TITLE: How Democratic are Local Russian Deputies?

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"How Democratic are Local Russian Deputies?"

The answer to the title question of this paper is ambiguous: the reforms of Russian local government introduced in 1990-91 clearly contributed to the emergence of democratic pluralism in that country; it is equally clear that the transition to democracy is far from complete. The conditions of democratic pluralism set forth in this analysis included the dispersion of political power, legitimate political contestation, and opportunities for public participation. The task of this paper was to determine what evidence there is to indicate that such conditions are becoming characteristic of local Russian politics. To do this, the author offers a detailed study of how local government reforms were implemented in the city of Yaroslavl', an ancient Russian provincial capital and an important industrial city located on Russia's "Golden Ring" about 200 miles northeast of Moscow. In the course of five research visits from February, 1990 to January, 1992, the author observed the election of local deputies, attended sessions of the city council, and held often lengthy interviews with government leaders, deputies, and the public. Conclusions based on the study are offered as a point of departure for studying transitions to democracy in other regions of Russia.
To summarize the findings, considerable progress was made at the local level in meeting the conditions set forth for the emergence of democratic pluralism. On the positive side, power is clearly more widely dispersed than it had been under the old system. The Party no longer controls who gets elected to the soviet, nor does it play any role in the formation of the government. Executive and legislative authority is no longer joined, but divided; executive accountability before the legislature is established not only in law, but in fact. Free and competitive elections provide at least the possibility that ultimate accountability will rest with people. Political contestation is manifest not only in competitive elections, but also in the behavior of the deputies in council. It is visible in the formation of voting blocs in council, and in the open opposition of deputies to policies of government leaders with which they do not agree. Finally, there is some evidence to suggest that, however slowly, the public has become involved in the process by which decisions are made, and not only through voting, but through individual and group action.

At the same time, the development of democratic pluralism in local Russian politics, at least as practiced in Yaroslavl', was limited by a number of factors. Of these, probably none is more significant than the conduct of the 1990 elections which did not fully satisfy the requirements of either political contestation or popular consultation. Voters were simply faced with too many candidates running for too many offices in too many elections.
Without partisan affiliation to give them political identity, voters relied on candidates' personal qualifications making their choices less meaningful than they should been as an indicator of the public's policy preferences. Although there was organized opposition in the form of the Yaroslavl' Popular Front, they were unable to get their message out to the electorate because they lacked the resources, experience, or organization to do so. For this reason, instead of dispersing power, the 1990 elections probably enabled older elites to retain more power than they otherwise would have. To some extent, this was also true in the relations between the soviet and its ispolkom. Despite the new separation of powers, the executive branch retained a preponderance of influence partly by virtue of its expertise and partly through its connections to the old nomenklatura. Finally, although the channels for citizen involvement are immeasurably more open than before, there is little evidence to suggest that they are widely used or even perceived as particularly fruitful.

For all of these reasons, the prognosis for the further evolution of Russian local politics in the direction of greater democratic pluralism is uncertain. Much will depend on when and how the next elections of local officials take place. As the political theorists of democracy almost unanimously concede, no other institution is so central for insuring that the criteria of democratic pluralism are met. Much will also depend on whether the Russians can improve their lot economically. Failure to do so invites demagoguery and authoritarian solutions. Such alternatives
are unpalatable, to say the least. If there are policy implications emerging from this analysis, they weigh heavily on the side of those who argue that we have an historic opportunity to support the continued transition to democracy in Russia; the potential costs of doing too little, too late are enormous.
How Democratic Are Local Russian Deputies?

by

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The system of local government that existed in the former Soviet Union prior to 1988 provided scant opportunity for popular control over those who governed, surely an essential feature of representative democracy. (Mayo, p.60). At best, locally elected officials, called deputies, could sometimes act as "ombudsmen" in the communication of citizen preferences to those who governed. (Hahn, 1988a, p.194-198). In his speech to the 19th Party Conference of June, 1988, however, CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev outlined his dramatic proposals to "democratize" the Soviet political system, including local government. Among other things, these proposals called for competitive elections, a division of executive and legislative powers, an end to the interference of the CPSU in local governance (called podmena), and greater local decision-making authority. (Hahn, 1989). The reforms were introduced in the Russian republic in 1990. Did they have their intended effect? Have they contributed to the emergence of democratic pluralism in Russian politics? The purpose of this paper is to contribute to answering this question by looking at how the role of the deputies elected to Russian local government changed in the first year or so after the implementation of the reforms.

Any answer to this question presupposes a clear statement of what is meant by democratic pluralism and of the criteria by which the development of democratic pluralism is to be measured. Moreover, because the requirements of democratic pluralism encompass more than
the issue of representative government, the relationship between the two must also be clarified.
The present paper will employ the American rather than the British usage of the term pluralism
(see Ranney and Kendall, p.24; Solomon, pp.8-20) and accept the conceptualization by Robert
Dahl that essentially it refers to: "organizational pluralism, that is, to the existence of a plurality
of relatively autonomous (independent) organizations (subsystems) within the domain of the
state." (Dahl,1982,p.5).

But what does pluralism have to do with democracy? For Dahl, not all pluralist systems
are necessarily democratic. They become so only if they exist within the conditions of what he
calls "polyarchy", the two central dimensions of which are public contestation and participatory
inclusiveness (Dahl,1971,p.3,4). His criteria for ideal democracy (voting equality, equal
participatory opportunity, "enlightened understanding", control over agenda, and inclusion of
all adults) can only be fully realized in small scale regimes; large-scale democracies require
mechanisms of representation. Among these, a fair electoral process for choosing the few who
will make rules for the many is certainly critical if representation is to be democratic. "Perhaps
no institution is more critical to the differentiation between polyarchies and non-polyarchies than
competitive elections." (Dahl, 1972, p.44). Yet since a single vote in a large country can only
have the slightest impact on government, representation must also be achieved through
associational organizations such as parties and interest groups. It is in this sense that he
concludes: "All democratic countries are pluralist democracies" (Dahl,1982,pp.5,12-16,29
emphasis added).

In his study of community power, Robert Presthus adopts a similar usage of the term
pluralism, defining it as "a system in which political power is fragmented among the branches
of government; it is, moreover, shared between the state and a multitude of private groups and individuals" (Presthus, p.10). For Presthus, the antithesis of pluralism is elitism or "monism" which connotes the concentration of political power or rule by one or few. Just as Dahl ranges actual systems relative to the opposing ideal types of democracy and autocracy, (Dahl, 1972, p.37), Presthus places any given community on a continuum between being comparatively pluralist or elitist. He proposes that five conditions be met for a community to be located near the pluralist end of the spectrum. Since they offer a set of norms against which to measure progress towards democratic pluralism in other countries, including Russia, they are worth noting here:

1) That competing centers and bases of power and influence exist within a political community.

