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Public Participation in Soviet Environmental Policy

J. William Futrell*

The role and influence of individuals and voluntary groups is one of the most interesting aspects of Soviet environmental policy. Since citizen participation plays so large a part in United States environmental policy, Americans are particularly interested in the role public participation plays in the USSR. Their questions are not easy to answer because the two political systems are so different, the philosophies of participation are dissimilar, and the two societies value contrasting aspects of participation. Observers associated with the ongoing environmental exchanges administered by the Environmental Protection Agency on the United States side and by Hydromet on the Soviet side¹ believe that the environmen-

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1. The conduit for cooperative work between the United States and the Soviet Union on environmental issues is the agreement entitled "Cooperation in Environmental Protection." It was signed in May, 1972 as one of a series of bilateral science and technology agreements jointly undertaken by the United States and the Soviet Union in the early 1970s. By the terms of the Agreement, cooperation is to aim at "solving the most important aspects of the problems of the environment" in the following areas:

- air pollution;
- water pollution;
- agricultural pollution;
- urban environment;
- preservation of nature and the organization of preserves;
- marine pollution;
- biological and genetic consequences of pollution;
- influence of environmental changes on climate;
- earthquake prediction;
- arctic and subarctic ecological systems; and,
- legal and administrative measures for protecting the environment.

Each of these areas has been set up as a separate project governed by a project leader. The role of citizen participation in policy making is one of the study topics of the section on legal and administrative measures. The author has followed the work

tal field is one of the areas in which the Soviet government has publicly welcomed increasing public participation.

In the course of these exchanges, the Soviets refer to the importance of mass organizations in mobilizing citizen participation. The most important of these mass organizations in the environmental field is the All Russian Society for the Protection of Nature. As opposed to the United States where citizen participation efforts tend to emphasize advocacy and influencing government, Soviet Union citizen participation emphasizes popular education. Effective environmental advocates in the Soviet Union make their push through elite academic and scientific circles rather than through mass organization.

This paper reviews Soviet citizen participation theory, compares it to American participation theory, examines the major Soviet mass organizations from the view point of U.S. theory, and considers the recent developments of the Glasnost era on participation practices.

I. Soviet Citizen Participation Theory

The basic legal documents of the USSR call for widespread political participation. This emphasis is carried forward in the various statutes such as the fundamental legislation on marriage and the family:

Art. 1. The Tasks of Soviet Legislation on Marriage and the Family.

Soviet legislation on marriage and the family has the following tasks: the further strengthening of the Soviet family, based upon the principles of communist morality.

...

The rearing of children by the family in combination organically with public instilling of a spirit of devotion to the homeland, a communist attitude toward labor and the preparation of children for active participation in the making of a communist society.²

of this section closely since 1979 when he served as a member of the U.S. delegation hosted by the All-Russian Society for the Protection of Nature.

2. Fundamental Principles of Legislation of the USSR and of the Union of Re-

Article 9 of the Soviet Constitution emphasizes the role of citizens:

The principal direction in the development of the political system of Soviet society is the extension of socialist democracy, namely ever broader participation of citizens in managing the affairs of society and the state, continuous improvements of the machinery of state, heightening of the activity of public organizations, strengthening of the system of people's control, consolidation of the legal foundations of the functioning of the state and of public life, greater openness and publicity, and constant responsiveness to public opinion.

The Soviet Constitution has three provisions on environmental quality. Article 18 states:

In the interests of the present and future generations the necessary steps are taken in the USSR to protect and make scientific, rational use of the land and its mineral and water resources, and the plant and animal kingdoms, to preserve the purity of air and water, ensure reproduction of natural wealth, and improve the human environment.³

The Soviet Constitution states the duties of its citizens toward environmental protection:

Article 67. Citizens of the USSR are obligated to protect nature and conserve its riches.

Article 68. Concern for the preservation of historical mon-

publics on Marriage and the Family, *Ved. Verkh. Sov. SSSR*, No. 27, item 241, June 27, 1968.

