet society (Tarasulo, 1992,6). Originally, Gorbachev's changes were aimed at simply starting the economic engine of the Soviet Union again. Glasnost, or openness, was to be used primarily as a mechanism to accelerate the economy by a process of "criticism and self-criticism" (Benn, 1992,12). However, it soon became obvious that this action would not be enough since society wanted real reform. Thus, as early as 1986, glasnost began to be seen in a broader sense, as a way to transform the political system of the Soviet Union. It was at this time that Gorbachev's perestroika, or restructuring, began to apply equally to aspects of social life. Perstroika than signified that deeper, even fundamental, changes would have to be made for the Soviet Union to reform. During the early phase of glasnost and perestroika, governmental policy was still focused on expanding officially organized groups (Kerblay, 1989,95). This policy was simply an extension of official policy as it had existed since the Stalinist era. Informal groups, in Russia, were tethered to the state by a 1932 RFSFR law that permitted informal groups as long as they had a sponsoring governmental institution (Hosking, 1990,64). The effect of the law was to allow informal organizations in name only.

As the extent of glasnost and perestroika began to

expand in the late 1980's, Gorbachev took a more lenient view of informal organizations. This official permissiveness allowed informals to exist without being tethered to official organizations. However, Gorbachev still clearly did not want informal groups to threaten the Party and thus allowed reduced, but still persistent harassment of these groups (Hosking, 1990,7475). But, his meager embrace of the informal groups was to change at the historic 19th Party Congress, a change that will have ramifications for the political system in the former Soviet Union into the next century.

Confronted with rising conservative opposition to his programs of reform, Gorbachev turned to the public to assist his cause. This political move is best seen in Gorbachev's explicit approval of the creation of informal organizations that would support his policy of perestroika. The effect of this endorsement from the top was the creation of a plethora of Marxist-Leninist discussion groups and popular fronts for the support of perestroika (Petro, 1991,104). Gorbachev, in a rare move for a Soviet leader, had turned to the public for help and they quickly had answered his call for support. He commented at the same party conference that the growth of informal organizations represented the growing diversity of Soviet society. Importantly, Gorbachev saw one of the utilities of informal organizations by realizing their

function as permanent mechanisms for "juxtaposing opinions, criticism and self-criticism" (Hosking, 1990, 74).

However, even with his explicit endorsement of informal groups, it is still likely that Gorbachev wanted to protect the primacy of the Party.

Why did Gorbachev want informal organizations? The answer to this question has many different components : (1) He needed societal support for his reforms to succeed; (2) There were economic reasons to favor the creation of informal organizations; (3) It was necessary to adapt to the changing Soviet society or risk losing the leading role of the Party once and for all; (4) Some of Gorbachev's top advisors favored moving in the direction of civil society; and (5) He had little idea of how to proceed with perestroika and hoped to use these organizations to generate new ideas and approaches.

The analysis presented earlier in this paper indicated that Gorbachev inherited a society that was anything but content with its lot in life. The society was at first cynical about Gorbachev's new promised reforms, but was longing by 1988 for real change in the Soviet state (Sedaitis & Butterfield, 1991,3). Gorbachev's strategy was to drag the apolitical mass that society had become into action by allowing them to engage in differing types of voluntary associations (Bonnell,1991,155). Gorbachev's reliance on society for change was driven in large part

by the magnitude of the changes he was attempting. Without great social participation the state was not ready, let alone able, to solve any new tasks. Official documents argue that reaching out to the social sphere was seen as, "the key to the accelerated solution of numerous problems, current and future, of our life." (Lewin, 1989,117)

Another very real reason that Gorbachev turned to the public via voluntary association was, as already mentioned, to offset conservative opposition to his programs. Gorbachev saw these associations as a wellspring of support he could draw on in times of political need. These associations were to serve as a counter-weight to the official opposition to perestroika/glasnost among the conservative elements of Soviet government (Sedaitis & Butterfield, 1991, 10). Quite simply, for change from above to have any long-term chance for success, mobilization from below was necessary. The long-term support on which Gorbachev's policy changes hinged could only be achieved by a massive effort to mobilize society (Bonnell, 1991, 153).

Another important consideration which motivated Gorbachev's support for informal associations was economic in origin. This support once again illustrates how the glasnost and perestroika reforms, although political in nature, were motivated by economic considerations. One

of the most important informal associations for Gorbachev's policy of economic restructuring was the cooperative. These organizations were given official status by the Law on Cooperatives of July, 1988. These informal associations quickly grew, to some 48,000 by January of 1989, providing employment to almost a million Soviets (Bonnell, 1991, 152). The law was important in that it freed the new cooperative from the state; its charter did not have to be registered with the state, and most importantly it had the status of a legal entity (Slider, 1991, 146). This new status of the cooperative showed the extent of support Gorbachev gave to certain informal associations. Do to its importance to his economic plans, its rights were codified in Soviet law. This occurrence is rare among informal associations and signaled the importance he must have assigned to the cooperative.

Another likely reason that Gorbachev endorsed informal association has to do with preserving the leading role of the state. If Gorbachev had not legitimized informals their growth would likely have posed a problem for the Party. The informal associations, such as discussion groups, grass roots environmental movements, etc., even without official endorsement, were growing to the point of being formidable. The lack of official approval, coupled with the growing strength of the informal movement, could easily have led the associations to see the Party

as part of the problem and not the solution (Petro, 1991,128). The likely outcome of this perception would have been to further alienate society from the state, at the exact moment that Gorbachev desperately needed its assistance.