2) Opportunity for individual and organizational access into the political system.

3) That individuals actively participate in and make their will felt through organizations of many kinds.

4) That elections are a viable instrument of mass participation in political decisions, including those on specific issues.

5) That a consensus exists on what may be called the "democratic creed". (Presthus, pp. 22-24).

In the conceptions of both Dahl and Presthus, pluralism is an essential ingredient of a democratic polity because of its importance in linking the public with those who make decisions.
That is, in a representative democracy, if the popular will is to be expressed, if popular control is to be exercised, the elected representative must be cognizant of the public will and take it into consideration. There must be what Austin Ranney calls "popular consultation" (Ranney and Kendall, pp.56-81). Empirical research has tended to conceptualize the problem in terms of "constituency influence" and to focus on analyses of congressional voting behavior (Eulau, et al. ; Miller and Stokes; Kingdon). In their book, Public Opinion and Responsible Democracy, Ippolito, Walker and Kolson hypothesize three basic paths of public influence: direct influence (voting, petitioning, demonstrating); group influence (parties, interest groups) and indirect influence (representatives reflect the public will through attitudinal congruence) (Ippolito, Walker, and Kolson, pp.3-13). Such linkages are possible only under conditions of political pluralism.

At this point it is possible to return to the problem identified at the outset of this paper: Is Russian local government becoming more democratic? From the theoretical overview presented here, at least three criteria suggest themselves. These can be expressed as continuums. First, it seems clear that democratic pluralism requires a dispersion of power. If power remains centralized or monopolized by one or even a few groups, then progress towards pluralist democracy would be minimal. Second, a relatively high degree of contestation would be expected. The absence of legitimate opposition, openly expressed, must also be regarded as a deficiency from the standpoint of democratic pluralism. Finally, a public role in local governance is required. There must be mechanisms for the communication of citizen preferences and evidence that these preferences are taken into account in making decisions. The lack of same would indicate the absence of real popular consultation. In short, the emergence of democratic
pluralism will vary with the relative absence or presence of dispersed power, political contestation, and popular consultation.

The task of this paper is to determine what evidence there is that these indicators of democratic pluralism are becoming characteristic of Russian local politics. How do we propose to do this? The evidence offered here is drawn from a single case study of the city government of Yaroslavl' during the first year or so (1990-91) of the implementation of the local government reforms initially proposed by Gorbachev. More specifically, we will focus on the role of locally elected deputies to the city soviet. To understand how their role has changed and to assess whether they have become more democratic, this paper will first examine the election of the deputies in March, 1990. Then it will describe how the new soviet works, including first-hand observations of a session of the city soviet held in June, 1991. Finally, we will explore the relationship between the deputies and those who elected them. To do so, the paper will rely in part on in-depth interviews with some of the deputies conducted by the author in June, 1991 and on the results of systematic survey questionnaires administered in May, 1991 by the Yaroslavl' city soviet's own Center for the Study of Public Opinion.

The advantage of the case study approach proposed here is that it can provide a picture of the democratization process that is rich in detail and "thickly descriptive" (Geertz). The obvious disadvantage is that there is no way of confirming the generalizability of conclusions based on only one case. Though there is no apparent a priori reason to suggest that Yaroslavl' is so far out of the Russian political mainstream that it constitutes a unique case, it should be emphasized that our purpose is not to offer definitive answers about whether Russian local politics is becoming more democratic by looking at what is happening in Yaroslavl', but to
generate hypotheses which may be tested in other communities of that vast land. 3

How Local Russian Deputies are Elected

Competitive elections are surely the cornerstone for the development of democratic pluralism. They are the locus of popular control in representative government, for those in elected office who choose to ignore their constituents' concerns are periodically subject to removal by them. Few students of democratic theory would disagree with H.B. Mayo when he writes: "The one institutional embodiment of the principle universally regarded as indispensable in modern democracies is that of choosing the policy-makers (representatives) at elections held at more or less regular intervals." (Mayo, p.61). At the same time, it is clear that not all elections are equally democratic. According to Gerald Pomper, at least six requirements need to be met before an election can be regarded as truly free: meaningful choices, the freedom to know and discuss the choices, a manageable number of clear choices, the equal weighting of votes, free registration of choices (a secret ballot) and accurate registration, counting and reporting. (Pomper, pp.263-266).

By these standards, elections in the Soviet Union prior to 1989 can hardly be considered democratic despite the persistent claims of Soviet scholars of that time to the contrary. Reports of nearly universal turnout, public financing, demographic representativeness, and universal suffrage could not alter the simple fact: There was no choice of candidates. Until 1989, the Communist Party and only the Party determined who would be elected by virtue of its control over the nomination process. For the sake of establishing a baseline for comparison, it is worth
describing, briefly, how the old system worked (Hahn, 1988b, pp. 92-107).

Nominations to various legislative councils (known as the soviets) were conducted in the workplace. While there was no legal requirement that only one candidate be nominated for each seat in the soviets at various levels, in order to ensure an artificial representation of different demographic groups (by gender, age, education, occupation, Party membership, etc.), the corresponding Party secretary at each level of government would inform the Party committee at the place of work as to the number and composition of the deputies it should nominate. After discussions with leaders of the Komsomol and trade union committees at the workplace, a list of willing candidates would be drawn up, confirmed, and presented at a general meeting for what usually was unanimous nomination. On election day, voters were mobilized by local "agitators" into dropping ballots listing a single candidate for each office into a ballot box. Since the outcome was foreordained, and the poll workers wanted to get home early to enjoy the holiday, voting irregularities were apparently widespread and tolerated (Zaslavsky and Brym). About the only requirement of a free election that was met was the equal weighting of votes: All votes were equally unimportant.

The introduction of a competitive element in the electoral process was originally called for by Gorbachev in a speech to the CPSU Central Committee in January, 1987. Subsequently, an experiment in competitive elections was proposed and carried out in less than 5% of the seats at stake in the June, 1987 local elections (Hahn, 1988b). The results proved disastrous for many of the old Party and state officials who Gorbachev had come to regard as a "brake" on his economic reforms. In hopes of undermining his opposition further he proposed to the 19th Party Conference of June, 1988 that they become the norm in national elections to be held in 1989 and
in local elections thereafter.

While providing a legal basis for the freest elections in Soviet history, the Law on Elections adopted on December 1, 1988 for elections to the Congress of People's Deputies in Spring, 1989 contained a number of defects. It set aside a third of the seats for public organizations most of which went to the CPSU or Party dominated bodies. It required pre-election meetings which could be used, and were, to discourage candidates who were critical of the Party's political monopoly. It allowed the possibility that seats could go uncontested (almost 400/1500 were). And, since the new parliament was to be elected indirectly, Gorbachev was assured a majority of votes even before it met. In fact, it can be argued that the election rules were arranged to produce just this result (Hahn, 1990).

