

SVITLANA SOROKA

## THE POLICY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND KOMSOMOL CONCERNING INFORMAL YOUTH ASSOCIATIONS IN UKRAINE (1986–1988)<sup>1</sup>

*The more we organize society, the more resistant  
it becomes to our abilities to organize it*  
(Richard Adams, 1975)<sup>2</sup>

Informal non-governmental associations were special organizations in the Soviet Union where citizens did not have the right to freely unite and to realize their own needs and interests. Young people could participate only in official youth organizations established by the state and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The main youth organization was the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol). The setting up of associations outside of the official structures was considered to be illegal and was strictly prosecuted by the Party and the Committee for State Security (KGB). At the outset of “perestroika” in the mid-1980s, the situation in the USSR was gradually changing, and public initiative was beginning to get a different status. This article is devoted to these changes in the policy of the authorities regarding informal youth associations. It covers the period of “perestroika” from 1986 to 1988 when it became apparent that the state could no longer control informal associations.

---

<sup>1</sup> The article was partially reported at the international scientific conference “Disintegration and collapse of the USSR: 25 years later”, Poznań (Poland) on December 7–8, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> R. Adams, “Harnessing Technological Development” in *Rethinking Modernization: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. J. Poggie Jr. and R.N. Lynch (Westport, 1975), p. 60.

## THEORETICAL BASIS AND METHODOLOGY

Informal associations that emerged extensively in the Soviet society in the second half of the 1980s were characterized as associations independent of the Party and state control<sup>3</sup>, and they differed from the formal official youth unions.<sup>4</sup> According to Hilary Pilkington, the term informal people meant “informal groups”, but in fact they were not necessarily informal in their organization or activities since by the end of “perestroika” some of them had turned into national movements. Rather, their informal status referred to activities in those areas that were not included in the state or formal sector.<sup>5</sup>

Other concepts to denote informal youth associations are found in scientific research. Informal youth associations are called “unofficial” or “independent” associations. The term “club” is used to denote small informal groups consisting of 10 to 30 people. The term “association” means a more organized group consisting of more members, or a group with a program and goals.<sup>6</sup> So-called indirect (oblique) groups are a type of informal association. At the time when the Soviet political system did not allow holding open discussions, so the representatives of indirect groups of society demonstrated considerably different opinions to those presented by mainstream media. They had no possibility to transform themselves into socio-political organizations within the Soviet system.<sup>7</sup> Certain types of informal associations that emerged in the last years of the existence of the USSR are studied as “proto-factories of thought”.<sup>8</sup>

When studying unofficial associations in Soviet society, it should be noted that the concept “unofficial associations” has acquired a specific meaning in contrast to the meaning applied in sociology. Determining formal and informal associations, researchers take into consideration two initial criteria - legal recognition and organizational structure. First and foremost, informal associations have no legal status. Only collective agreement provides them with legitimacy. Secondly, informal associations have a more diffused structure than formal associations. Their boundaries, composition and hierarchy are less apparent.<sup>9</sup>

The peculiarities of informal associations in the Soviet society can be summarised as: the creation of associations based on people’s initiative; non-integration into the socio-

---

<sup>3</sup> A.B. Evans Jr., “Recent Assessments of Social Organizations in Russia”, *Demokratizatsiya*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2002), p. 323.

<sup>4</sup> F. Krawatzek, “Fallen Vanguards and Vanished Rebels? Political Youth Involvement in Extraordinary Times” in *Eastern European Youth Cultures in a Global Context*, ed. M. Schwartz and H. Winkel (London, 2016), p. 195.

<sup>5</sup> H. Pilkington, *Russia’s Youth and its Culture. A Nation’s Constructors and Constructed* (London and New York, 1994), p. 115.

<sup>6</sup> N.C. Levine, “The Emerging Political Party System in Russia: 1986–1992” (Master’s thesis, McMaster University Hamilton, Ontario, 1995), p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> H.-H. Nolte, “Changing minds, but not politics in Brezhnev’s time”, *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 5 (2014), p. 122.

<sup>8</sup> A. Sungurov, “Think Tanks” and Public Policy Centers in Russia and Other Post-Communist Countries: Development and Function”, *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review*, vol. 39 (2012), pp. 24–25.

<sup>9</sup> K.S. March and R. Taqqu, *Women’s Informal Associations and the Organizational Capacity for Development* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982), p. 3.

-political system; independence from official structures. In my research, I come to the conclusion that “informal (unofficial) youth associations” are a voluntary association of citizens aged between 14 and 35 years old, created to protect and represent their rights and interests in various spheres of life as well as to participate in the management of public affairs. Such associations have the following features: the creation of an association based on the society members’ initiative, non-integration into the socio-political system, and independence from official structures. The age scale adopted for the participants of youth public organizations in accordance with the current Law of Ukraine “The Support of the Socialization and Development of Youth in Ukraine”.<sup>10</sup>

Taking into consideration that some of the unofficial youth associations were in opposition to the government authorities, I specify the concept “opposition” in non-democratic political systems. The opposition is an association or group of associations, including political parties, that opposes the government or the parliamentary majority and criticizes the dominant ideology or institutions.<sup>11</sup> I must agree with Michal Kubat’s idea that democracy creates the best conditions for institutionalized political opposition. However, the process of institutionalizing the opposition may exist in different forms and not necessarily in the form of political parties that function in democratic regimes. In a non-democratic system a group of artists, churches, trade unions, discussion clubs, student associations, environmental movements are more or less institutionalized organizations that may be in opposition to the regime. Thus, they seek to overthrow the government/regime and replace it with another government/regime; and they do it directly or indirectly.<sup>12</sup> One of the peculiarities of the opposition in non-democratic countries is that the authorities exclude the possibility of the opposition to come to power unlike in democratic countries.<sup>13</sup>

Today, there is no doubt that researchers should pay more attention to unofficial structures since their influence on official organizations is increasingly amplifying in the modern world. Also particularly topical is the activity of unofficial associations in the period of socio-political and economic transformations. In the USSR during Gorbachev’s reforms, unofficial associations weakened the state’s ability to implement reforms. Therefore, it is still necessary to understand how informal, micro-level social structures influence formal macro-level institutional forms.<sup>14</sup> Presently, so-called “color revolutions” are believed to be stimuli to youth movements.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Zakon Ukrainy № 2998-XII »Pro spryanniia sotsialnomu stanovlenniu ta rozvytku molodi v Ukraini«, [http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2998-12\\_05.02.1993](http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2998-12_05.02.1993).