The influence of Gorbachev's top advisors in his decision to support explicitly informal associations should not be overlooked. A key Gorbachev advisor, Tatiana Zaslavskaya, began arguing in the early 1980's that interest group analysis presented the truest picture of Soviet society. According to her, the society was broken into different classes having interests that conflicted with each other. After Gorbachev was firmly entrenched in power, Zaslavskaya spelled out the implications of her analysis. She argued that people must understand their interests and that they must be expressed. However, verbalization of interests was not enough. According to Zaslavskaya, each interest must choose "from its midst or find a spokesman for its interests, defenders of those interests." This analysis by Zaslavskaya provided a forceful philosophical justification for informal associations (Bonnell, 1991, 155). It is obvious from Gorbachev's words to the 19th Party Congress that Zaslavskaya's influence on him was great. For example, he acknowledged the diversity of Soviet society, clearly rejecting the propaganda of the Soviet homogeneous society

in favor of a more interest group oriented, heterogeneous view.

Another top advisor, Aleksandr Yakovlev, is also likely to have influenced Gorbachev's positive, although late coming, support for informal association. In 1987, Yakovlev argued that the Soviet Union should adopt the common law stance that "everything not explicitly forbidden by law is permitted." The impact of this utterance was amazing, as Fredrick Starr noted:

As if acting on the general secretary's advice, Soviet courts in the first half of 1987 sent back more cases for further investigation, handed down more acquittals, and threw out more suits than in any previous 6-month period in Soviet history.

This action and the words of Yakovlev show a deep understanding of the rule of law and its civil society implications (Starr, 1988,37). Even if Yakovlev had no direct influence on Gorbachev's support for informal associations, the effect of his words on the Soviet judicial system certainly made the political atmosphere more conducive to the growth of informal associations.

The impact of support for informals by Gorbachev has been far reaching and will be analyzed more in the next section. It is clear that Gorbachev to a very great extent wagered his future, and that of the Soviet state, on civil society and informal associations (Bonnell

91,158). At the very least, Gorbachev should be given credit for inspiring the informal associations for the support of perestroika which came into creation because of his call at the 19th Party Congress, and of overall making the Soviet political atmosphere more conducive to informal associations(Petro 1991,105).

Informal Associations, their composition and impact
in Soviet society

Informal associations in the Soviet Union and all of their components are called colloquially "neformaly" in Russian. The "neformaly" revolution was the heart of an attempt to move the Soviet Union closer to being a civil society. Put simply, without organizations existing outside of the control of the states, the neformaly, the achievement of civil society would be impossible. Soviet society by 1988 was increasingly attempting to define itself and the limits of the state's power through voluntary associations. The purpose of this section of the paper is to examine what informal groups are, the number of these groups that were in existence in the late 1980's, a breakdown of where they occurred, who their members were, what their political beliefs were, and their significance to society.

Informal associations can be thought of as having three major components: (1) Individuals join to further common interests; (2) Membership is voluntary, not coerced by the state; (3) The groups exist outside of the boundaries of the state (Bonnell, 1991,151). Of all of their characteristics the last is the most important. These organizations do not officially participate in the political system, rather, their activities are conducted

outside of "official channels" (Sedaitis & Butterfield, 1991, 1). However, simply because these groups exist outside of the state does not mean that they are necessarily opposed to it politically (Lewin, 1988,80).

Informal associations, while greatly different among themselves, can be broken down in the late 1980's into three broad types: discussion groups, grievance committees, and political parties. The discussion groups met to discuss a wide variety of topics such as philosophy, politics, history and economics. People in these types of groups were simply attempting to orient themselves to the new and alien ideas that were facing them. The grievance committee category designates those groups which arose spontaneously to deal with problems which the government was unwilling or unable to solve. The specific problems with which the grievance committees were developed to deal varied from ecological issues, to preservation of historical monuments, to abuse of Party privilege. During Gorbachev's tenure these groups were despised by lower level party functionaries. However, this type of group had much protection from central party authorities due to its functional utility. The result was that the lower functionaries were forced grudgingly to accept their existence. However, when the central party authorities were not actively watching, these groups were often harassed at the local level. The last type of group are

those which could be called embryonic political parties. Individuals within these groups initially wanted to end the domination of the Communist Party. With a Central Committee decision in February of 1990 allowing for different political parties to exist, this category subsequently grew. The boundaries between these types of groups are not rigid. Rather, many groups that started out apolitical turned political after failing to achieve wanted change (Petro, 1991,105-106). It is important to note that truly "apolitical" informal associations could not exist since membership in these groups signaled a desire to step outside of the state which was in itself a political decision.

The tremendous explosion of neformaly groups basically occurred overnight (Ra'anan, 1990,26). These groups bloomed like plants in the desert after a long overdue rain. The growth of these organizations increased the most in the late 1980's, according to available statistics (Petro, 1991,102). Pravda has documented the tremendous growth in these organizations. According to Pravda, in 1988 it was estimated that 30,000 groups existed. By 1991, this estimate had been revised to a total of around 60,000 groups. This estimate is likely to be low since not many unofficial groups feel compelled to register officially with the government (Hosking, 1991, 64). For example, in Moscow in 1991, of the over 2,000 known

informal associations, only 530 were officially registered with the state (Petro, 1991,102). There are a number of likely reasons that many groups did not register. First, the non-glasnost days were alive in the memories of all Soviets citizens. Thus, the compulsion against registering as a possible official opponent of the regime was still strong. The horror of the Stalinist era still caused fear in many and made them unwilling to register officially as possible "political dissidents". Second, little was to be gained from official registration. Since little legal codification of rights existed for most informal associations, the risk of registration outweighed meager benefits. Lastly, some analysts have argued, to remain truly independent and outside of the state it was necessary not to register. This action would then indicate a political decision among those non-registered groups to move away from the Soviet state (Brovkin, 1990,233).