Unhappiness on the part of many reformers, including Andrei Sakharov, with the 1988 electoral law resulted in significant changes in the laws adopted on 27 October, 1989 for Russian republic and local elections (Zakon; Mann). The Law on Local Elections provided for direct elections to all local soviets on the basis of equal and universal adult suffrage and by secret ballot. No seats were to be assigned to public organizations and the requirement that candidates be approved at pre-election meetings of district election commissions was abolished. Candidates could be nominated at the workplace, as before, or by officially registered public organizations or at places of residence. The number of candidates per single-member district was "unlimited" (again making uncontested districts possible). To be elected, a candidate had to receive more than 50% of the votes cast with no fewer than 50% of the eligible electorate turning out to vote. Since it was clearly possible that no one would emerge victorious in a district with several candidates, provisions had to be made for runoffs (povtornie golosovanie) and for repeat
elections (povtornie vybory). Runoffs occurred in districts where three or more candidates were running and none got 50%. Repeat elections (including new nominations and time for campaigning) were held in districts where there were one or two running and none got 50%.

The point to be made here is that the election law of 1989 is cumbersome, to say the least. By not allowing the winner to take all and by requiring that 50% of those eligible vote, it creates the possibility for virtually endless elections; from the standpoint of the average voter, the process is unnecessarily complicated. A simple majority without a required level of turnout would be equally democratic. Despite its many shortcomings, however, the Law provided a legal basis for comparatively democratic elections.

The first round of elections was held in Yaroslavl’ (as in the rest of the Russian Republic) on 4 March, 1990. Runoff elections were held two weeks later on March 18 and repeat elections on 22 April. Did they meet the requirements of a free election? The first of these, meaningful choice, has both a quantitative and a qualitative dimension. Quantitatively, there must be at least two candidates for each position. Generally speaking this was the case in Yaroslavl’. 565 candidates were registered for the 200 seats in the city soviet, an average of 2.8 per seat, although 52 of these withdrew before election day. There was considerable variance from the mean, however. Twenty districts had between 5 and 7 candidates, while in 47 there was only one. It is noteworthy, however, that running unopposed did not guarantee election. In 7 of the 47 such cases more than 50% of those voting defeated candidates by crossing their name off the ballot; among the defeated were the first and second secretaries of the city Party Committee (Gorkom).

As this last point suggests, the local elections in Yaroslavl’ provided some degree of
meaningful choice in a qualitative sense as well. On the one hand, voters could voice their opinions on the old Party-state apparatus by voting them out of office. Approximately 65 members of the apparat were on the ballot on March 4; only 27 of the 179 seated for the first organizational session of the city soviet which met on May 10 were from this group. On the other hand, the Yaroslavl' Popular Front (YPF) represented an alternative which people could vote for. The YPF originated as a protest movement against the election of former Obkom 1st Secretary, Fedor Ivanovich Loshenkov, (often referred to locally as "Tsar Fedor") to the 19th Party Conference in the summer of 1988 (Izvestiia, June 18, 1988). Although the movement was initiated mostly by those in the Party committed to Gorbachev's policies of perestroika, it became radicalized over time and by the time of the local elections, it was openly campaigning against the local Party establishment, even though four of its five co-chairs were Party members (Izvestiia, Jan. 10, 1990). Although splintered by the emergence of a more radical group called The Movement for Popular Rule, the YPF had managed to elect Boris Shamshev to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies and had become broadly affiliated with the Inter-regional Group of Deputies (of which Shamshev was a member) and the national democratic movement, "Democraticheskaia Rossiia".

The YPF supported 67 candidates in the March elections winning 22 seats to the first session of the soviet which was convened on May 10, 1990. Although this does not, at first glance, compare favorably with the ratio of winners to losers among the apparat, appearances are deceiving. In fact, enough of the remaining deputies were sufficiently sympathetic to the YPF that they formed a voting bloc of 44 deputies called "Democratic Yaroslavl" which, in coalition with two other reform-minded deputy groups, easily controlled the election of the chair
and vice-chair of the city soviet (Hahn, 1991 p.329).

Moreover, despite its limited resources, the YPF acted like a proto-party. Not only did it recruit and support candidates, it organized mass demonstrations on February 25 and on March 17. It disseminated information to the public by maintaining a kiosk in the center of town next to the city bus terminal. Although not always efficiently, the leadership provided a measure of internal discipline. At an organizational meeting attended by the author on the eve of the March 4 elections, much of the discussion turned on getting out the vote, giving out telephone contact numbers, going over the mechanics of voting, reading telegrams of support from Yeltsin and Popov - in short, the sort of precinct politics familiar to this author from 8 years in elective office in a city government in suburban Philadelphia.

There were also important differences from the American experience of local politics, however, differences which may help account for the fact that the YPF did not do better than it did and which must be acknowledged in any assessment of meaningful choice. Pomper's model, cited earlier, specifies that choices should be manageable and that voters must have the opportunity to know and discuss these choices. It is hard to conclude that these requirements were met. The first reason has to do with the law or, more accurately, the lack of one, for registering political parties. Candidates could not run on a Party label. The only hint of partisan identification was whether the candidate was a member of the CPSU. If not, they were identified as non-party (bezpartiinyi). Since 70% of the candidates were Party members, including many supported by the YPF, these labels had little meaning. The absence of legislation by which alternative parties could register and identify their candidates meant that voters had to rely on word of mouth and on other forms of mass communication to know which candidates
stood for what.

It is in connection with this last point that the second problem arises. At the time the elections were held, the local Party officials had an overwhelming advantage in resources: they commanded a fleet of cars, telephones, finances, and the main means of mass communication, including access to radio, TV, and the press. They had offices, an infrastructure - in short, an effective organization. The YPF had none of these advantages. How were they to make their case known to the voter? Demonstrations, word of mouth, and a kiosk were hardly sufficient to ensure that YPF supported candidates could publicize their names and policy positions so that voters could make an informed choice. In retrospect, it’s surprising that the YPF did as well as they did.

The other three requirements for a free election identified by Pomper - equal weighting of votes, free registration of choices, and accurate registration, counting and reporting of ballots - appear to have been largely fulfilled in Yaroslavl’. With respect to equal weighting of votes, the average number of voters registered in each district was 2312. While the range varied from a low of 1299 voters in district #163 to a high of 3455 in #154, (a clear violation of the principle of one man - one vote), the standard deviation from the mean was only 295 indicting that in 2/3 of the districts the actual number of eligible voters was less than 13% larger or smaller than the norm.