3. In actual practice, these constitutional provisions have not played a role in the extensive environmental protection efforts made in the USSR during the last fifteen years. The constitutional provisions are seen as expressive of national policy. The guiding forces in shaping environmental policy are not the constitutional provisions, but other complex sources, often extralegal and extremely political, which effect a compromise between Communist Party directives, centralized state planning, and the legal world of administrative decrees.

uments and other cultural values is a duty and obligation of citizens of the USSR.⁴

It is clear that the Soviets themselves see public participation as an important social value as articulated in their basic legal documents, although the priority of participation against other important social values is not clear from the laws. The all embracing provisions of the Soviet Constitution strike many Americans as being more of a list of ideals rather than hard law.

Soviet law is a branch of civil law. The Soviet codes evolved from French and German law and share the Civil Code's emphasis on completeness, even when the law may announce society's aspirations rather than enforceable commands. How are the Soviet legal prescriptions on citizen participation implemented? Is participation pervasive in fact or is it seen as a social value to which the society aspires? Or do the Soviets and the Americans have different activities, different values in mind when they refer to participation?

The extent and nature of public participation in Soviet

4. Soviet writing on citizen participation emphasizes the citizen's obligations and is silent on citizen empowerment. A leading treatise on Soviet environmental law by Oleg Kolbasov makes many comparisons between Soviet and U.S. environmental laws and policies, but is silent on the role of citizen groups - both in the U.S. and the USSR. The longest passage on the public's role in environmental law and policy stresses citizen obligations:

[E]mphasis should be given to the importance of a correct understanding by citizens of their obligation to respect nature and to adopt the environment's pollution and depletion.

Occasionally, this function of citizens is interpreted in a way that is too narrow. In particular, citizens are then viewed as residents of cities, rural settlements, and other population centers, or else as tourists, hunters and fishermen. But the obligation to preserve nature must be addressed above all to persons in specific professions who are constantly engaged in social production activities. For it is on them that ecologically correct uses of the existing powerful means through which society influences the environment depend — in industry, the production of energy, transportation, and agriculture. The legal obligation of citizens to protect nature must become a professional official obligation of persons engaged in taking and carrying out economic decisions — planners, supply specialists, finance managers, engineers, technicians, and administrators.

O. Kolbasov, *Ecology: Political Institutions and Legislation - Environmental Law in the USSR*, at 85.

political life has been the subject of a sharp and extended debate among American-Soviet scholars. Marxist-Leninist teachings stress the importance of public participation. A leading U.S. scholar observes:

[O]ne of the great paradoxes of the systems we have called "totalitarian" has been their strong emphasis upon mass participation as well as upon tight central control. The traditional authoritarian dictatorship asked no more from its citizens than political passivity and acquiescence, but the leaders of the Communist party have demanded more. Even under Stalin, they strove for the "total and active involvement of all citizens" in the affairs of a rapidly changing and ever more complex society, and in broad comparative terms the Soviet Union has, in fact, been a modern participatory state.⁵

An older generation of American scholars dismissed the Soviet emphasis on public participation as window dressing, as unimportant in decision-making, and as attempts to foster public support of the State, with the citizen groups limited to serve as buffers between the masses and officials. In the Leninist-authoritarian tradition, the direction of messages is top to bottom. Critics point to the provisions of the Family Law as evidence of the view that the ideal citizen is one who is completely politicized, yielding to the party even in the most personal aspects of life.⁶

These critical observers frequently dismiss the role of the societal or mass organizations such as the Young Communists and the All Russian Society for the Protection of Nature which are a highly visible feature of Communist society. The organizations are characterized as "transmission belts" which interpret policy to the masses but which do not allow for two

5. J. Hough & M. Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed* 277 (1979) [footnotes omitted].

6. For an example of the older viewpoint see H. Swearer, *Popular Participation: Myths and Realities*, 9 *Problems of Communism* 42 (1960). A large and influential group of American scholars still holds similar views and their work is published by such leading centers as the Georgetown Center for Strategic Studies. See G. Hannah, *Soviet Information Network*, 4, 42 (1977).

way traffic by informing government of the desires of citizens.⁷ Within these mass organizations, power is concentrated in the headquarters staff which, in turn, takes directions from government officials. Thus, no significant role has been accorded to the established mass associations in shaping policy.