<sup>11</sup> E. Zwierzchowski, “Wybrane problemy opozycji politycznej” in *Ustrój polityczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w nowej Konstytucji z 2 kwietnia 1997 roku* (Lublin, 1998), s. 122.

<sup>12</sup> M. Kubat, *Teoria opozycji politycznej* (Kraków, 2010), s. 26–27.

<sup>13</sup> N. Brack and S. Weinblum, “»Political Opposition«: Towards a Renewed Research Agenda”, *Interdisciplinary Political Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2011), p. 71.

<sup>14</sup> R. Šimić Banovi, “Informal Networks as a Reflection of Informal Institutions in East European Transitional Societies: Legacy or Opportunism?”, *Equilibrium. Quarterly Journal of Economics and Economic Policy*, vol. 10 no. 1 (2015), p. 199.

<sup>15</sup> D. Beacháin, A. Polese, “»Rocking the Vote«: New Forms of Youth Organisations in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union”, *Journal of Youth Studies*, vol. 13 (2010), p. 615.

It is necessary to emphasize that unofficial youth associations were not phenomena of “perestroika”; they had existed in the USSR before 1986. I have analyzed some aspects of their activities in 1953–1991.<sup>16</sup> My research revealed that informal youth associations had a huge impact on the crisis of the authorities in general and directly the Party and the Komsomol. Therefore, I have decided to analyze the policy of the Party and Komsomol structures regarding the informal movement which up to now not comprehensively studied by researchers. Working with the documents of the Central State Archive of Public Organizations in Ukraine made it possible. These documents were not published previously and have been introduced into scientific sphere for the first time. I had to take into account the ideological and political background of the materials and the degree of their reliability and objectivity. Critical analysis of archival materials enabled us: firstly, to determine in more detail the main approaches of the Party and Komsomol structures to unofficial youth associations; secondly, to analyze the means and methods used by the Party and Komsomol structures to influence young people.

The main hypotheses of the study are:

1. The policy of the Communist Party and Komsomol concerning informal youth associations did not take into account their interests and needs, excluded cooperation, and therefore had an authoritarian character. The structures of the soviet regime i.e. the official structures, did not allow the youth opinions to contradict official ideology; they could not become democratic and change the general paradigm of activity. This led to discredit of the Communist Party and the Komsomol in society and ultimately led to the loss of power.

2. The policy of the authorities regarding informal youth associations in 1986–1988 showed that the nondemocratic system of public associations in the Soviet Union did not contribute to the realization of the youth interests. Therefore, there was an intensification of informal opposition associations.

## NEGATIVE TENDENCIES AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR UNOFFICIAL ACTIVITIES ON THE EVE OF THE MID-1980S

Crises in the USSR in both in the internal life and in the foreign policy sphere have intensified since the mid-1970s. The quality of life was low and situation in the social sphere unsatisfactory because they were funded based on the “*whatever funds remain after others have received their share*” principle. Unsatisfactory working conditions and the low level of quality of life led to a situation where people were not longer interested in the results of their work. The quality of goods was low and the assortment was impoverished. The belief that the economy, science, education and culture were successfully

---

<sup>16</sup> S. Soroka, “Neformalni obiednannia: mistse i rol u totalitarnii derzhavi (na prykladi URSR)”, *Naukovi pratsi*, vol. 44 (2005), pp. 181–186; M. Bahmet, S. Soroka, “Komsomol ta neformalni obiednannia Ukrainy v period »perebudovy«”, *Politychnyi menedzhment*, vol. 5 (2006), pp. 164–181; S. Soroka, “Diialnist subkulturnykh obiednan molodi v 1950-kh–1980-kh rokakh na Ukraini”, *Naukovi pratsi*, vol. 47 (2006), pp. 45–52.

developed in the country and that social problems were not present, was widespread in the society. The Communist Party was proclaimed to be the main force leading people to a better life. The population was dissatisfied with foreign policy, in particular, with the war in Afghanistan in 1979 in which more than 150 thousand native Ukrainians were involved. 2,500 men were killed and many people disabled. The population of the country began to doubt whether the current political regime was appropriate. This led to the intensification of bias towards opposition among young people.

During this period there were negative tendencies among young people. The youth alienation from politics grew; they did not influence and participate in state and public affairs. Young people were frustrated with the main values of the political system. While in 1975–1976, from 66% to 90% of young people focused on the communist model of development and monopolistic position of the Marxist-Leninist theory in the political life of the society, in 1987 the numbers of these indicators changed significantly. Only 32% of young people believed that the political values of the Soviet society reflected their interests.<sup>17</sup>

Public organizations became bureaucratic and did not take into consideration the main interests and demands of the society. It became more obvious that the authority of official structures, in particular the authority of the Komsomol, declined among young people. According to sociological research in 1987, only 6% of Komsomol members believed that their interests were fully taken into account in their primary organization while 43% of polled members said that their interests were partially taken into account.<sup>18</sup> From 1979 to 1984, the admission rate to the Komsomol declined by 27.9% and the widespread passiveness of young members in the activities of the Komsomol was abundant.<sup>19</sup> Basic principles of the Komsomol needed to be revised in order to sustain its influence on the youth environment.