The critical condition for the free registration of choices is a secret ballot. In contrast to previous practice, Russian voters were now required to take their paper ballots into a curtained booth to be marked. Personal observation at several precincts randomly chosen during both the March 4 and March 18 elections gave the impression that this procedure was routinely followed,
although a few older voters tried to go directly to the red ballot boxes on the other side of the booths to deposit their unmarked ballots as in the old days and had to be gently reminded that things were different now.

The same may be said about registration, counting and reporting procedures. In the precincts visited by the author, voters went first to a table where 10-15 members of the election commission sat and had their names verified on a voter list. They were then given five differently colored ballots, one for each level of government where seats were to be filled: borough, city, oblast, and RSFSR national and territorial. The polls were open from 7 A.M. to 8 P.M. during which 283,691 voters cast their ballots (a 62% turnout). The percentage voting in elections for representatives to the Russian Republic parliament and in rural districts was higher, in some cases substantially so (Hahn, 1991, p.328). After the polls closed the ballot boxes were sealed by the chair of the election commission, unused ballots were destroyed, and counting began.

The author received permission to be present on March 18 when this was done for precinct 9/174 which was located in the ship-building area of the Frunze borough (raion v gorode). 63 % of the eligible electorate had voted, down from about 70% who came out on March 4. While the work had to be done by hand in the absence of voting machines, all results were confirmed independently by at least two counters. Although it was legally possible for someone from the YPF to be present, the only observer there, aside from the author and a colleague, was the secretary of the factory Party committee. He did not, however, interfere in any way with the proceedings. At the end, the chair read the results, asked for objections, and hearing none, signed the protocols and sent the results to the city’s Central Election
Commission.

From the point of view of election mechanics, were the elections honest? Clearly there were opportunities for fraud and manipulation. The author himself witnessed a number of minor violations. Numerous complaints of election irregularities were made at a post election meeting of the YPF on March 20. However, a fully representative survey of voter opinion conducted in Yaroslavl' by the author showed that nearly 70% of the electorate felt that the March 4 elections had been fair; only 16% thought they had not been. On balance, that's probably a pretty fair assessment.

How Local Russian Deputies Behave as Legislators

The organization of local government in the Soviet Union prior to 1989 reflected Lenin's conceptualization, following Marx, that the soviets should be "a working, not a parliamentary, body" (Lenin). Representatives of the working class, elected by universal suffrage and subject to recall, would be directly involved, not only in making local decisions, but in carrying them out. The soviets were to be a "school for the masses" in self-administration. One consequence of this conception was that the number of elected deputies was large, as many as 500 in some cities and up to 1000 at one point in Moscow. In 1985, more than 2.3 million deputies were elected to 52,041 local governments (Hahn, 1988a, p. 86). Since the turnover at each two and a half year term was around 50%, an enormous number of people held public office at one time or other.

Partly because the soviets were too large to conduct the daily business of government,
and partly because of Lenin's proscription against separating legislative and executive authority, the deputies at their first session would elect, from among their members, an executive committee, known as an ispolkom, consisting of perhaps 15 members. In addition to a chair, a vice-chair and a secretary, the ispolkom included the heads of the major administrative departments of government. While the deputies met four times a year, usually for a few hours, the members of the ispolkom were full-time professionals. The chairman of the ispolkom functioned more or less like an American mayor and was responsible for governing the city. The one other structure intended to ensure a continued legislative presence was the system of standing committees which ostensibly oversaw the work of the executive departments for whom they were responsible.

Although in theory the soviets embodied the principles of direct democracy in which the people exercised control over their government through their participation as elected representatives. in practice, they were anything but. Such large bodies meeting so infrequently meant deputies could have, at best, a marginal impact on local governance. The brevity of their tenure in office and the fact that they held full time jobs elsewhere further diminished their impact. They possessed neither the expertise to govern nor the time to acquire it. As a result, by 1985, the running of local government in the old Soviet system was left to the members of ispolkom who operated virtually without regard to popular control; the people's elected representatives provided little more than token approval for decisions already made elsewhere.

The real explanation for the absence of democratic pluralism in Soviet local government during this time, however, must be found in the role of the CPSU. In the Leninist conception, the Party, and only the Party, could define the interests of society, and was therefore entitled
to a monopoly of political power. The Party exercised its complete control over the soviets in several ways. As we have seen, the 1st Secretary of the city’s Party committee controlled the outcome of single candidate elections by controlling the nomination process at the workplace. Although a majority of the elected deputies were not Party members, no one unwilling to accept the Party line would be nominated. Furthermore, the Gorkom 1st Secretary commanded the loyalty of those deputies who were Party members and who constituted a caucus called the "Party group" among the deputies. Through them, Party 1st Secretaries controlled the nomination and unanimous election of a single slate of members to the ispolkom, normally including themselves. Finally, in order to ensure the implementation of the Party’s policies, local Party structure duplicated the administrative departments of the ispolkom. The Russian word for this complete usurpation by the Party of the authority of the state was "podmena" and while it was officially condemned, it was universally practiced (Hill). In sum, while the legislative branch of government was completely dominated by the executive, the executive was entirely the creature of the Party. It was the antithesis of pluralism; it approached a perfect monist system.

It is clear from the foregoing that local political power under the old system was not dispersed, but concentrated; it was not divided among many, but belonged to few. In Yaroslavl’, during "Tsar Fedor" Loshenkov’s tenure as Obkom 1st Secretary, it had really belonged to one. Gorbachev’s proposals to the 19th Party Conference in June, 1988, as implemented at the local level in 1990, aimed at fundamentally altering the old system in two ways: legislatures were to be given greater control over the executive branch, and the role of the Party in governmental affairs was to be diminished.
To implement the first of these goals, members of the ispolkom, except for the chair, could no longer be deputies at the same time (Zakon, art. 12). Instead, they would be elected by (and subsequently accountable to) the deputies at their first, organizational, session. To ensure continuous legislative oversight, the deputies would also choose from among themselves a 15-20 member presidium which would consist of the heads of the standing committees as well as the chair and vice chair of the soviet. The Presidium, and not the ispolkom, would organize the work of the deputies at their sessions and make sure that the executive branch was carrying out the decisions of the legislature. As to diminishing the role of the Party, its control over the composition of the soviet had already been significantly reduced by the introduction of competitive elections. Among other things, the local Party leadership would now be exposed for the first time to the voter’s judgement. Internally, the structure of the Party was reorganized and the duplication of administrative departments ended.  

How were these reforms put into practice? Did they bring about a greater dispersion of political power? In Yaroslavl’, the new system of local government was introduced at the inaugural session of the city soviet. It began its work on May 10, 1990 and continued for about a week. By then, 179 of the 200 seats in the city soviet had been duly filled, enough to constitute a quorum.  