Some western political scientists even go so far as to dismiss Soviet public participation techniques as "pseudo-participatory devices."⁸ They specifically criticize the Soviet system's tight control of information, the limiting of public debate to issues chosen by the regime, the limits on real choices in plebiscites, the lack of concern for civil rights, the intolerance of dissent, and the insistence on adherence to a party line.⁹

The common view among American scholars until around 1970 was that there were no interest groups, as Americans know them, in the Soviet Union, which was seen as a totalitarian government jealous of any autonomous behavior by groups other than the state or the party. Groups or factions opposed to or competitive with the leadership were not to be permitted. More recently, U.S. scholars of Soviet affairs have described a different scene, pointing to real activity bearing on party deliberations, with selected groups articulating competing interests and playing a part in shaping policy.¹⁰ As evidence, scholars have pointed to the greatly expanded participation in decision making by experts and specialists in their fields which began in the Khrushchev era (1953-1964). Prominent among the emerging influential groups were scientists and other professionals who emerged as principal figures in a new elite. They were important as lobbyists and the leadership was responsive to their views. Soviet conservationists see

7. The principle that mass organizations are transmission belts of party policy is a key facet of Leninism. For a discussion of mass organizations as transmission belts see H. Swearer, *supra* note 6, at 46.

8. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *Citizen Participation in the American Federal System* 30 (1979) [hereinafter *Advisory Commission*].

9. M. Margolis, *Viable Democracy* 72-77 (1979).

10. For example, the standard political science text on the USSR in the 1950's was Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (1950). The 1979 revision by Jerry Hough is titled, *How the Soviet Union is Governed*.

themselves as a part of this scientific lobby and look to leaders in the Academy of Sciences to make their points for them.

Since the 1960s and 1970s, the rising curve in the influence of scientific elites has combined with a deeply felt impulse toward the preservation of old Russian traditional values to make protection of nature an important nationalistic value. Commentators now discuss the development of informal ad hoc alliances which rearrange the traditional groups around specific issues. For instance, writers, artists, scientists, and lawyers joined together in letter writing campaigns (both privately circulated unpublished letters to higher officials and published letters to *Pravda* and other journals) protesting the destruction of Moscow's historical monuments when the hotel Rossiya was constructed.¹¹

The type of pressure exerted by these groups may be compared with American lobbying. However, the main target of these Soviet groups is not the legislature, but a state agency or party committee. Debate takes place, but in private not in public, in the closed session of an engineers' conference, not on the floor of a public assembly. While these proceedings are sometimes reported, the sanitized record can soften the sharpness of the exchanges. A key question for a scholar studying Soviet interest groups would be a survey tracking the upsurge of meetings, travel, and conferences for specific interest groups. It is then that the "family circles," represented by the interlocking boards (or presidiums) of the Soviet trust network (or old boy network), come into play. The arguments are made, and what influence there is, is used. But they do not erode official dogma. These special interest groups do not take stands contrary to positions of the Communist Party which articulates the interests of all social groups. The making and announcement of policy remains highly centralized and authoritarian, and the command trickles from the top down.¹²

One American scholar has described the Soviet system of interest groups and public participation as "Corporatism:"

11. National Park Service, *Historic Preservation in the USSR* (1980).

12. D. Barry & C. Barry, *Contemporary Soviet Politics*, 220 (1978).

A system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized and licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports.¹³

"Corporatism" is not what U.S. environmentalists mean when they speak of citizen participation. U.S. citizen participation efforts revolve around highly political interest groups combining people with a common goal. Such groups are by definition prohibited in the Soviet Union because all political power is concentrated in the Communist Party.

The sharpest contrast between public participation in the United States and in the Soviet Union arises out of the contrast between the Soviet government's one-party system and uniform ideology and the United States' system of pluralistic interest groups operating in a system of separated and divided powers.

II. Public Participation and American Environmentalists

Before further discussion of Soviet public participation, it might be helpful to outline the nature of environmentalist citizen participation in the United States in order to identify the cultural standards which color the American view of Soviet citizen participation.