On the other hand, the alienation of young people from institutional values led to a shift in their value orientations. Sociological studies in the 70s – early 80s<sup>20</sup> confirmed that youth values they became oriented towards leisure, free time and hedonism. Negative characteristics, such as social passiveness, extremism, consumer attitude to life, drunkenness and criminality became commonplace among young people. The number of young people using drugs increased. According to official statistics the number of people with substance abuse and drug addiction in Ukraine increased by 3.2 times in 1980 compared to 1960 and amounted to 4,267 people.<sup>21</sup>

I should note that the authorities considered “ideological sabotage of imperialism” to be the main cause of contradictory processes of young people. The goals of this “ideo-

<sup>17</sup> E. Levanov, “Social and political potential of youth” (Ph.D. diss., Academy of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of CPSU, 1990), pp. 18–19.

<sup>18</sup> S. Plakhsy, *Molodezhnyye gruppy i obyedineniya: prichiny vozniknoveniya i osobennosti deyatel'nosti* (Moskva, 1988), p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine, fund 7, descr. 20, file 3699, p. 118.

<sup>20</sup> E. Golovakha, I. Bekeshkina, V. Nebozhenko, *Demokratizatsiya obshchestva i razvitiye lichnosti ot totalitarnosti k demokratii* (Kyiv, 1992), p. 44.

<sup>21</sup> B. Levin, M. Levin, *Narkomaniya i narkomany* (Moskva, 1991), p. 50.

logical sabotage of imperialism” were: the distraction from active social and political activities, political apathy, consumerism, young generation as an explosive force of the Soviet system. In socialist countries an important means to influence young people was the so-called “stimulation of group forms of behavior”. Under certain conditions it led to the assimilation of values, views, attitudes not inherent to socialism.<sup>22</sup> An additional reason of negative processes in the youth environment was an unsatisfactory level of ideological and political work of the Komsomol committees and cultural-educational institutions.

Until the beginning of “perestroika” unofficial youth associations existed, although they were not widespread. The system of non-governmental associations, which functioned in the USSR in the mid-1980s, had been developed in the 1930s. During this time, all the non-Bolshevik public organizations were abolished in the political structure of Soviet society, and those that remained, merged with state bodies or became submissive units of the command and administrative system. Both the absence of the necessary legal basis for the creation of independent public institutions and the rigid totalitarian, Stalinist regime that had prevailed until 1953 precluded the establishment of unofficial associations. After Stalin’s death, socio-political changes took place in the country which led to the symbols of classical totalitarianism disappearing. However, there were no changes in the system of non-governmental associations which remained appendages of state structures. The futility of citizens not being able to realize their social and political potential in official organizations as well as the democratization of the regime contributed to the founding of unofficial associations from 1953 to the beginning of the 1980s.

Up until 1985, unofficial youth associations developed in two stages. The first stage continued from 1953 to the first half of the 1970. During this period a significant number of unofficial associations emerged. This growth was associated with the liberalization of socio-political life in the country. During this stage, along with political youth associations (nationalist, national-communist, social-democratic, socialist, anarchist), a number of associations of cultural, ecological and pedagogical orientation emerged. Youth subcultures (stilyagi, hippies) emerged as informal initiatives. The second stage continued from the second half of the 1970s up until the first half of the 1980s and was marked by the expansion of the activities of unofficial associations and the intensification of repressive measures against them, especially against those associations that were politicized. As a result, associations of youth subculture developed intensively (hippies, punks, bikers, rock groups, neo-Nazis). This second stage was characterized by an increase in the number of unofficial associations and radicalization of their activities.

However, the analysis of the activities of unofficial associations until the mid-1980s is made complicated by the lack of source documents because, as a rule, during this period a significant part of the processes in the youth environment was suppressed, even at the state-party level, and therefore was not the subject of research. Also, there was no information about unofficial associations in the public media. The press, radio

---

<sup>22</sup> *Molodezh kak glavnyy obyekt burzhuznoy propagandy* (Kiyev, 1986), pp. 10–11.

and television did not even mention that there were other forms of youth activities besides the Komsomol and the Pioneer organizations. During this period the authorities did not endorse any forms of independent activities of citizens and crushed them with administrative and repressive methods, including criminal prosecution. All of this led to the loss of control over the youth. In the mid-1980s, the vast majority of unofficial associations were illegal or semi-legal which led to their radicalization, the emergence of extremist groups as well as alcohol and drugs propagation among young people.

Unofficial youth associations became active by virtue of “perestroika”. The slogans “broad democracy” and “glasnost” proclaimed by M. Gorbachev in April 1985 contributed to softening the regime, overcoming the alienation syndrome of citizens, revival of social activity and the expansion of the information space. Discussions in the media had been already allowed in the USSR, and criminal prosecution for dissent had ceased since 1986, although political articles to date still in the Criminal Code.

### “RESTRUCTURING” THE APPROACH OF THE PARTY AND KOMSOMOL LEADERS TO INFORMAL YOUTH ASSOCIATIONS

As of the period of 1985–1986 youth problems finally started to attract the attention of authorities in the USSR. Attempts were made to develop a balanced youth policy in order to analyze the reasons for unofficial activity of young people. Authorities and political structures acknowledged that there were problems in organizing the activities of non-governmental associations. At the XXVII Congress of the CPSU in 1986 it was stated that the creative and amateur nature of non-governmental associations in the country was not being focused on intensively enough.<sup>23</sup>

In these circumstances, on May 13, 1986 the normative document “Regulations on amateur associations and special interest clubs” was adopted in order to expand the legal framework for public initiative and to prevent uncontrolled activity of public associations and clubs. The Central Committee of the Komsomol initiated the approval of this document by 12 ministries and departments. In accordance with it, interest clubs were a form of public initiative. However, any activity of the associations was completely under the control of the organization-founder. In the first section of the document it was stated that “Associations are established, reorganized and dissolved by the decision of the organization-founder”. Moreover, governmental and non-governmental organizations that could act as an organization-founder had the right to refuse to establish an amateur association. There was no way to appeal to a higher authority or file a lawsuit. The organization-founder managed and controlled the association.<sup>24</sup> According to this document, only those associations that were approved by official organizations

<sup>23</sup> *Materialy XXVII syezda Kommunisticheskoy partii Sovetskogo Soyuza* (Moskva, 1989), pp. 57–58.