The first order of business facing the deputies after a temporary organizational committee had been chosen to run the meeting, was the election of someone to chair the soviet. The deputies rejected an attempt to use a list of candidates prepared in advance by the ispolkom on the basis of a written deputy survey and proposed nominees from the floor instead. Fourteen were nominated in this fashion. After ten of these withdrew their candidacies, the remainder presented their platforms. Among the four, L.L. Kruglikov, a law professor at
Yaroslavl' State University, was favored by the YPF. His main rival was L.L. Karnakov, the Gorkom 1st Secretary, who had managed to get elected from another district in a repeat election after losing an uncontested seat in the first round. When it became clear that Karnakov had no chance of winning, he withdrew rather than face certain defeat. On a secret ballot, Kruglikov won easily with 132 votes.\textsuperscript{7}

Although the YPF had not actively supported Kruglikov in the March elections, their support of him as chair of the soviet was crucial to his election.\textsuperscript{8} This first step established the political character of the new soviet in an important way: Both the contested vote and the defeat of the Gorkom 1st Secretary made it clear that from now on the political life of the city would be different. The support given to Kruglikov was sustained for the next two items on the agenda: the election of V.N. Bakaev as vice-chair and V.V. Volonchunas as chair of the ispolkom. The second of these is particularly noteworthy because Volonchunas had been the ispolkom chair in the previous soviet and as such was criticized by the YPF as a member of the old apparat. Volonchunas was one of five candidates originally nominated and one of three left in the final balloting. He was finally elected receiving 125 votes, but only after Kruglikov had personally endorsed him on the basis of his competence and his experience. "Not all apparatchiks are bad" Kruglikov told the deputies, "They should be judged first of all by their performance."(GN, 16 May 1990, p.2).

The remainder of the session was taken up with the formation of legislative and executive bodies. On the legislative side, this included the appointment of the legislative standing committees and commissions (of which there are 16), the election of the chair of the city's Peoples' Control Committee (a legislative oversight committee with 3 permanent staff), and the
formation of the legislative Presidium consisting of the officers of the soviet and the chairs of the standing committees (21 members in all, with a permanent staff of 5). On the executive side, the remaining members of the ispolkom were elected by the deputies by secret ballot. The deputies then decided what other administrative departments they wished to form. Nominees to head these other offices were then proposed by the ispolkom chair, subject to confirmation by the deputies.

What are relations between the city soviet and its ispolkom like under the new system? Legally, at least until late in 1991, their relations were governed by the regulations (reglamenty) of the city soviet adopted at its third session in September, 1990.9 According to article #84 of these regulations, the subordination of the executive branch to the decisions of the legislature was clear:

"Art. 84. All officials of the ispolkom are obligated to implement all decisions of the soviet and its Presidium. The soviet has the right to revoke any decision of the executive committee. Decisions of the Presidium have priority over those of the ispolkom."

Among the decisions belonging to the soviet was approval of the budget prepared by the ispolkom and any changes proposed in it. The ispolkom could not make discretionary expenditures over a certain amount without the approval of the Presidium. To ensure that the executive does not exceed its authority, a Peoples' Control Committee was established to oversee the work of the administrative departments. In addition, the deputies and their committees were granted an impressive list of ways to obtain information about executive activities (art. 89-100). Finally, the ispolkom had to report at least once a year on its activities to the soviet as a whole (art. 86), while its departments could be required to do so at any time.
The reality of executive - legislative relations is a good deal more complicated than the foregoing legal description would suggest and tends to favor the continued dominance of the executive branch. The reason for this has little to do with shortcomings in the law, nor is it necessarily due to any malevolent power ambitions on the part of the administrators. The fact of the matter is that, as Kruglikov had recognized, these are the professionals. They alone knew how to run a government and they were indispensable. Not only did they know how the government worked, but because they were all a product of the old "nomenklatura" system, they knew the people who made things work, an "old nomenklatura-boy network", if you will.

During in-depth interviews with about 15 of the deputies in June, 1991 the author asked directly: Who has more influence over the city’s affairs, the chair of the soviet or of the ispolkom? Invariably, the deputies named the latter, although some noted the growing influence of the legislative branch and its chair. This impression was confirmed by an in-house poll taken of 90% of the deputies in May, 1991 by T.P. Rumiantseva who heads the city’s Center for Public Opinion Research. When she asked which of the branches of local government had more real power, 53% of the deputies named the ispolkom; only 12% named the soviet.

With respect to the role of the Party in local politics, it was clear that even before the failure of the attempted coup of August, 1991, the Party’s fortunes were on the wane, although they continued to retain some influence, especially on the provincial (oblast) level (Hahn, 1991, pp.332-334). Their weakness in the city soviet was obvious. Despite the fact that 67% of the deputies were Party members, the deputy group calling themselves "Kommunisty" which was registered at the organizational session could muster only 17 members. The Gorkom 1st Secretary, Karnakov, avoided a humiliating defeat in his effort to be elected chair of the soviet
only by withdrawing his candidacy at the last minute.

Not only was the Party's influence in the soviet evaporating, the Party itself was. In the course of the year 1990-91, membership in the Party fell by nearly one-fourth and the number of obkom officials by nearly two thirds. When asked about the influence of the Party in the city soviet, almost all the deputies interviewed by the author in June, 1991 agreed that it was negligible or non-existent. During an interview with the author, even the Obkom 1st Secretary agreed with this assessment at the city level. Whatever remained of the Party's presence as a political organization disappeared, of course, after the failed coup. Yeltsin's decree seizing Party property was implemented by the city soviet at its 7th session held on September 2, 1991. His decree of November 6, 1991, banning the Party's activities in Russia was merely the coup de grace.

A final way to look at how the role of the deputies has changed is to describe their behavior in council sessions. The author had attended a session of a city soviet operating in the old style in 1984 (Hahn, 1988a, pp.199-207). It had quickly become clear that the entire proceedings were carefully scripted in advance by the organizational-instructional committee of the ispolkom. They drew up the agenda, determined who would present reports and on what subject, who would comment on them, and how many minutes each speaker would be allowed. In many cases, they even prepared the texts. The meeting of the 250 deputies lasted the allotted three hours during which a number of votes were taken, all unanimously. Participation was thus extremely limited and opposition was non-existent. It is worth recalling this ritualistic exercise in formalism because it was typical of soviet sessions throughout the USSR, Yaroslavl' included, prior to 1985 and serves as a benchmark against which to measure change.
The sixth session of the Yaroslavl' city soviet which began its work on June 26, 1991 stood in stark contrast to previous practice and provides a measure of how far the deputy's role has evolved. While a detailed description of the session is beyond the scope of the present paper, the differences between the two sessions can be summarized. For one thing, this meeting lasted three days, not three hours. For another, the agenda had been prepared by the Presidium of the soviet, not by the ispolkom. Although the ispolkom could, and did, propose items for inclusion, the Presidium arranged the proceedings. No time limits on debate were imposed.