The Environmental Law Institute periodically conducts seminars on American environmental law for visitors from other countries with different legal systems. Most of these, such as Germany and the United Kingdom, have a unitary

13. C. Ziegler, *Environmental Policy in the USSR* 46 (1987). Jerry Hough observes that interest group demands in the United States are made by spokesmen for autonomous groups (e.g., labor union chiefs, Sierra Club attorneys, etc.), but in the Soviet Union the interest group spokesman more often than not is making the demand on someone who appointed him and has the power to remove him. See J. Hough, *The Soviet Union and Social Science Theory* 105 (1977).

system of government with the executive and his or her cabinet emerging from the Parliament. The USSR carries this consolidation even further. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the sole avenue for political participation. These foreign environmentalists express admiration for many aspects of American environmental law such as citizen suits, environmental impact statements and freedom of information requests. Most of all, they express admiration for our activist citizen organizations. At the same time, however, they express repugnance for the overly political and legalistic nature of American environmental law. The phenomena are two sides of the same coin. The unique system of American environmental laws and institutions are a direct consequence of the pluralistic system encouraged by the U.S. Constitution.

The American constitutional system of separated and divided power is directly responsible for the American innovation in environmental affairs most admired by foreigners: the power and influence of citizen groups. This system of separated and divided powers sets up opposing poles which electrify an otherwise nonpolitical electorate and attracts individuals and groups to pressure competing sides. Under the American system, special interest groups pressure officials in the executive branch offices and congressional representatives.

The United States has become a country of politicized and highly organized interest groups with an association for every political interest. Political scientist James Wilson has advanced the theory that government agencies, competing for popular support and providing both subsidies and new access points to power, fuel the growth of citizen associations. The U.S. has many more lobbying associations than other countries because the greater decentralization and dispersion of political authority in the U.S. creates so many pressure points where voluntary associations can be effective.¹⁴ The dramatic increase in environmental group participation from 500,000 to 2.5 million members during a fifteen year span is paralleled by the increasing clout of these groups in shaping the national

14. J. Wilson, *Political Organizations* 83 (1973).

environmental agenda.¹⁵ Legislative successes led to increased membership which led to further political influence. Groups like the Sierra Club, which were seen in the 1960s as being hiking clubs, were perceived as part of a political movement in the 1970s.¹⁶

The shape of our American laws reflects this congressional/citizen group partnership. Citizen groups are keenly aware of the mesh between agency practice and congressional committees which review agency budgets and conduct oversight hearings. If an environmental or industry group does not prevail on the shape of regulations at the Environmental Protection Agency, its recourse is Congress, where it lobbies friendly members.

Access to information is a key element in environmental campaigns. Congress has consistently promoted citizen access to information on government statistics and plans, often over the opposition of the executive branch. No other country in the world allows ordinary citizens such extensive access to information as the United States does. Congress enlists citizen assistance in monitoring executive branch performance by giving citizens expanded access to information. While investigative journalism and congressional oversight hearings are a primary tool in this effort, during the 1970s, Congress dramatically increased governmental oversight by giving citizen groups access to information through environmental impact statements and expanded freedom of information requests. It opened the doors to citizen enforcement of environmental laws by creating citizen suit provisions in seven of the major environmental statutes. In all these efforts Congress is vying with the executive branch, empowering citizens to be an extra avenue of investigation and oversight.

The American tradition of public participation, which empowers people, looks beyond the utilitarian principles of

15. *The Growth in Environmental Organization Memberships*, 29 *Env't No.* 6, at 35 (1987).

16. Faich & Gable, *The Environmental Movement: From Recreation to Politics*, 14 *Pac. Soc. Rev.* 270 (1971); S. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States 1955-1985* (1977).

John Stuart Mill to the revolutionary teachings of Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson was a lifelong "Apostle of Human Rights"¹⁷ and "advocated extending public participation as both instrumental (making things happen differently) as well as an end in itself by enhancing individual self-development and keeping the system republican."¹⁸ He wrote:

In government, as well as in every other business of life, it is by division and subdivision of duties alone, that all matters, great and small, can be managed to perfection. And the whole is cemented by giving to every citizen, personally, a part in the administration of the public affairs.¹⁹

In practice, American public participation opportunities are broader than those found in any other country. The Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations surveyed the range of American public participation objectives in a 1980 survey.²⁰ The committee found that public participation efforts can:

1. Give information to citizens.
 - a. Disseminate information.
 - b. Inform and educate the public.
2. Get information from and about citizens.
 - a. Identify problems, attitudes, and objective characteristics of citizens.
 - b. Gauge citizen attitudes toward government.
3. Improve public decisions and programs.
 - a. Enhance program coordination by counter-balancing special interests with the general public interest.