Due to their numbers and importance, one type of informal association, environmental groups, deserves special examination. Ecological matters, by 1989, had become substantially important to Soviet society. According to survey data from that year, 83.5% of Soviets polled were deeply concerned about the state of their environment (Ziegler, 1991,115). This great level of environmental concern in the late 1980's was spawned by the Chernobyl disaster and the Soviet government's bungled

efforts to deal with it (Maples, 1991,138). This deep concern about environmental issues led ecological informal associations to be among the most popular, and numerous, of all informal associations throughout the Soviet Union (Petro, 1991,108). Although the exact number of informal ecological groups was unknown, it was estimated that they numbered in the thousands (Frerer, 1991,336). It is next necessary to examine the nature and effects of these groups.

Environmental groups were grass roots movements that had started from below and wished to remain outside of the control of the state (Altshuler & Mnatsakanyan, March 1990, 29). Due to this characteristic, and the nature of practices within the groups, they were of a fundamentally democratic nature. Most of the groups, outside of the Russian Republic, often tied environmental concerns together with nationalist demands (Ziegler, 1991,129,114). This occurrence was natural since to many non-Russian nationalities the exploitation of their environment was indicative of a larger problem of political exploitation of their Republic by the Soviet state. Accordingly, in many of the non-Russian Republics, the environmental groups were very political in nature. In some Republics, notably Ukraine, these environmental groups later grew into Green political parties (Maples, 1991, 141- 142).

The impact of these environmental groups has been wide ranging. On a practical level, most groups were very successful in influencing decisions that affected their environment. For example, one Russian environmental group, the Lake Baikal Protection Society, brought pressure to bear on the local government and stopped plans to divert pollution from a paper mill into the Irkutsk river. This group, by 1990, had enough support to motivate the national government, through the Central Committee and Council of Ministers, to mandate cleanup of the Lake Baikal area by 1995 (Ziegler, 1991,122-123).

The environmental groups had an unintended consequence as many of them led to the formation of political parties. For example, in the Ukraine and Russia, Green Parties were created to provide an umbrella organization for ecologically concerned politically active environmental groups (Ziegler, 1991, 142 & Frerer, 1991,336). The Greens also figured importantly in the political makeup of the Congress of Peoples Deputies, where it was estimated that around 15 percent of all the deputies were Greens or interested in environmental issues (Altshuler & Mnatsakanyan, March 1990,9). So important were the Greens in 1990, that the American Committee on US-Soviet Relations noted, "Green activism is in the vanguard of democratization throughout the USSR." (Frerer, 1991,336)

Overall, those groups which were environmental and nationalist in their orientation were the most successful in influencing policy, due to their larger base of support (Sediatis & Butterfield, 1991,7). However, it was exactly these groups, in the non-Russian Republics, which caused more difficulty by increasing nationalist separatist demands. These environmental nationalist groups added another reason for the conservatives in the Party to fear and want to suppress informal associations: they threatened the existence of the Union.

The Russian Republic was not the center for the growth of all informal associations. The greatest growth of these groups did not occur in the center, but rather, in the non-Russian periphery of the Republics (Bonnell, 1991,155). However, my analysis will focus in this section on informal association within the Russian Republic for two main reasons. First, these are the associations that many believed would be the decisive ones in influencing the battle between conservatives and reformers within the Soviet state (Brovkin, 1990,233). Second, more systematic data is available on these informal associations than for any of the other Republics.

Within the RSFSR, the largest concentrations of informal associations, not surprisingly, were found in the large cities, especially Moscow and Leningrad. The fact that these groups existed primarily in cities has

made some see them as "islands" within the vast and barren political sea of the Republic (Brovkin, 1990,238).

Most participants in informal organizations were very young. It is estimated, with the use of survey data, that between 50 and 70 percent of youths participated in informal associations. However, in certain cities this number may have run higher. For example, in 1987 in Moscow, 90 percent of the members of informal associations were under twenty-five years of age (Bonnell, 1991,156). Survey data from 1988 indicated that 50 percent of youths participated irregularly in informal associations, with only between 10 and 13 percent actively participating. This would roughly work out to between 1.8 and 2.4 million youths. It is not surprising with this large youth contingent in informal associations that it was expected that the official youth organization Komsomol membership would decline by at least 50 percent by 2000 (Petro, 1991,103+124).

A further breakdown on the basis of age can be seen by examining the types of groups certain age groups dominated. Individuals in their late twenties and early thirties were drawn to high profile groups that worked for social justice. These social justice groups were one of the largest components of informal associations in the RSFSR (Petro, 91,103). Most of the individuals who joined these social justice groups could be considered

cultural intelligentsia. This fact indicates what the dominant concerns of the intelligentsia were. However, one has to be careful about calling all involved individuals members in these groups. For the most part, members were limited to a small core and the rest could more correctly be called supporters of the particular association (Brovkin, 1990,245).