Most significantly, perhaps, the opportunity to participate in these proceedings was open to any and all deputies and they took full advantage of it. Participation was frequent and often severely critical of those who sat in the ispolkom and the Presidium. Disagreement among the deputies was openly expressed, negative votes were cast on virtually every issue, and on some matters of importance (a bill on how to implement privatization was being discussed), proposals by the Presidium or the ispolkom were defeated. On at least three occasions, draft legislation was remanded to ad hoc committees and later presented to the deputies as a whole who would then vote on changes introduced in a manner not unlike a committee "mark-up" session in Congress. In these respects, the deputies demonstrated the characteristics of contestation that mark the emergence of democratic pluralism.

Clearly, this session of the Yaroslavl' city council was far more democratic than the one observed by the author in 1984. At the same time, the conduct of this meeting also revealed a number of rather serious shortcomings from the standpoint of democratic development. In the first place, while there was a lot of participation, much of it wasn't very good. Speakers frequently and freely introduced subjects that were trivial or irrelevant to the matter at hand,
debate degenerated into shouting matches, and matters related essentially to constituency service were put up for votes by the body as a whole (a good 30 minutes were spent discussing a bus rerouting necessary to service one district). Moreover, the participation was uneven. 136 deputies came to the session, meaning roughly a third were missing. Among those present, perhaps 30 took an active part in the proceedings. Many of the others seemed unprepared, or even uninterested, in doing so.

Voting was haphazard in the sense that personal whim rather than group affiliation or constituency representation seemed to guide the deputies’ choices. The relatively disciplined voting that had characterized the organizational session a year earlier and had resulted in Kruglikov’s election as chair had disappeared. The four deputy groups which had been registered at that time also played no apparent role in this session. Despite the fact that the chair, Kruglikov, was a lawyer by profession, at times it seemed as if procedure was being made as the meeting went along. By the end of the session, it seemed as if discipline had all but broken down as deputies argued about whether to end the session or to continue it on the next day. To this observer at least, chaos, rather than calm deliberation, seemed to characterize much of the work of the June, 1991 session.

In his analysis of the first two years of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Robert T. Huber measured the emergence of pluralism as a function of whether legislative institutionalization had taken place (Huber). Using Michael J. Mezey’s five categories, he concluded that the Supreme Soviet should be considered a "marginal legislature" in the sense that despite substantial formal authority and high expectations from both the public and administrators, the members of such a legislature don’t deal very effectively with the demands placed on them. Such a conclusion
would not seem out of place applied to the mini-parliament that is the Yaroslavl' city soviet. There are simply too many deputies, with too little political experience and too little organizational discipline, to deal effectively with the numerous complex and urgent problems that face their city today.

**How Deputies Consult With Their Constituents**

It was argued at the beginning of this paper that democratic pluralism presupposed the possibility of public participation, singly or in groups, in the political life of the community. Such participation is essential if public preferences are to be communicated to those who govern. In a democracy, it is assumed that these preferences will be taken into consideration; representatives who ignore them may be held accountable at periodic elections thus ensuring popular control. But elections are only one way by which popular preferences can be ascertained, and not necessarily the most effective. Political participation can take many other forms: people work in campaigns, for political parties, through interest groups; they contact their representative directly, sign petitions, respond to opinion surveys, and demonstrate. Whatever form they take, some mechanisms for popular consultation are vital if we are to conclude that democratic pluralism is emerging in Russia. Moreover, there must be some evidence that the people are being listened to.

It seems clear from our earlier discussion of pluralist societies that competition for political influence is open to people acting on their own or through groups. In Dahl's view, large scale democracies are chiefly distinguished by having a number of autonomous groups
contending for influence, while Presthus finds the participation of individuals equally significant when the level of analysis is community politics. In assessing the degree to which popular participation is characteristic of political life in Yaroslavl', this paper will examine, first, what forms of participation (other than voting) are possible for individuals acting on their own. Group participation will then be considered. Finally, the question of whether anyone is listening will be taken up.

Even before 1985, Soviet law provided for a number of ways by which voters could contact those they elected in order to express personal or community concerns. They included the use of voter's mandates (nakazy izbiratelei) which were approved at campaign meetings and which specified certain actions that deputies were pledged to fulfill if they were elected. Deputies were also required to meet with their constituents at least four times a year (twice in their districts and twice at the workplace that nominated them) and to hold regular reception hours, called a "priyom", during which citizens could raise local and personal problems which deputies were expected to address. In addition, the electorate could make its wishes known orally or in writing through a procedure known as "complaints, proposals and declarations" (zhaloby, zaiaavlennii, i predlozhenii) which required a response from the deputy. Finally, deputies had the right to make formal inquiries (zaprosy) on behalf of their constituents to executive departments responsible for implementing policies in their districts. In short, the institutional basis for the expression of citizen preferences was substantial. Furthermore, there is some evidence that it was used, albeit infrequently (Hahn, 1988a, pp.133-198).

It is noteworthy that all of these ways of communicating citizen preferences to those who govern appear to have survived the reform process intact, although in Yaroslavl', at least,
shortcomings in implementation are more candidly acknowledged. The city council was supposed to adopt measures to fulfill the voter mandates at its third session in September, 1990, but ran out of time and didn’t do so until its fifth session, six months later. At that time, a plan for implementing 130 mandates was developed. This, however, represented less than half of the mandates proposed by voters because "the candidates for deputy, through their inexperience, did not give sufficiently serious attention to the form and contents of the mandates at the time of the meetings". There also were 476 written and oral complaints and proposals from the voters received by the deputies (206 of them during reception hours). Of these, 235 resulted in on-site inspections by members of the soviet or its committees. However, the overwhelming majority of these problems (65%), as in the old days, concerned housing.

The use of the deputies right of inquiry (zapros) seemed to have greater potential for focusing the deputies’ attention on issues with a more widespread community impact. The sixth session of the city soviet, which the author attended in June, 1991, spent considerable time discussing various deputy inquiries. In some cases, they engendered sharp debate and action was defeated or modified. In the end, action was voted on 14 items each sponsored by a different deputy. While many of these were purely parochial in nature, hardly meriting the attention of the soviet as a whole (e.g. roof repairs, bus routes, telephone service, closing a beer hall), not all were. Among the topics discussed was the provision of housing for refugees from the fighting in Baku, the construction of a new school in one of the micro regions, and the conduct of an independent soil test for pollution in the Frunze district.