17. Advisory Commission, *supra* note 8, at 25 (quoting Dumas Malone in Jefferson; A. Mason and R. Leach, *In Quest of Freedom* 217 (1960)).

18. T. Jefferson, Notes on Virginia in 4 *The Works of Thomas Jefferson* 64 (Ford ed. 1905).

19. Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Kercheval (July 13, 1816) *quoted in* A. Mason, *Free Government in the Making*, 372 (1956).

20. Advisory Commission, *supra* note 8, at 61-97.

4. Enhance acceptance of public decisions and build consensus.
 - a. Get citizen endorsements.
 - b. Build constituency for programs.
 - c. Minimize opposition by providing full information.
5. Supplement public agency work.
 - a. Accept citizen volunteers on the staff.
 - b. Share policy-making roles with citizens.
6. Alter political power patterns and resource allocations.
 - a. Establish citizen control.
 - b. Oppose the government.
7. Protect individual and minority group rights and interests.
 - a. Go to court.
 - b. Mount administrative appeals.
 - c. Stage protests, demonstrations, strikes, pickets, etc.
8. Delay or avoid making difficult public decisions.
 - a. Call for further studies.
 - b. Go to court.
 - c. Mount administrative appeals.
 - d. Stage protests, demonstrations, strikes, pickets, etc.

Environmental public participation efforts in the United States focus on areas 6, 7, and 8, activities which use such contentious means as lawsuits and demonstrations. Public participation in the Soviet Union focuses on areas 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, activities which seek to enlist citizen efforts in cooperative work with the government. But to look for the ways in which Soviet citizen participation efforts differ from Jeffersonian models is to ask the wrong question. A study of Soviet citizen participation should focus on how environmental advocates in the Soviet Union try to persuade their government to curb pollution and protect natural values.

III. Soviet Public Participation in Practice

The Soviet system does not offer the wide range of public participation activities encouraged in the United States. This should not be a reason to dismiss or belittle their substantial public participation efforts, especially in the environmental area. American observers need to be alert to alternative methods of participation. American environmentalists who have visited the USSR and worked with Soviet environmentalists have been impressed by the work of such mass organizations as the All Russian Society for the Protection of Nature²¹ and by informal coalition efforts to protect natural areas such as Lake Baikal.

The leading mass organization concerned with environmental quality is the All Russian Society for the Protection of Nature. Established in 1924, it now has close to thirty-eight million members, half of whom are school children. At first it was a scholarly scientific society, and some of the leading Soviet scientists still serve on its Presidium (Board of Directors). For a long period, V.V. Krinitsky, then Chief of the Preserves Branch (the equivalent of the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Interior for Parks and Wildlife), was chairman. Other members have included such nationally prominent environmental professionals as Professor A.G. Bannikov, the most prominent Soviet Academic writer on wildlife protection, and Oleg Kolbasov, perhaps the most widely published writer on environmental law. Such men play an active role in guiding the affairs of the organization, consulting with the staff, and serving as a network to other interests. From our observation, it was very clear that one of the chief conduits for input by concerned environmental professionals and citizens was through the Academy of Sciences which has many informal interlocks with the All Russian Society.

The Society is organized along both vertical and horizon-

21. Houck, *Lenin's Trees*, Audubon, Mar. 1980, at 104-116, N. Yost, *The Citizen's Role in Nature Protection in the USSR*, 11 *Env'tl. L. Rep.* 50051 (1981). The author's information on the All Russian Society for the Protection of Nature was gathered during a visit to its Moscow headquarters in 1979 and updated in interviews with Oleg Kolbasov, Presidium member, in Washington, D.C. (1987).

tal lines. There is no All Union Society (for the whole USSR), but there are allied societies in each of the Union Republics. Chapters are maintained by regional subdivisions (Oblast, Krai, and cities). In the local chapters, the same patterns of interface between board members and scientists and writers are repeated. Thus, a leading official in the water pollution control field may be on the board of directors of the Leningrad chapter of the All Russian Society, or a leading official in air pollution questions may be found on the board of the Moscow All Russian Society. American environmentalists and U.S. investigative reporters would probably characterize this as co-operation if it were done in the United States. In the Russian system, such patterns of interface are seen as evidence that the society is effective, important and worth the official's time. The Society's members feel that they have a friend who can make his voice heard. One hears overtones of the British system with its reliance on the trust (or old boy) network.