The membership and beliefs of informal associations were so very diverse that the only thing that many had in common was that they stood outside of the same traditional political structure (Brovkin, 1990,233). The politics of these groups also greatly varied, ranging from the conservative nationalism of Pamyat to the ultra-liberal tendencies of the Democratic Union. However, it was possible in 1989 to arrange most groups within four broad categories: those who supported change within the existing structure, those who rejected the existing structure and called for multi-party systems, popular fronts for Perestroika which originally existed simply to support Gorbachev's policies and became broad based umbrella organizations, and lastly nationalist political groups which viewed all politics through the lens of their particular ethnic heritage (Petro, 1991,111-112). Generally, most informal associations in the RSFSR were liberal and desired substantial change within the Soviet state (Brovkin, 1990,238).

The significance of the growth of these informal organizations cannot be overstated. They were the incarnation of individualism in a society which has faced the domination of what was often the epitome of the statist system, the Soviet totalitarian state. The impact that these groups have had and their significance is the next area of analysis within the paper. This analysis will focus on how these groups signaled a significant shift in the Soviet political system. The introduction and legitimation of informal associations has ensured that post-Soviet politics will never again be what it once was.

The most important effect of the growth of informal associations was the decline in the leading role of the Communist state. The proliferation of informal associations, individuals acting outside of the control of the state, was a strong sign that the post-Stalinist structure was in a precipitous decline. The growth of informal organizations has shown that the perseverance of the individual for his/her freedom can outlast the coercive power of the state.

Increasingly, in the Soviet Union in the late days of Gorbachev, the Party was losing the initiative to society (Staar, 1991,128). Public opinion was no longer something rarely to be paid attention. Rather, the public was increasingly not only defining policymaking options

but also framing the entire scope of political discussions (Sedaitis & Butterfield, 1991, 1). Society was assuming this new role because "interests" were beginning vocally and persistently to make their demands known. This occurrence led to what Gorbachev had wanted in part, different views on how reform should be carried out. The tremendous impact of society influencing policy, as opposed to it being the passive recipient of directions from the state, can not be overstated.

The newly assertive role of society was problematic for Gorbachev because it meant the end of the leading role of the Party, to the reform of which he had committed himself. Turning to society for assistance against conservative opposition, Gorbachev was playing a very dangerous game. The French social philosopher Castoriadis has argued that Gorbachev's delusion was to believe that he could order people into activity and still restrain their wants and dreams with vague limits that constantly changed (Tismaneanu, 1990,5). The declining role of the Party however, was not entirely beneficial for the growth of civil society. As will be examined later, the fact that society challenged outright the supremacy of the state was potentially an obstacle to the further advancement of civil society. Quite simply, in the later 1980's the Communist Party was not entirely down and out and its potential for coercive behavior was truly worrisome

to supporters of reform.

Informal associations, for the most part, did not attempt formally to take on the central government. Rather, the strategy of the informal political organizations was to "take on city hall." This strategy led to a shift on politics from the national to the local level where informal associations had more pull (Petro, 1991,124). The groups at the local level, for the most part in the late 1980's, were not yet full fledged political parties. Rather, they began to act as "interest groups" advocating certain local policy options, as Zaslavskaya had foreseen (Ra'anan, 1990,27). At the local level, informal organizations won significant political battles against an entrenched Communist state over specific problems ranging from the protection of historical-cultural monuments targeted for destruction, to the stopping of specific programs that would harm local environments. The most important effect of this "localization" of politics within the Soviet Union was that it further entrenched the idea of civil society in society. Simple discussion groups evolved into action groups that defended individual interests against the state.

Some of the more openly political informal associations were beginning to play the role of real "political opposition" by 1988 within the Soviet system. Two examples bear this out: the Moscow Tribune, and the

Alliance of the Federation of Socialist Clubs (FSOK) with Popular Fronts. The Moscow Tribune was a club made up of about 100 members and was founded in October of 1988. The group included the leading intelligentsia for radical reform of society. Members included R.Z. Sagdeev, Roy Medvedev and Tatiana Zaslavskaya. The fact that prominent members of this "loyal opposition" were elected to the Congress of People's Deputies moved them into the stage of formal politics (Brovkin, 1990,240). Members of this group, after their election to the Congress, began to use their informal association to influence actions within the Congress. The name of the association was changed from the "Moscow Tribune" to the "Interregional Group". The organization then adopted a platform of political action that included universal suffrage elections for the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, guarantees for the sovereignty of the republics, demonopolization of the state's control of the economy, protection for individual rights in accordance with international human rights agreements that the USSR had signed, and the right of People's deputies to form parliamentary groups. It should be obvious that this group was no longer simply an informal association. TASS, the official newspaper of the party, noted the group had become the "Soviet opposition" (Ra'Anan, 1990,29,34,36).

The FSOK and Popular Front alliance shows another

interesting example of informal associations becoming political actors. These organizations in the summer of 1988 attempted to mobilize the public for Gorbachev against conservative opposition. This function, mobilizing support for the leader, is very similar to functions carried out by parliamentary parties. If Gorbachev is thought of as leader of an opposition group in a parliament, the actions of FSOK and the Popular Fronts were very similar to those carried out by the official opposition in those systems (Hosking, 1990,70-71). Regardless, the fact that these unofficial groups were trying to solicit support for Gorbachev is another sign of the extent of political change occurring in the late 1980's.