<sup>24</sup> “Polozheniye o lyubitelskom obyedinenii, klube po interesam” in *Dokumenty TsK VLKSM 1986 g.* (Moskva, 1987), pp. 204–205.

and agreed to corporate and fully coordinate all their activities with the Party and the Komsomol, were subject to approval.

Subsequently, on July 2, 1986, the Collegium of the USSR Ministry of Culture, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Komsomol and other organizations adopted the decree “On further development and improvement of amateur associations and interest clubs”. In this decree it was stated that the lack of control and disregard for the amateur movement by various departments and organizations led to a number of negative consequences, such as an insufficient level of upbringing and education, and the spontaneous setting up of amateur associations outside the limits of cultural institutions and non-governmental organizations. Therefore, the relevant institutions and organizations were required to carry out the certification of amateur associations and interest clubs until January 1987, and to constantly control their activities.<sup>25</sup>

Glasnost (openness), the democratization of society and pluralism of thoughts led to changing the policy of Party structures regarding informal associations. The inadequacy of the administrative and repressive approach used in the 1950s to the first half of the 1980s was experienced by all forms of unofficial initiative. In December 1986 at a session of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Young Communists of Ukraine, the issue of unofficial youth initiative was discussed in the context of strengthening the struggle against bourgeois ideology and morality. In this regard, governance of informal youth associations by the Komsomol committees and assistance in their work were defined as a priority.<sup>26</sup>

The next step to the changes occurred during the Twentieth Congress of the Komsomol in April 1987 with the acknowledgement of the existence of problems in the youth environment as well as the fact that the Komsomol did not always protect the interests of the youth. The beginning of “perestroika” in the Komsomol was proclaimed on the principles of democratization and the youth initiative and creativity.<sup>27</sup> The proposal to adopt the Law “On youth” was approved. The resolution adopted at the Congress proclaimed the necessity to introduce liberal forms of the organization of leisure. The Komsomol was to strengthen ideological and organizational impact on amateur youth associations, promote the development of wholesome initiatives in their activities and uncompromisingly oppose manifestations incompatible with the socialist way of life. They declared the need to improve the management style of amateur associations and other youth structures by introducing the principles of public self-government and independence into their customary procedures and behaviour.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the Komsomol had an ideological and organizational impact on the unofficial youth movement supporting an initiative that did not contradict the interests of the existing system. It also

---

<sup>25</sup> “O dalneyshem razvitii i sovershenstvovanii raboty lyubitelskikh obyedineniy i klubov po interesam” in *Dokumenty TsK VLKSM 1986 g.*..., pp. 201–202.

<sup>26</sup> Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine, fund 7, descr. 18, file 1826, p. 28.

<sup>27</sup> XX syezd Vsesoyuznogo Leninskogo Komsomolskogo Soyuza Molodezhi 15–18 aprelya 1987 g. in *Stenograficheskiy otchet* (Moskva, 1987), p. 139.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 150.



counteracted those associations that had other ideological benchmarks or carried out “undesirable” activities for the authorities.

In accordance with the declared goals, the so-called “differentiated approach to informal associations” was developed. It identified positive (social), neutral (asocial) and negative (antisocial) groups. This approach was based on the principle of social and ideological orientation of the youth initiative. Therefore, positive groups included associations of social initiatives which adhered to the official ideological doctrine. Associations without a certain socio-political orientation, mainly subcultural were regarded as neutral. Associations guided by unofficial ideological positions or related to prohibited topics were deemed as negative. As a rule, the Party and Komsomol structures tried to actively interact with the first two types of associations and provide them with necessary support in their activities. They conducted individual ideological and educational work with the so-called negative associations and exposed their “antisocial” orientation.

In my opinion, State and Party structures responsible for providing guidance to informal youth associations and establishing relations with them, had the following objectives:

- firstly, to preserve the monopoly of the Komsomol in the country’s youth movement turning it into a “really independent organization” by involving informal associations in it;
- secondly, to make latent informal associations, legal in order to influence their activities and reduce destructive orientations;
- thirdly, to unite and lead pro-socialist groups to support the policy of the state, and the exclusion of any deviations from official ideology;
- fourthly, to control all the processes in the informal movement in order to counteract associations oriented towards unofficial values.