The Society's pyramid-like organizational structure commences from Moscow through the chapters to neighborhood offices. The Society maintains a local office in each of Moscow's thirty-two districts with staff workers, exhibit halls, and very popular specialty shops selling plants, handicrafts, and gardening supplies. The shops are perceived as a method of citizen education much as the Sierra Club uses calendars and outdoor equipment to reach out to people in America. These local offices and shops are usually staffed by pensioners, a number of whom are retired military personnel. The pensioners are praised for their ability to procure scarce goods by being able to contact other pensioner colleagues working in other associations. Informal networks are very important in everyday Russian life - and for making policy. The Society does not sponsor outdoor trips (which are run by Intourist), nor does it publish newsletters or journals on the local or national level.²²

22. One fundamental contrast between American and Soviet environmentalists is their different access to information and their ability to easily communicate their views. One observer notes:

Perhaps the most notable difference between Soviet Marxist and non-Marx-

One of the Society's main purposes is to disseminate information on nature protection. The offices distribute publications from the state printing office on the *zapovedniki* (nature preserves) of the area, on endangered wild flowers, youth activities, and various other programs.

The activities of the Society run the gamut of social, commercial, educational, and legal undertakings. A major activity organizes young members as roving deputies, known as Green Patrols, which police the greenbelt around the cities, making citizen arrests of those who chop wood illegally or harm the shrubbery. There is also a Blue Patrol which has the power to report and stop water polluters. These Green and Blue Patrols are mentioned by society members as one of their outstanding citizen participation efforts.²³

One of the Society's major privileges is its statutory right to have its experts comment on government regulations and proposed laws prior to their enactment. This has been compared to the circulation of a rule or regulation by an American administrative agency with a request for comments.²⁴ The national and regional leadership in the Soviet Union are frequently busy planning conferences at which environmental issues are discussed. These meetings are a gathering of the old boy network within the society. The importance of informal

ist social systems is not central planning of means of production, but Party control of means of communication. This control of communication, combined with various forms of institutionalized censorship, has a major effect on the nature of environmental discussion. — What is not permitted is any linking of environmental problems to the nature of the Soviet Union. — It is not only this political speech that is banned. Technical quantitative data on pollution also are regarded as state secrets.

P. Maggs, *Marxism and Soviet Environmental Law*, 23 Colum. J. Transnat'l L. 353, 368-69 (1985).

A leading American scholar notes:

The type of information that is most tightly censored is not that on "defects" in Soviet society (a western observer has relatively little difficulty in collecting an enormous amount of such information from isolated references in Soviet sources), but that dealing with "politics" in the American layman's understanding of that word.

Hough & Fainsod, *supra* note 5, at 292.

23. M. Yurchenko, *Students vs. Poachers*, Soviet Life, Aug. 1984, at 10-13.

24. Ziegler, *supra* note 13, at 120-121.

networks is great.

What is the involvement of the average member in the Society? By the standards of American environmentalists from the Sierra Club and the National Wildlife Federation, the instruments of organizational solidarity are weak. The demands of membership in the All Russian Society are probably no more onerous than an American membership in the Red Cross. There is no newsletter and no program of demanding activities. The dues are only thirty kopecks (fifty cents) a year (which nevertheless gives the Presidium major income from the 38 million members). In both societies, members ascribe to the ideals and goals espoused by the organization and leave the work to the staff. There are few demands for emotional or physical engagement of the individual in the society's work. The accomplishments of the goals are the work of the Board of Directors, important people, and the professional staff.

Probably most important for the individual (and the State) is that the Society serves as an outlet for nature protection sentiments. It should be seen in the context of Soviet society. This is not an environmental group like the Sierra Club. There are no environmental plaintiffs such as we know them because there are no such things as environmental lawsuits against the state. Nevertheless, these people see themselves as environmental advocates. They see their role as supporting the government, pushing government officials to work more actively for environmental protection. Thus, citizen participation for the All Russian Society members is following behind government officials who are for stronger efforts of nature protection, and increasingly membership involves advice and information to the government.