Another of the greatest signs of the degree of political change in the Soviet Union in the late 1980's involved the ability of informal associations to influence the election of candidates to the Congress of People's Deputies. Proposals had existed, during the electoral process to allow informal associations to nominate candidates for office. This move was seen by many communists as threatening the nomenklatura system that had been firmly in place since Brezhnev (Lapidus, 1991,142). Many party functionaries stepped up their harassment campaigns against the informals. Far from intimidating the informals, it simply heightened their resolve. In the end, after significant interference with

informal associations from officials, they were still able heavily to influence the elections. The election results were a significant victory for the informals; they defeated 35 obkom secretaries and 200 other high ranking communists. These election victories and the attempt of the informals to influence election results were of monumental importance. This occurrence showed that Soviet society was through being apolitical. Society had once again become a political beast. In the minds of many top analysts and as subsequent events have born out, these new more politically mature informal associations were themselves embryos of future political parties (Brovkin, 1990, 254).

The best example of how informal associations became interest groups can be seen in the cooperatives. Even after being legally allowed to exist by the 1988 law, cooperatives still faced opposition from communist agencies which oversaw their activities. During the course of 1988 and 1989 it became increasingly obvious that cooperatives were still facing harassment by certain governmental agencies. Individual cooperatives began to band together to face the powerful governmental interests threatening their very existence. They formed in 1989 a national organization for all cooperatives called the "National Union of Associated Cooperatives." This organization began to attempt to influence national

policy-makers in meetings with them. More importantly, the union used its large financial resources to organize and finance friendly political parties for election to the Congress of People's Deputies. For example, in Belorussia a cooperative that made environmental monitoring devices began to make financial contributions to the "green movement" in the Republic (Slider, 1991,145-155). The development of the Union and its actions followed almost to the letter the pattern that Zaslavskaya had foreseen for Soviet society. The cooperatives had consciously sought to defend their interests by uniting and influencing political decisions that affected them; in Western theory they had become a special interest group.

Again, I will emphasize that the importance of the informal associations can not be overstated. These groups, with their relatively young composition, have influenced, and are likely to continue influencing politics in the former Soviet Union for the foreseeable future. They have played an integral role in moving the Soviet Union from being a stagnant monolithic state to being a dynamic political system with official opposition, interest groups, and most importantly individual political choices. It is quite possible that Trotsky's words to the Mensheviks are resounding in the ears of former Soviet Communists. Trotsky spoke these words, ironically a fitting epitaph for the now dead Communist Party, "Your role is played

out, your place is in the dustbin of History." (Brovkin,
1990,254)

CHAPTER IV
IMPEDIMENTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT
OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE SOVIET UNION

The future of civil society in the Soviet Union, while brighter under Gorbachev than at any time since the Bolshevik revolution, was still not certain. Civil society, much like Rome, could not be built in a day. Even today, after the fall of the Communist Party and the dissolution of the Soviet state, a full fledged civil society does not exist in the former U.S.S.R. There have been a number of formidable barriers that civil society has had to overcome to implant itself in Soviet soil: conservative opposition, historical barriers, nationalist demands, and the fragmentation of society.

Although Gorbachev eventually endorsed the idea of informal organizations at the 19th Party Congress, it must be remembered that his support was late coming and tepid at best. Many leaders, before and after Gorbachev's endorsement, still had grave reservations about allowing civil society's informal associations to grow. Opponents of informal associations argued that these groups were "extremist" and were out to destroy the Communist Party (Hosking, 1990,74). The opponents of informal associations reached into the highest level of government where it is known that Igor Ligachev, a top Politburo member, desired to crush their growth (Petro, 1991,125).

Initially, the motivating factor propelling conservative opposition to informal associations was that they threatened the monopoly on power the Communist Party had. As many top Western analysts have pointed out, civil society cannot exist in a one party state. Thus, for the Soviet society to move towards civil society multiple parties would have had to be created, which would have cut at the heart of the party's power (Starr, 1989,308) (Petro, 1991,125). Analysis of the historic growth of civil society in former Communist states indicates its rise is accompanied by a subsequent decrease in the power of the party-state (Kuzenstov, 1990,183).

The Party in the new environment of glasnost and perestroika was unsure at first about how to react to informal associations. The response, while inconsistent, generally included harassment such as fines, imprisonment and confiscation of materials. The inconsistent response by the government led to confusion about what was permissible. The first definitive action the state took was in the summer of 1988 when it passed a law regarding the rules of conduct for demonstrations and created a special " police" riot squad to deal with the informal associations. In August, this new "police" squad took its first action by crushing a demonstration to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Soviet forces. This action in August signaled an end

to the experimental permissiveness of the state. However, worse times were still to come.

The informal associations had always been considered a serious threat by conservatives. So serious was the threat, according to a samizdat publication, that plans had been established to disconnect some 90 percent of private phones in Moscow if an "emergency" arose. But, the state began to see informal associations as even more of a threat after their success in influencing the elections to the Congress of People's Deputies.