Between 1986 and 1987 in this environment, various amateur clubs were established at the Komsomol committees, enterprises, palaces of culture considering the interests of young people. Special structures were created to coordinate and centralize their work. Thus, the Regional Federation of Amateur Associations was created in the Voroshilovgrad (modern Lugansk) region in 1986. Its organizers were the Regional Committee of the Komsomol of Ukraine, the Department of Culture and the Regional Council of People’s Deputies.<sup>29</sup> The Association of Youth Clubs was established in Lvov in 1987. The Regional Youth Center of Culture was established in Khmelnytskyi in 1987.<sup>30</sup>

The structure and status of the Committee of Youth Organizations of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) changed. It was established in 1956 to coordinate youth organizations with the aim of fighting for peace and implementing international politics on behalf of the youth. In practice the Committee did not play a significant role in the youth movement. In 1987 the Committee got informal youth associations established to fight for peace, democracy and social progress involved in its structure. However, only the associations based on the Marxism-Leninism principles could become members of

<sup>29</sup> Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine, fund 7, descr. 20, file 3944, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 31, 54.

the Committee. It limited the range of cooperation with informal youth organisations considerably.<sup>31</sup>

## COOPERATION OF PARTY AND KOMSOMOL WITH INFORMAL YOUTH ASSOCIATIONS

The legalization of rock music in 1986 confirmed that the approach of the authorities to unofficial youth associations had changed. Therefore, clubs for rock music fans appeared thanks to active support of official organizations. Their number was growing steadily. For example, in the Voroshilovgrad region there were 42 such associations and in 1987 the number of their participants reached 600 people, while in Odessa 400 people<sup>32</sup>. Komsomol supported a large number of rock concerts and rock festivals held in almost all cities of Ukraine. However, Soviet rock clubs set the goal of “adding social content to rock music” due to the fact that foreign rock music had a considerable impact on domestic rock bands, often distorting artistic and aesthetic tastes of young people and that it propagated dubious ideals.<sup>33</sup> This led to a strict control over the repertoire, which sometimes caused confrontation of the clubs with official structures.

In the second half of the 1980s, Party and Komsomol structures cooperated with a special category of the Soviet youth known as soldiers-internationalists. The subculture of the “Afghans”, the soldiers of the Soviet Army who took part in the Afghan war, had already formed at that time. It formed due to a number of socio-psychological factors: differences between the expectations of the “Afghans” and real peaceful life; the resentment towards people who lived in a peaceful society; the desire to return to Afghanistan. Due to the fact that the war in Afghanistan was hushed up and criticized, the “Afghans” needed to struggle for their recognition, protection of their political and social rights and the rights of the families of the deceased soldiers, at the same time immortalizing the deceased soldiers. As a result, soldiers-internationalists had a profound personal conflict which led to psychological disharmony with society and to temporary social disadaptation.<sup>34</sup> The researcher of youth subcultures S.I. Levikova defines these socio-psychological problems of “Afghans” as a syndrome of local wars and states that informal youth associations help young people to overcome the state of estrangement from society because “they allow them to perceive the world through the prism of their contact community”.<sup>35</sup>

The first associations of “Afghans” showed up in the early 1980s. They spontaneously arose at enterprises in educational institutions and functioned on an almost semi-legal

---

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, fund 1, descr. 25, file 3318, p. 27.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, fund 7, descr. 20, file 3944, pp. 6, 40.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 64.

<sup>34</sup> V. Znakov, “Psikhologicheskiye osobennosti lichnosti »afgantsev« i ponimaniye imi situatsii nasiliya” in *Psikhologicheskiye osobennosti samodeyatelnykh podrostkovo-yunosheskikh grupp*, ed. D.I. Feldshteyn and L.A. Radzikhovski (Moskva, 1990), p. 144.

<sup>35</sup> S. Levikova, *Molodezhnaya subkultura* (Moskva, 2004), p. 178.

basis. Subsequently, the Party members realized that the considerable social and political potential of soldiers-internationalists could be used for the upbringing and education of the younger generation. In 1986 soldiers-internationalists began to establish their clubs with the support of Komsomol of Ukraine. The decision of the Politburo of the Communist Party's Central Committee "On Measures to Implement the Decisions of the XXVII Party Congress, Plenum of the Communist Party's Central Committee in January 1987 in the sphere of national relations, international and patriotic education of youth" gave new impetus to the "Afghan" movement. It required that the soldiers-internationalists were involved in the education of young people and that they developed military-patriotic associations, defense-sports health camps, and councils of young reservists.<sup>36</sup> As a result, there were more than 900 associations of "Afghans" in the late 1980s.<sup>37</sup> However, conflict situations between the soldiers-internationalists and official organizations still took place. They arose because of attempts to restrict the activities of clubs, refusal to provide them with premises, etc. Such a situation, in particular, occurred in the Kiev region. The establishment of the military-patriotic club "Pamyat" by soldiers-internationalists at the Boguslavskaya secondary school caused discontent of the directorate and subsequently the club was banned.<sup>38</sup> But in general, the "Afghans" organizations actively interacted with official structures. An important event took place in June 1988 in Sevastopol at the Republican assembly of young reservists, which marked the establishment of a single Republican Council of Reservists.

After the policy of "broad democratization" had been proclaimed in the republic, youth socio-political clubs were organized on the initiative of the CPU and Komsomol of Ukraine. In 1987 there were 1119 such clubs.<sup>39</sup> Problems of the socio-political and economic life of the country were discussed in these clubs with the aim of contributing to the political education of the population. The political clubs established at the Komsomol committees, enterprises and cultural institutions were oriented solely to official ideology as "perestroika" needed to be carried out within the framework of the existing political system.

All-Union Socio-Political Club (ASPC) was established in May 1987 in order to guarantee cooperation between the political clubs. It had two groups: "social-democratic" and "Marxist-Leninist". In all regional centers in Ukraine, there were branches of the All-Union Socio-Political Club (ASPC). The Komsomol and party organizations worked individually with the members of the associations.

The next direction of the youth unofficial initiative to be supported by official structures was the national-cultural association. Thus, the historical and cultural Society Lva was established with the assistance of the Komsomol in 1987 in Lviv. The society began with two clubs: the Club of Young Scientists and "Zerkalo". Both newly founded clubs focused on the problems of culture and education. Students of local universities,

<sup>36</sup> Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine, fund 1, descr. 11, file 1464, pp. 29–30.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, fund 7, descr. 18, file 1996, p. 29.

<sup>38</sup> F. Illiuk, "Afhantsi", *Moloda hvardiia*, 27 kvitnia 1988.