Since the United Nations Stockholm Conference in 1972, an international environmental movement in the world has developed. Most of the major environmental organizations in the United Kingdom, India, Australia, Japan, and the United States are part of this network. The All Russian Society has not been a part of such organizations; it has been closed off from communication with other similar organizations. As part

of the 1972 U.S./USSR bilateral agreement,²⁵ section 11 (legal and administrative) sought to initiate a series of exchanges of non-governmental organization representatives between the two countries. A delegation of Sierra Club leaders visited Moscow and met with leaders of the All Russian Society in September 1979. To the keen disappointment of both the leaders of section 11 and the Sierra Club, no return visit by a delegation from the All Russian Society has yet taken place. Visits have been scheduled and postponed, rescheduled and postponed again. Thus, one of the disappointments of the exchanges has been their failure to build a bridge between citizen participation leaders in the Soviet Union and the United States.

IV. The Special Role of Scientific Groups

There seems to be widespread agreement that the most effective environmental advocates in the Soviet Union are members of the scientific elite. The Academy of Science of the USSR is at the center of the Soviet establishment. Many of the institutes of the Academy of Sciences and its branch affiliates are involved in ecology studies. On any environmental issue there may be dozens or even hundreds of institutes, departments, mass organizations, or institutions of higher education involved in study and discussion. The U.S. International Communication Agency's (now the U.S. Information Agency) *Soviet Research Institutes Project* identified a total of 329 research establishments in the USSR dealing with some aspect of the natural environment.²⁶

Much of the literature on Soviet environmental policy deals with the work of the scientific establishment and its relation with Soviet decision-makers. A review of books by specialists such as Charles Ziegler, Thane Gustafson, and Joan DeBardeleben will give the reader a much fuller picture of the interface between the Soviet scientific elite and the decision-

25. See *supra*, note 1.

26. B. Ruble, *The Emergence of Soviet Environmental Studies*, 5 *Env'tl. Rev.* 7 (1980).

makers.²⁷

But lacking in all of this is an organized vehicle for dissent; a vehicle provided by citizen groups in the United States. A leading scholar of Soviet affairs has written that Soviet science needs dissent and that a Russian Sierra Club could have prevented Chernobyl.²⁸

V. Environmental Participation in the Glasnost Era

During the last two years the Soviet press has reported increasing government emphasis on the importance of citizen participation. Mikhail Gorbachev's calls for *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (reconstruction) have opened the doors for unofficial environmental grassroots organizations. In January 1987, the Central Committee of the Communist Party adopted a call for glasnost, self-criticism, and democratization.²⁹

In the fall 1987, press releases from the Soviet news agency TASS emphasized an increased role for the public in decision-making. TASS credits grassroots citizens opposition, among other things, for bringing about a government decision to halt a scheme for diverting a part of the flow of northern and Siberian rivers to the south.³⁰ In an interview with French journalists in October 1987, Gorbachev even went so far to describe the recent developments as "socialist pluralism."³¹

Since the spring 1987, independent clubs have spread in the Soviet Union. Instead of being treated as disloyal dissi-

27. See, e.g., C. Ziegler, *Environmental Policy in the USSR* (1987); J. DeBardeleben, *The Environment and Marxism - Leninism: The Soviet and East German Experience* (1985); T. Gustafson, *Reform in Soviet Politics: Lessons of Recent Policies on Land and Water* (1981).

28. Graham, *Soviet Science Needs dissent - A Russian Sierra Club Could Have Prevented Chernobyl*, *The Washington Post*, June 15, 1985.

29. *Unofficial Groups Discuss Social Action* (Paris AFP Broadcast in English, Sept. 12, 1987) (translated by Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Report: Soviet Union, Sept. 14, 1987, at 40).

30. *Public's Role in Decision Making Growing* (Moscow TASS Broadcast in English, Sept. 16, 1987) (translated by Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Report: Soviet Union, Oct. 18, 1987 at 36).

31. Bohlen, *Independent Clubs Spread in Soviet Union*, *Washington Post*, Oct. 11, 1987, at 37.

dents, as might have happened under Brezhnev or earlier party leaders, these activists are receiving widespread press coverage and are being treated sympathetically by both national and party leaders. A nationwide meeting of representatives of fifty-three of the clubs from all over the USSR was held in August 1987 at a hall provided by the Moscow Communist Party. In October 1987, the Soviet news agency Novosti hosted a news conference for club leaders who discussed their concerns with journalists from both the Soviet and foreign press.