While opportunities for citizens individually to express their concerns to decision-makers are numerous and appear to be heeded on those relatively infrequent occasions when invoked,
the same can not be said about participation through groups, although this may be changing. As already noted, despite the active role played by the Yaroslavl' Popular Front in the 1990 elections and the formation of quasi-partisan deputy groups at the organizational session which elected the city’s leaders, these groups have not maintained their cohesion over time. Partly, this is because, by the nature of its business, municipal governance doesn’t tend to foster ideological divisions. But, in Yaroslavl' as elsewhere in Russia, it is also because the deputies didn’t run on a partisan platform and don’t owe their election to any party organization.

In a different way, the same thing is true for interest groups. The influence of private interest groups in the USA, for example, is derived in no small part from its ability to give or withhold campaign donations. In the Russian elections of 1990, however, there were strict limits on campaign expenditures (Colton, p.293; Zakon, art. 13). The city paid for virtually all of the permissible campaign literature precisely to ensure that candidates would not have an "unfair" advantage by outspending their opponents. To the extent that private or "corporate" interests are expressed, it is probably the result of the fact that the overwhelming majority of deputies were nominated at the their place of work and can therefore be "pressed", if you will, into supporting decisions favorable to their employers. Whereas deputies may not feel that they owe their election to private interest groups in general, they do seem to be aware of the views of the work collective that nominated them.

Public interest groups (sometimes called "neformalny") are another matter. There are a number of such groups in Yaroslavl' including an ecological group called the "Green Bud", a branch of Memorial, the national organization concerned with the victims of Stalinism, and a charitable organization called the "Miloserdtsy". There is also the Russian Orthodox church
which has been lobbying vigorously and with considerable success for the return of some of
Yaroslavl’s many ancient churches to use for worship. The limits on the influence of groups
such as these derive not only from a lack material means, but, with the exception of the Church,
to a lack of organizational and political experience; they are political amateurs. Nevertheless,
these groups can, on occasion, make their presence felt. In the end, however, although these
groups can (and did) call on their members to support candidates in the 1990 elections, they lack
the material or organizational resources to make much of a difference. It is doubtful if any of
the deputies feel that they are dependent on the support of such groups for their election.

Finally, what about the public? Are they ready to participate politically? Do they feel that
their views are taken into consideration by those they elect? Do they find that the new form of
government is more responsive than the old? A systematic survey of public opinion on these and
related questions was conducted in May, 1991 by Tatiana Rumiantseva, the head of the Center
for the Study of Public Opinion and Sociological Research which carries out such work for the
city government. The sample size was more than 600. The results shed some light on the
degree to which deputies are likely to be influenced by those they represent.

For public opinion to have an impact on decision makers, it is generally assumed that
citizens should be interested in what government does, know something of its policies and
personnel, and be prepared to communicate their views on them, to participate (Monroe, p.11).
It seems clear from the results of the survey that a gap exists between the expectations of
democratic theory and the reality of local politics in Yaroslavl’. Only 12% claimed to know the
deputy from their district, while barely 25% had even fragmentary knowledge of what the
Presidium was (65% knew nothing). Only 2% had directed questions or complaints to the
Presidium in 1990-91 and the level of satisfaction with deputy reception hours and written proposals was very low. As to the voter mandates, the largest percent of respondents (39%) felt that "practically none were implemented, only promises".

It can be fairly argued, however, that low levels of knowledge, participation, political information, and trust are found in other democratic systems. Certainly similar results in American cities would hardly be surprising. More disturbing in the Yaroslavl’ survey is that most respondents saw little change from the previous system. The results are presented in Table 1.

**TABLE 1**

Q. Do you think there have been any changes in the activities of local government today as compared with the previous one?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>Decreased</th>
<th>No Change</th>
<th>Hard to Say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizationally</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputies Professionalism</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democraticness</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in Results</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucratism</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with Voters</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in the City</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in the City</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ispolkom</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in Your Deputy</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only on the dimension "democraticness" (demokraticchnosti) did the respondents see an appreciable increase in the work of local government. On the question of contact with the electorate, few perceived any improvement over the past practice. The one ray of hope may be that so many responded "hard to say" suggesting they haven't yet made up their minds. As for the remainder, the public seems decidedly unimpressed with what they have seen so far of local government reform.

In conclusion, what can be said about how well city politics in Yaroslavl' meets the criterion for democratic pluralism of popular consultation? What struck this observer in the course of his attendance at the session of the city soviet and during his interviews with the deputies was that they seemed to be voting quite independently of any public input, except perhaps that which they received at their place of work where they were nominated. They demonstrated little evidence of any public influence, not from their constituents, not by any partisan allegiance, not from interest groups, nor even by ideological predilection. Instead, their choices seemed to be informed by little more than their personal opinions of the moment. In reflecting on why this should be so, it is possible to hypothesize that since the deputies relied largely on personal qualifications to get elected, there is so far little reason for them to think that they are dependent on anything other than their own personal characteristics to get re-elected. As a result, from the standpoint of organizational participation in politics associated with democratic pluralism, community politics in Yaroslavl' is still in an early stage of development.
Conclusions

Are we seeing the emergence of democratic pluralism in Russian politics? The purpose of this paper was to contribute to answering this intriguing question by looking at how the role of locally elected officials has changed since reforms were introduced in 1990 to promote democracy. The standards of measurement were defined as the degree to which a dispersion of power, political contestation, and popular consultation are characteristic of contemporary local Russian politics. Certainly, the practice of local government in Russia and the rest of the Soviet Union prior to the reforms of perestroika was deficient by these standards: power was highly centralized; legitimized political opposition was non-existent; and popular consultation was largely confined to ritual. Has the situation improved? How democratic are local Russian deputies?

On the basis of the evidence presented here, the short answer to this question is that while democratic pluralism is far more characteristic of local Russian politics than it used to be, there is a great deal of room for improvement. Admittedly, the evidence is from only one Russian city, Yaroslavl', but the following conclusions may offer a starting point for understanding what is happening elsewhere.

On the positive side, power is clearly more widely dispersed than it had been under the old system. The Party no longer controls who gets elected to the soviet, nor does it play any role in the formation of the government. Executive and legislative authority is no longer joined, but divided; executive accountability before the legislature is established not only in law, but in fact. Free and competitive elections provide at least the possibility that ultimate accountability will
rest with people. Political contestation is manifest not only in competitive elections, but also in
the behavior of the deputies in council. What Thomas Remington (Remington, p.185) has
referred to as the "mobilization of discontent" is visible in the formation of voting blocs in
council and in the open opposition of deputies to policies of government leaders with which they
do not agree. Finally, there is some evidence to suggest that, however slowly, the public has
become involved in the process by which decisions are made, and not only through voting, but
through individual and group action.