<sup>39</sup> V. Holovenko, O. Korniiievskiy, *Ukrainskyi molodizhnyi rukh: istoriia ta sohodennia* (Kyiv, 1994), p. 72.

colleges, schools, workers and officials joined them. The first activity of young enthusiasts was the improvement of local cultural heritage - the Lychakiv Cemetery. They sent a collective letter to the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine, the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, and the media as an initiative to set up a historical and cultural reserve on the basis of the Lychakiv Cemetery.

The society was supported by local branches of creative unions, the Ukrainian Fund for the Protection of Monuments and the Ukrainian Fund for Culture. The main tasks of the organization were: the preservation of cultural and historical monuments, the development and distribution of the Ukrainian language and the development and preservation of Ukrainian folklore. The society had its branches in Ternopol and in Volyn. The head of the society was O. Sheika, the head of the department of the Komsomol city committee. Thus, the Komsomol supported the youth and had the opportunity to control it to some extent. Similar to the Society Lva national cultural associations were established in many cities of Ukraine: in Chernovtsy – “Obereg” and “Sech”, in Sambor – “Progress”, in Striy – “Rostki”, in Uman – “Bereginya”, in Kiev – “Istinnoe bratstvo” and in Dnepropetrovsk – Association of young historians.<sup>40</sup>

One of the advantages of the recognition by the authorities of the youth informal initiative was the removal of an information ban of this topic which was now openly discussed in newspapers, magazines and on radio and television programs. In this way youth problems came into the focus of current interest, which initiated dialogue and discussions on how to solve these problems in the youth environment. For example, in cities the Komsomol initiated regular television programs on informal youth association and about their cooperation with the Komsomol. Programs with the Komsomol members were broadcasted live. In particular, in Voroshilovgrad there was a TV program named “Contact” while in Zakarpattia, a television magazine called “Dialogue”.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, cooperation of the majority of informal associations with official structures is ambiguous. On the one hand, the fulfillment of the youth’s interests caused the growth of youth initiative while the reduction of destructive tendencies among young people made it possible to ease tension between informal youth and official organizations. Organizations for spending leisure time were established. In early 1988, there were 105 cost-accounting youth centers and 450 youth cafes which united a considerable number of amateur formations.<sup>42</sup> However, cooperation of the majority of associations in practice was limited to obtaining the status of an amateur association giving them the right to freely assemble. The authorities however when in contact with informal associations tried to control and regulate their activity. This, in turn, limited the initiative and innovation in youth associations and led to their integration into official organizations.

---

<sup>40</sup> *Katalog-spravochnik neformalnykh samodeyatelnykh organizatsiy i nezavisimoy pressy SSSR* (Moskva, 1990), p. 136.

<sup>41</sup> Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine, fund 7, descr. 20, file 3944, pp. 8, 22.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, fund 1, descr. 25, file 3318, p. 34.

## THE POLICY OF THE AUTHORITIES REGARDING INFORMAL OPPOSITION ASSOCIATIONS

In spite of the control over young people by the Komsomol and Party organizations, youth associations were established during the period of 1986–1988. They tried to counteract the existing regime. Youth associations that advocated the independence of Ukraine emerged. Such an organization was founded in 1986 in Ivano-Frankovsk. Its goal was to fight against Soviet power. According to the secretariat of the Central Committee of the Komsomol of Ukraine the members of the association conducted “nationalist” propaganda and disseminated “anti-Soviet” printed literature. At the same time, N. Moriliak, the secretary of the Komsomol Committee of the Odessa Engineering and Construction Institute, tried to set up an association of the students from western regions of the republic called the “Ukrainian community”. He planned to hang a “nationalist” flag on May 1, 1987. Such organizations were suppressed by the security forces.<sup>43</sup>

Revisionist, nationalist and pro-fascist groups appeared in Kiev, Ternopol, Lvov, Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozhe and Voroshilovgrad region. The negative reaction of the authorities was caused by the fact that some leaders of informal associations tried to be independent and avoided contact with Komsomol and public organizations. Some political clubs, initiated by the Party, deviated from the prevailing ideology in society. In 1987–1988 the Central Committee of the Komsomol of Ukraine obtained the following information on the work of socio-political clubs: “The Komsomol, organizations and departments responsible for educational work with young people are not always ready to cooperate with such associations. Some leaders put forward the ideas of political pluralism and de-ideologization of Soviet society”.<sup>44</sup> These leaders were searching for alternative ways of the development of society and for this required the pluralism of youth associations.<sup>45</sup>

The association “Democratization” and the youth political club “Bolshevik” testified to deviation from the official ideology. “Democratization” was one of the collective members of the All-Union Socio-Political Club and operated in Kiev and Poltava. The purpose of the association was to deepen the processes of “perestroika” in the USSR by revising the role and forms of the CPSU, councils and trade unions by expanding people’s self-government. One of the main tasks of the association was the fight against bureaucracy. Members of the association also exhorted to establish on a conspiratorial basis, a Ukrainian Council of Workers’ Collectives and similar councils at enterprises, educational institutions, and places of residence. The government believed that these proposals were aimed at undermining the leading role of the CPSU, and that their purpose was similar to that of the Polish association of trade unions “Solidarity”.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, fund 7, descr. 18, file 2074, pp. 79–80.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, fund 7, descr. 20, file 3944, p. 60.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, fund 7, descr. 18, file 2029, p. 24.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*, fund 7, descr. 20, file 3944, p. 62.

“Democratization” from Poltava, which operated from the end of 1985, had emerged as the “Workers’ Party of Democracy and Justice”. In 1987–1988, the association particularly demanded to increase scholarships for students, grant public organizations political rights to press, the right to nominate deputies and to set up the All-Union Fund for Assistance to “perestroika” supporters.<sup>47</sup> Protesting against bureaucracy, the members of the association proposed to pass a law to appropriate surplus housing from officials and wealthy people.<sup>48</sup> Party members conducted preventive work with members of “Democratization” at the political discussion club “Dialogue”. A number of articles were published in the press in order to discredit the club.