The informal associations had become involved in the elections due to the harassment they had faced in the Republic. During the elections, this harassment was further intensified. This did not stop the informal associations from scoring electoral success as has already been discussed. The state did not wish to acknowledge that they had failed at the task of governing and that the people wanted to replace them. Rather, the state argued that the electoral failure of many socialist candidates was not the party's fault but the fault of the informals. It was in this mood that the Communist Party decided it would not give up power voluntarily. The Party in almost all Republics carried out some form of retribution against the informals ranging from warnings in Leningrad to shootings in Georgia. Indeed, on the eve of the new Congress of People's Deputies first meeting,

there were rumors that certain Communist Party organizations had started forming their own private militias (Brovkin, 1990, 237-252).

In late 1989, the civil society reformers faced a great opponent, the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. The Party was not willing easily to relinquish its grasp on power. Instead, the Party was determined to fight every inch of the growth of civil society. This barrier was very formidable because of the great resources and coercive pressure the Party could bring to bear against informals. However, with the dissolution of the Party after the August 1991 coup, this barrier was diminished because conservative opponents of reform could no longer bring the full coercive power of the state to bear against the informal associations.

One of the most formidable barriers to the establishment of civil society in the Soviet Union has been the historical legacy of the nation. Previous attempts at civil society and informal associations, for example in pre-Soviet Russia, were very fragile and in the end overwhelmed by the environment in which they existed. The one period that serves as the largest historical obstacle for civil society is the Stalinist period. During this time, civil society and informal associations were overwhelmed by the concentrated power of the state. As has already been discussed, Stalinism

greatly scarred Soviet society. Due to the nature of repression during this period, society was atomized and individuals were ingrained with a suspicion of one another. This fragmentation created a wound within society that still has not yet completely healed. Overall, the Russian/Soviet experience has yielded few victories for civil society advocates. In almost every historical epoch when democratization has occurred it has in the end been crushed by the state. These many losses for democratic reformers have created an underlying attitude of "why try?" which dissidents, and later informal associations, have had to overcome. However, this obstacle may be one that has faded in the light of the new realities in the former Soviet Union.

The nationalities question constituted another important barrier to the growth of civil society in the Soviet Union. As Soviet society began to act on its realization that it was not homogeneous, certain nationalistic elements wished to be released from the Soviet state (Ra'anah 1990, 83-84). The Soviet Union had always been acutely aware of its nationalities problem since the beginning days of the federation of socialist states. However, due to the power of the Party and intolerance for dissent, nationalist movements had been forced deeply underground after they had arisen sporadically. As the Party became more lenient, because

of political decisions under Gorbachev and the "official" toleration of informal associations, nationalist movements came out from hiding, and quickly grew into separatist political parties. This occurrence had two important effects on civil society's growth. First, as these separatist movements grew the Party felt increasingly threatened as it seemed the Union was about to disintegrate in its hands. This threat to the Union made the Party more reactive as a whole to informal associations. The first impact was to deepen the conservative opposition to civil society (Ra'anan, 1990,83-84). Second, informal associations in the non-Russian Republics took on a life of their own. These organizations, overall, were no longer interested with the Soviet Union. Instead, they wanted to begin restoring their national independence and ethnic heritage. Within the Russian Republic, one of the reactions to this occurrence, was a great resurgence of Russian nationalism. But, even this backlash in the Russian Republic, was not enough to stop the informal associations in the non-Russian Republics from forcing the transition to non-Soviet rule.

The last barrier to the growth of civil society in the Soviet Union is one that still endures today in the Commonwealth of Independent States,. It is that not all members of society care about it becoming "civil." As the earlier analysis on informal associations indicates

they are made up of mainly young urbanites who are members of the cultural intelligentsia. This fact is important because it means the base from which civil society could find support, while not a static condition, was originally limited. Also, certain sections of Russian society, are still conservative and anti-democratic. These sections long for the "stability" of the past and consequently do not want any further change. Since all of society has not been receptive to the message of civil society, potential anti-civil society elements exist even in the post-Communist Commonwealth.

This analysis of impediments to the growth of civil society in the Soviet Union has not been exhaustive. Rather, an attempt has been made to highlight the major obstacles that informal associations faced in late 1989. The most important of these obstacles was the continued opposition to civil society of the Communist Party. Although Gorbachev had endorsed informal associations, official harassment of these groups still continued. However, importantly, it was not at a level that made the growth or participation in these groups impossible. The nationalities problem still posed difficulty for the growth of civil society in the former Soviet Union. Although the Republics had gained their independence from the center, many ethnic minorities were still contained within individual Republics. As informal associations

grew in these ethnic minorities, increased pressure was put on the individual Republics to recognize and respect the autonomy of these groups. Even if these demands were not of a separatist nature, as some were, they put more demands on the already meager resources many Republics had. Conservative opposition, while no longer at the helm of the state, found new allies within the Russian nationalist movement. This alliance of conservatives/nationalists is likely, due to those groups' hostility to informal associations, to continue to pose a substantial threat, not only to informal associations but democratic reforms in general. Last, the urban/rural fragmentation of society will continue to deprive reformers of the full support of all society. The impact of this can not yet be analyzed, since for all practical purposes, the era of informal associations has just begun in the Soviet Union.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS

Soviet society, during the years of Gorbachev, underwent tremendous change. The question which remains is whether the civil society model helps to explain this change. To answer this question it is necessary to re-examine the questions posed in the first chapter of this thesis and analyze how well the model answers them. To what extent does the civil society concept help to explain the nature of the change that occurred in Soviet society? To what degree does the civil society concept have indigenous roots in the Russian/Soviet experience? What, if any, predictive validity can this model be said to have?