At the same time, the development of democratic pluralism in local Russian politics, at
least as practiced in Yaroslavl', was limited by a number of factors. Of these, probably none is
more significant than the conduct of the 1990 elections which did not fully satisfy the
requirements of either political contestation or popular consultation. Voters were simply faced
with too many candidates running for too many offices in too many elections. Without partisan
affiliation to give them political identity, voters relied on candidates' personal qualifications
making their choices less meaningful than they should been as an indicator of the public's policy
preferences. Although there was organized opposition in the form of the Yaroslavl' Popular
Front, they were unable to get their message out to the electorate because they lacked the
resources, experience, or organization to do so. For this reason, instead of dispersing power,
the 1990 elections probably enabled older elites to retain more power than they otherwise would
have. To some extent, this was also true in the relations between the soviet and its ispolkom.
Despite the new separation of powers, the executive branch retained a preponderance of
influence partly by virtue of its expertise and partly through its connections to the old
nomenklatura. Finally, although the channels for citizen involvement are immeasurably more
open than before, there is little evidence to suggest that they are widely used or even perceived as particularly fruitful.

For all of these reasons, the prognosis for the further evolution of Russian local politics in the direction of greater democratic pluralism is uncertain. Much will depend on when and how the next elections of local officials take place. As the political theorists of democracy cited earlier almost unanimously concede, no other institution is so central for insuring that the criteria of democratic pluralism are met. Much will also depend on whether the Russians can improve their lot economically. Failure to do so invites demagoguery and authoritarian solutions. Such alternatives are unpalatable, to say the least.
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NOTES

1. The city of Yaroslavl' is the administrative center and capitol of Yaroslavl' oblast and is located about 200 miles Northeast of Moscow. Although it is part of the "Golden Ring" of ancient Russian cities that surround Moscow, most of the work force is employed in industry. The population of over 630,000 is overwhelmingly Russian (over 90%). Although Yaroslavl' was one of the first cities to have an active popular front movement, it was by no means the only one. From February, 1990 - February, 1992, the author made five research trips to Yaroslavl.'

The author wishes to thank the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) for financial support in conducting the field research on which this paper is based and the National Council for Soviet and East European Research for a grant to support his salary in the Spring and Summer of 1992 so that he could write. None of these organizations necessarily share the views of the author.

2. It may be objected that this study is time bound because it relies on information gathered before the attempted coup of August, 1991 and the dramatic changes that followed. In fact, the coup had relatively little impact on the politics of Yaroslavl' other than to end the direct influence of an already diminished Communist Party organization. During a brief visit in January of 1992, the author found that the legislative institutions and political elites described here continued to function in ways only marginally modified (see also footnote #9) from what was in place in the summer of 1991. What modifications did occur do not appear to invalidate the conclusions offered here.

3. This approach has been fruitfully employed in numerous studies of community power in the United states and elsewhere. In fact, the approach used here may be particularly appropriate to analyzing the emergence of pluralism in Russia precisely because of the greater opportunities local government offers for public participation. As Robert Presthus notes in his book, Men at the Top, "In sum, field studies of the political process at the community level are needed to test pluralist assumptions, for it is here that widespread participation has the best chance to occur. One would expect to find the closest approximation between pluralist ideals and the realities of social and political organization." (p.32).

4. Such legislation was eventually adopted by the USSR Supreme Soviet on October 9, 1990 entitled the "Law on Public Organizations" (see Izvestiia, Oct. 10, 1990). Accordingly, we may expect that in future elections candidates will affiliate themselves with one or another party.
5. The legislative basis for the changes which effected the structure of the Soviet state system can be found in the amendments to the USSR and RSFSR Constitutions adopted during the Winter of 1989/90.

6. The composition of the 179 deputies who had been elected by May 10, 1990 included 29 women (16%), 30 workers (16%), 18 under the age of 30 (10%) and 27 Party and state officials (15%) In each case, their numbers were far fewer than in the previous soviet. The percent of Party and Komsomol members (70%) and deputies holding office for the first time (85%) was significantly higher.

7. All information comes from the city' weekly newspaper, Gorodskie novosti, (hereafter GN), or through documentary materials made available to the author by the Yaroslavl' city soviet, or through personal interviews. Information about the organizational session of the city soviet was published in GN from 8-22 May, 1990, including three special issues. Kruglikov's election was reported in the special issue of May 15.


9. These regulations remained in force at least until November, 1991. A decision was taken at the 8th session of the soviet on Oct. 21, 1991 to replace the Presidium with a "small soviet" (malyi sovet) consisting of 15 members elected by the deputies as a whole plus the chairman ex-officio. This was done in accordance with Russian republic legislation adopted on 6 July 1991. So too, was the nomination of a mayor (referred to in the Law as the "glava administratsii"). This nomination took place at the 9th session of the city soviet on November 18, 1991. The names of three candidates voted on at that meeting were submitted to President Yeltsin, including former ispolkom chair, Victor Volonchunas, who had received the most votes, and who ultimately was appointed mayor pending elections tentatively scheduled for December, 1992. The new regulations reflecting these changes only took effect by the beginning of 1992.

10. To mention one example, Iurii I. Verbitskii, the representative of the 13th district, accused the ispolkom chair, Volonchunas, of violating a law on historic preservation by building a disinfection station in the middle of an historic cemetery. Verbitskii, who is the head of the city soviet's Standing Committee on Culture, Heritage and Religion, pursued this cause further at a meeting of the Presidium on June 28, 1991 and threatened to take the issue to court if there was no compensation.

11. For example, the deputy from district 166, Anatolii Samusev, was elected as a vice-chair of the ispolkom in charge of the city's administrative department for planning and the economy apparently in direct contradiction to article 12 of the RSFSR Law on Elections which prohibits deputies from holding administrative appointments. This decision, which was adopted on June 25, 1991, was later corrected at the 7th session of the city soviet on September 2, 1990 when Samusev's deputy status was revoked.

12. The data and this quote comes from a report by city soviet chairman, L.L. Kruglikov to the 6th session of the soviet meeting June 25, 1991 entitled "O rabote s nakazami i pros'bami
izbiratelei".

13. The author attended a meeting of the Green Bud on March 22, 1990 as it was choosing candidates for the second round of voting. He was as impressed with their almost total disregard for procedure as he was by the obvious sincerity of their conviction and civic mindedness.

14. The author attended a meeting of the city soviet's Presidium called on June 28, 1991 to discuss charges raised at the general session regarding violations of the law on historic preservation. Considerable pressure was brought to bear by representatives of several of these groups, including Memorial, to reverse an earlier decision of the ispolkom about the location of a city facility in an historic cemetery. The Presidium voted to investigate the charges and report back to the deputies at the next session.

15. The existence of this Center is itself a sign of the increased attention being paid to what the public thinks and to what the deputies think. Other surveys undertaken by the Center include assessments of proposed changes in the structure of city government, the city's attempt to reform alcohol sales, and who the people favored for election as President of Russia in March, 1991.