Youth political club “Bolshevik” resonated well with the Party. They operated in Kiev and numbered about 30 people. The members of the association stated oppositional ideas against the existing authorities in their manifesto. Thus, they demanded the replacement of the CPSU which in their opinion, was in a state of regression caused by its departure from the masses and political arrogance. It also ceased to consult with the working class and to being a Marxist-Leninist party. A new revolutionary Marxist-Leninist workers’ party was to come to power instead of CPSU. Its founding was the aspiration of the club “Bolshevik” which proclaimed itself as a “political organization of revolutionary youth”. The organizers of the club stated that inability of the CPSU to lead the country out of the economic and political crisis led to establishing such a party. The political club developed its own economic strategy necessary to overcome the crisis in the country, and in the political sphere emphasized its orientation to a multi-party system under which each class would have the right to establish its own political party for the expression and protection of their interests.<sup>49</sup> The political club broadcasted propaganda among students and working youth appealing to create similar political clubs for studying Marxist theory and establishment of relations between them. It is worth emphasizing that in 1987 by reason of their biased goals this club was not included into the structures of the Committee of Youth Organizations of the USSR.<sup>50</sup> The party and Komsomol organs conducted ideological, theoretical and educational work with the members of the aforementioned associations. In fact, authorities tried to force them to cease to exist.

Although ideological and theoretical foundations of these associations did not go beyond the framework of the Marxist-Leninist theory, the Party and Komsomol structures were not ready to communicate with them. It was hampered by ideological dogmatism, rejection of socio-political innovations and fear of losing a dominant position in society. Therefore, the party and Komsomol committees banned and discredited these associations. Thus, in the process of implementing a differentiated approach to informal associations the following formula worked: the Party and the Komsomol co-

---

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, fund 7, descr. 18, file 2074, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> H. Yaroshenko, “Peremoha. A, mozhe, porazka?”, *Molod Ukrainy*, 10 kvitnia 1988.

<sup>49</sup> Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine, fund 7, descr. 18, file 2074, pp. 85–87.

<sup>50</sup> *Katalog-spravochnik neformalnykh samodeyatelnykh organizatsiy i nezavisimoy pressy SSSR...*, p. 34.

operated with all associations that did not criticize their activities and did not encroach on their monopoly.

On August 31, 1987 the Central Committee of the Komsomol of Ukraine adopted the decree "On informal youth associations and measures to prevent their anti-social activities". According to this decree, the Propaganda and Agitation Department should have had to submit proposals to the secretariat of the Central Committee of the Komsomol on the subject matter of the decree after having carefully studied it, supplemented it with factual materials and prepared recommendations for improving the work of the Komsomol committees with informal associations.<sup>51</sup> The necessity to take measures to eliminate and prevent negative manifestations in informal associations and to ensure ideological and political influence on them was mentioned in the document. Relevant organizations needed to create councils of informal associations in order to prevent uncontrolled activity of some youth associations as well as to show initiative to establish new youth groups for protecting historical, cultural monuments and the environment.<sup>52</sup>

Government paid special attention to that part of unofficial youth associations that focused on non-socialist ideals or refused to cooperate with Komsomol committees. They were identified to be antisocial. In 1987 committees of the Komsomol were given the task of isolating and bringing to justice members of such groups. It was necessary to formulate and explain the nature and consequences of their activities, to people become intolerant towards them.<sup>53</sup>

Despite the increased control over youth initiatives and over the process of establishing new youth organizations, those associations that were out of the authorities' control, continued to function. A striking example of this in autumn of 1987 was the founding of the Ukrainian Cultural Club (UCC) at the House of Scientists of the Ukrainian SSR Academy of Science. The main goal of the club was to be purely of a cultural nature and yet it immediately became an opposition group in spite of the study and dissemination of knowledge about the past and present of Ukrainian culture among people of different ages, the social strata and nationalities, the education of national respect and the feelings of friendship and brotherhood among the population of the USSR republics. This, in particular, can be explained by looking at its members. There were 10 people who were previously sentenced for writing anti-Soviet articles. There were the participants of the "Democratic Club" (1981) among them – S. Naboka, L. Lokhvitskaya, L. Milyavskiy i I. Chernyavskaya.<sup>54</sup>

Club meetings were held in the form of talks and discussions on topical issues like the artificial famine in Ukraine, the destruction of Ukrainian culture or the repression of the 1930s. Famous scholars and writers came to meet with young people: S. Plachinda, M. Braychevskiy, M. Sagaydak and others. Employees of the news agency from the United States of America and the radio station "Voice of America" attended one of the mee-

<sup>51</sup> Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine, fund 7, descr. 18, file 1996, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 80.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, fund 7, descr. 18, file 1998, p. 137.