There is no doubt that the changes that occurred under Gorbachev were of a fundamental nature. The question the model must help to answer, to show its utility, is how important these changes were. The civil society concept, as has been already discussed, focuses on society existing independently of the state. The society finds cohesion within itself by forming informal associations where individuals of like minds freely gather to discuss ideas. These groups may make demands on the states around specific issues and when functioning in this role approximate interest groups. These groups are allowed to exist and are protected from the state by the rule

of law.

The model stresses that one of the important aspects of these informal associations is that they limit the power of the state over the individual (de Tocqueville, 1945,118). Certainly, in the Soviet experience this attribute of informal associations cannot be overlooked. The analysis in the preceding chapters has shown how the formation of informal associations has been in response to social atomism forced on society by the state. The analysis in the thesis has also shown how the informal associations, through, for example, the dissident movement, have broken the monopoly on ideas that the state exercised about the future of society. The analysis also suggests in the Gorbachev period that society was indeed effectively limiting the power of the state. The greatest example of this limitation occurred during the victory of informal association supported candidates over Communist Party candidates in the Congress of People's Deputies elections in 1989. In this instance, society was reclaiming control over political matters from the state.

The model does have one difficulty with explaining this importance of informal associations. Why, if informal associations protect individuals from the power of the state, was the state repeatedly able to crush these associations? The answer to this question has a number of different dimensions. First, and most importantly,

civil society, before Gorbachev, was never allowed fully to grow. The analysis of the historical development of civil society in the Soviet Union has indicated that at times, previous to Gorbachev, civil society was at best embryonic. This immature civil society was simply not able to withstand the power of either the Russian autocratic, or the Soviet state. Second, the model's assertion that civil society protects individuals from encroachment from the state is not meant to suggest that it completely limits the state's power. Rather, informal associations present a limited sphere of freedom in which individuals operate in that it is free from state control. Certainly, the informal associations of late Imperial Russia, the dissident movement, and informal groups under Gorbachev accomplished this goal. Although not complete, informal associations did, simply by their nature, limit the power of the state. Third, and last, it is impossible, due to the historic immaturity of civil society in the Soviet Union, to tell the extent to which these informal groups may limit the power of the state. Since civil society is just currently beginning to move beyond its embryonic stage in the Soviet Union, this judgment must be reserved for later researchers.

The civil society model, as used in this thesis, also contains elements of interest group articulation. The importance of this behavior was explained in the last

chapter in reference to Tatyana Zaslavskaya. Zaslavskaya and Skilling believe that society has realized its heterogeneous nature and that individuals have begun to look for specific groups that share their values. These groups have then articulated their demands on the state. The thesis is full of examples of informal associations asserting their specific interests to the state; they range in focus from the dissident movement to environmental groups. This articulation of interests is seen as important by the model because it is a new mechanism for society to communicate with the state. No longer must individuals stand isolated against the power of the government. Informal associations allow individuals to unite and compete with the state in the political arena for power. It should be noted that not all informal associations attempt this interest articulation. As the thesis has noted, many informal associations are simply discussion clubs. However, the trend, even in these these clubs has been towards a more active political role.

The model also notes the importance of informal associations in forming political associations. Alexis de Tocqueville, in Democracy in America, explained the nature of this relationship:

Civil associations pave the way for political ones, but on the other hand the art of political associations develops and improves this technique for civil purpose. (1945,123)

This connection between informal associations and political associations is clearly supported in this thesis. To begin with, under Soviet rule any informal association, since it existed outside of the state was a "political" association. Individuals, simply by associating freely were challenging the power of the Soviet state and consequently taking political action. Also, some informal associations have gone on to become true political associations, or opposition parties, under Gorbachev. The best example of this would be Moscow Tribune that, once elected to the Congress of People's Deputies, formed the Interregional Group and began to articulate political demands. Even the state has recognized the transformation of the Moscow Tribune into a political opposition as was noted by TASS's reference to them as "Soviet opposition" (Ra'Anan, 1990,36).

Overall, the model provides a good understanding of the nature of societal change occurring under Gorbachev. The model highlights certain types of activity, for example, the formation of informal associations, and helps to explain both its practical and theoretical importance. However, alone, this model does not explain the significance of these events in the Soviet state. This understanding can only be gained by analyzing the historical growth of civil society in the Soviet Union.

Because the model was not specifically developed to explain societal change in the Soviet Union it minimizes the fundamental, system changing nature of these actions. However, this insight can be gained by examining, as the thesis did, the historical growth, and roots of civil society in the Soviet Union.

The next question to be analyzed is to what extent the civil society model has indigenous roots in the Russian/Soviet experience. To answer this question, the thesis examined the historical origins, and evolution, of civil society beliefs and informal associations in late Imperial Russia, and the Soviet era. Put simply, the concept has limited, but important, roots in the Russian/Soviet experience. The thesis has shown that the greatest growth of civil society occurred in Russia during the last years of the Czar. This civil society never completely materialized; at best, it was "embryonic." The reasons for this lack of the growth of civil society were several: the historic lack of a middle class, the autocratic nature of the state, lack of agricultural surplus. The fragile civil society that was established was overwhelmed by the First World War, the Soviet revolution, and the Bolshevik consolidation of power. The only brief reprieve for society during this time was the NEP period. However, the analysis presented in this thesis has shown that this period did not present a rebirth

of civil society or even of informal associations. Society was subjected after the NEP to Stalin's rule which aimed at atomizing society and establishing state control over the individual. The state accomplished these goals through a variety of different draconian measures and consequently made sure no civil society would occur. However, interestingly, during this period, although civil society and informal associations did not exist, it is clear that the state was battling to defeat the concept's values, such as freedom of association and the right to exist independent of the state. From Krushchev through Andropov, Soviet leaders fought a battle against the dissent movement. This movement advocated and fought for civil society values. In the end, the state through coercive measures was able to overcome the informal associations that comprised this movement. But, although finally defeated, this period and movement are important because it was the first time since the death of Stalin that society spoke and acted independently of the state.