Many of these grassroots leaders are environmental activists. Club leaders in the Leningrad area have been particularly effective. They have organized public protests against water pollution which resulted in plant closings.³² These clubs are seen as being a new departure from the more traditional Soviet environmental organizations and similar to citizen participation efforts in the West.³³

American-Soviet scholars are taking a "wait and see" attitude about the development of glasnost and changes in the nature of Soviet citizen participation, but they are very impressed about some of the events of summer and fall 1987.³⁴

VI. Conclusion

Americans seeking to assess Soviet citizen participation must be careful to ask the right questions. Scholars who visit the Soviet Union and apply American standards of citizen participation may well overlook the areas of vitality in the Soviet system. American activists operate in a political system of divided and separated powers which encourages confrontational and adversarial procedures. That system operates to empower citizen groups and reward citizen participation. The

32. Keller, *Storm of Protest Rages Over Dam Near Leningrad*, N. Y. Times, Sept. 27, 1987, at 16.

33. Cockburn, *Up the Revolution of the Soviet New Left*, Wall St. J., Sept. 24, 1987, at 27.

34. In November the situation changed sharply and the future of the grassroots groups became even more uncertain. Keller, *Soviet Beginning to Crack Down on the Unofficial Political Clubs*, N. Y. Times, Nov. 27, 1987; Aksyonov, *Is Glasnost A Game of Mirrors?* N. Y. Times, Mar. 22, 1987.

Soviet system, with its monolithic institutions which vest power in one party, presents a totally different situation, but nevertheless presents opportunities of a different kind for environmental advocacy.

The Soviet citizen groups value their opportunities to act for nature protection. The citizens who work with the All Russian Society for the Protection of Nature believe that they are doing important work. This is the participation of affiliation and self-expression, not the participation of empowerment. While this is less than what American citizen leaders are used to, they should not belittle its importance. One Soviet scholar who differs from the conventional view notes:

[T]here are many types of participation, many types of policy, and many ways in which these various types of policy may be influenced. It would be wrong to focus simply on the limitations on public involvement in political decision-making and to ignore the great extent to which this involvement takes place. A discussion of the role of the individual and of the public as a whole must be as integral a part of a discussion of the political process in the Soviet Union as it would be in a discussion of that process in the West.³⁵

Recently, American observers have been more willing to acknowledge the influence of groups such as the All Russian Society. In the view of these observers, these groups can make a difference because of the powerful economic agencies of the USSR which frequently have conflicting agendas in the resource and environment fields. In such a situation, environmental interests from the universities and the citizen groups can make a difference, bringing in additional evidence of environmental impacts, inspiring letter writing campaigns to the more friendly journals, and in giving voice to the environmental ethic which remains strong in the Russian people.³⁶ The members of the All Russian Society for the Protection of Nature have influenced the provisions of draft environmental

35. Hough & Fainsod, *supra* note 5, at 278.

36. Maggs, *supra* note 22, at 370.

regulations, and have caused local officials to take enforcement actions which would not have been undertaken otherwise.

Every visitor to the Soviet environmental groups comes away sincerely impressed with the Russians love for *Rodina*, the Motherland. The Russian soil and forests, the rivers and mountains are a source of deep personal inspiration for these people. American environmentalists may not be expert on the operations of the Politburo, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, or other crucial matters, but they are expert in judging the consistency of an environmental philosophy and the commitment to environmental values. Our Russian counterparts are dedicated to nature protection and environmental quality.

At the end of a long first day meeting at the Moscow offices of the All Russian Society for the Protection of Nature, one of the officers asked me, "How do you teach your children to love their country?" That question was repeated several times in other cities. In the discussions that followed, it was clear that participation in organizations which worked for nature protection was seen as a means of teaching their children to love their country.

Russians and Americans have much to learn from each other about environmental education and how we teach our children to love their countries, just as we have much to do in our separate efforts aimed at environmental quality in our own home countries. But even more importantly, we need to cooperate to teach our children to love their Mother Earth. A sympathetic study of our differing systems of citizen participation in environmental affairs will assist that cooperative effort.