Under Gorbachev, the nature of the relationship between society and state underwent a fundamental transformation. The state increasingly allowed society to act independently, often simply because it could not prevent it from doing so. The question is, does the civil society model have any role historically in explaining this change? The answer to this question must be a

tentative yes. First, the civil society concept is not foreign to the Soviet Union. As the analysis in this thesis has shown, during important, although short-lived periods of reform in Russia/Soviet Union, civil society has been the ideal system reformers have been moving towards. This call has been the most explicit under Gorbachev when reformers have used "civil society" as a rallying call. Second, the Soviet state has historically struggled to prevent the creation of civil society. Since the days of Lenin, the state has attempted to eliminate private property, and associations of individuals outside of the control of the state, and to limit the use of the rule of law. This struggle against the civil society values was waged with greatest intensity under Stalin, but remained an underlying current in all periods of Soviet rule. This unifying theme among Soviet leaders illustrates the importance of the model as embodying an alternative set of values which the state has historically struggled against.

Although this thesis has demonstrated that civil society is not a foreign concept to the Soviet Union it has also shown the hostility that exists towards the concept. Society, as a whole, has not overwhelmingly accepted the message of civil society. Instead, historically, only certain segments of society, the middling groups in Imperial Russia and the intelligentsia

in the Soviet period, have supported civil society values. This fragmentation of support for civil society values was analyzed in detail when considering impediments to the growth of civil society in the last chapter. This fragmented support for civil society, coupled with its many losses against the Soviet state, points to the fact that this concept, while not foreign to Soviet society, has not been historically welcomed. This condition leads to the conclusion that while the model has roots in the Russian experience it does not have acceptance by most of society. However, among the individuals pushing for social change, the concept has been vital.

The analysis of the origins and historical development of civil society and informal associations in the Soviet Union served to show the drastic new direction the Soviet state was taking under Gorbachev. The Russian/Soviet states have been historically hostile to society, and certainly to its independent operation in areas outside of the state's control. Under Gorbachev, the historical hostility at first was minimized, and then completely disappeared. The reforms taken by society were of a fundamentally democratic nature. The thesis has also attempted to show the revolutionary importance of these democratic changes, for under Gorbachev, the Soviet/Russian people moved closer to democracy than ever before in their nation's history.

The last question to be analyzed concerns the predictive validity of the civil society model. In other words, how well does the model predict what the actions and motivations for societal change are? This question is currently largely unanswerable. To begin with, it is impossible to know how civil society will develop, if at all, in the Soviet Union. Currently, civil society once again in the former Soviet Union has achieved some sort of embryonic existence. However, without a crystal ball it is impossible to tell how this system will develop. In other words, it is currently difficult to analyze how well the civil society model will predict the development of civil society in the Soviet Union since the process has just begun. Second, the model is not built to be predictive in a hostile environment. The civil society model, and its founders, do not discuss what occurs to civil society and informal associations if the state is hostile to their growth. These models, due to their Western European creation, assume the state will tolerate their growth. However, this toleration of societal independence has not occurred in the Soviet Union. Today, there are still strong groups within the former Soviet Union which call for a return to some sort of statist system either a new autocracy, or a resumption of Communist rule. The model was not designed to assume these conditions and thus reveals little insight into what will

occur.

Further research must be done to ascertain the predictive validity of the civil society model in the Soviet Union. This research is of great importance because it will illustrate the extent to which the model is useful. In other words, if civil society collapses in the Soviet Union and some sort of authoritarian state is reinstated, the civil society concept may only help to explain the nature of change under Gorbachev. In this case, the model would primarily be an analytic model for examining an anomaly in Soviet history. Further research is necessary to modify the civil society concept to application in non-Western environments. In this regard, analysis of the ongoing battle between society and state in the former Soviet Union may be useful. It is quite likely that an analysis of these events could shed light on how civil society operates in a hostile environment.

The analysis presented in this thesis indicates that the civil society concept can help to explain the nature of societal change that occurred under Gorbachev. The concept is important because it emphasizes the fundamental importance of these changes in moving the Soviet Union towards an alternative path of development. The model, combined with a historicalal overview of the growth of informal associations in the USSR, helps in understanding the monumental importance of this democratic alternative.

However, the model's predictive validity is largely unknown. This deficiency is due in part to the fact that a full civil society has yet to develop in the Soviet Union. Another major concern with the predictive ability of this model is that it was not developed to explain how civil society would react to a hostile state. Due to this fact, this model suffers from a slight Western bias by assuming that civil society will be allowed to grow freely. This has not historically been the case in the Russian/Soviet experience. Further research is thus necessary to fine tune the model more for specific application to the Soviet Union. In the final analysis, this model is a novel idea which helps to explain the importance of societal change in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev.

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