<sup>54</sup> I. Dmytrenko, "Choho prahnut panove", *Radianska Ukraina*, 13 travnia 1988, p. 3.

tings. Similar meetings were attended by 250–300 participants. The club was one of the first to raise the issue of the Ukrainian Famine-Genocide in 1932–1933, it appealed to Western countries on the need to legalize the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, and demanded the release of all political prisoners. The members of the UCC also collected signatures for a petition to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR with the demand to make Ukrainian as the official state language and to improve the graves of famous figures of Ukrainian culture. Authorities characterised the Club in the following way: “... they spread myths about the history of the republic and national policy of the CPSU. They attempt to paint the “white spots” of our history into “black ones”.<sup>55</sup> Party and Komsomol structures began to counteract these characteristics within the Club and conduct explanatory work with active members. The authorities also began to demand re-registration of the club and changes in certain provisions of the charter, in particular mandatory observance of the Marxist-Leninist ideals and struggle against Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism. In reply, the leaders of the UCC declared that “the foundations of the Marxist-Leninist ideology are neither necessary nor acceptable for them”. Therefore they refused to have these points in their charter.<sup>56</sup>

Improving methods of discrediting “disagreeable” associations, the power structures escalated “moral panic” by organizing critical campaigns in the media. This method of influence, which in the opinion of the authorities was supposed to promote the dispersion of negative public opinion about unofficial associations, was applied to the UCC during that period. The local and republican media published a series of critical articles on this association. Thus, in late 1987 an overview of the letters from the readers of the newspaper “Vecherniy Kiev” was to demonstrate the public’s negative attitude towards the Club’s activities. All published letters, except for the letter of the well-known human rights defender O. Meshko, strongly condemned the UCC.<sup>57</sup> But public reaction to such articles was completely contrary to the authorities’ expectations. More and more people, especially young people, became the members of the Club. Why was the public reaction to criticism in the media not adequate? As sociologists explain, initiating a “moral panic” about a certain event, the mass media creates advertisements for the participants of this event and this in turn makes them attractive to certain categories of the population, especially young people.<sup>58</sup>

Having the experience of working with associations similar to UCC, government began to be suspicious of initiatives in the national and cultural sphere. There were cases of banning such activities. In particular, in Kharkov in 1988 an attempt to establish a youth club “Slobozhanshchina” was unsuccessful. The initiator of the association S. Sapilyak had a conversation with representatives of the KGB in the Kharkov region.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine, fund 7, descr. 20, file 3944, pp. 66–67.

<sup>56</sup> I. Dmytrenko, “Choho prahnut panove...”, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> “Yakym zhe buty klubu? Ohliad lystiv”, *Vechirniy Kyiv*, 2 hrudnia 1987.

<sup>58</sup> S. Kosaretskaya, *O neformalnykh obyedineniyakh molodezhi* (Moskva, 2004), pp. 155–156.

<sup>59</sup> Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine, fund 1, descr. 25, file 3318, p. 18.



## THE RESULTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE POLICY OF THE AUTHORITIES REGARDING INFORMAL YOUTH ASSOCIATIONS

In the context of the emergence of various informal associations throughout the country and the recognition of their existence by the authorities, it became necessary to provide legal support for their activities. Therefore, the Ministry of Justice of the USSR started drafting the law "On Voluntary Associations, Public Initiatives Bodies and Amateur Voluntary Associations" in 1987–1988. The document caused a flurry of criticism and protests from researchers and the public. Its main shortcomings were: the absence of normative definitions of the concepts of these associations, ignoring the rights of voluntary societies for legislative initiative and nomination of candidates for deputies, exclusively authorization order to establish organizations.<sup>60</sup> In this regard, it was decided to finalize the draft of this law and bring it to public discussion. The nature of the bill showed the paradox of the situation that arose around public activity: the government actually ignored the desire of people for self-organization and did not intend to recognize informal associations as fully fledged participants in the socio-political process.

The interaction of informal youth associations with official organizations during the studied period was rather negatively assessed by their participants. Already in 1987, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine received information that in practice the Komsomol committees were ignoring the needs and request of young people and neither did they have time to react to their hobbies. Some Komsomol staff did not have the skills to work with amateur associations, to conduct a discussion on topical issues.<sup>61</sup> Lack of political content in Komsomol activities and passiveness in solving social problems of youth led to weakening of their impact on young people. At the same time, distrust of the Party and Komsomol structures was due to their will to directly manage unofficial associations, to restrict their activities and to integrate them into existing public organizations. The absence of a mechanism for legal interaction of informal associations with the government and an incomplete system of an independent solution of their financial and economic issues made the situation more complicated.

Interaction with unofficial groups was not effective enough in the opinion of the Party. In February 1988, in a memorandum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party it was reported that "...in general, the results of work with public associations cannot be considered satisfactory ... The lack of initiative, slow resolution of problems cause political speculation and emergence of various initiative groups ... Unjustified prohibitions, attempts to crush the "uncomfortable" associations, to brush them aside have not been eliminated".<sup>62</sup>

It should be emphasized that the emergence of tendencies to politicize and orientate to unofficial values among members of informal associations made the political leadership of the country concerned. The decree of the CPSU Central Committee "On over-

<sup>60</sup> N. Belyayeva, "Posle dolgogo zapreta", *Izvestiya*, 17 maya 1988.

<sup>61</sup> Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine, fund 1, descr. 25, file 3141, pp. 77–78.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, fund 1, descr. 11, file 1842, pp. 22–23.

coming negative tendencies in the activities of some unofficial formations” was issued on January 8, 1988. Implementing this decree the Communist Party paid attention to major shortcomings and measures to overcome them:

1) Extremes in covering this problem by the media: indiscriminate attitude and flirting with “extremist” groups (especially in the youth press) as well as general unconvincing and declarative criticism. In this regard, the State Broadcasting Company of the Ukrainian SSR, newspapers and magazines had to actively support associations with “positive” programs and skillfully expose the purposes and intentions of political “extremists”.

2) Party committees underestimated the public danger from negative manifestations in the activity of unofficial formations, their unpreparedness for public discussions and counteraction to “extremists”. In order to eliminate these mistakes it was necessary to draw up action plans to strengthen ideological and organizational influence on informal associations, to organize specialized groups of the most competent party, soviet, trade union, Komsomol workers who had the authority and the skills to discuss working with associations and their leaders, a subject that required increased attention.

3) There was an insufficient level of research on socio-political problems of the activities of informal associations. The Solution was to conduct scientific studies of social and political problems related to unofficial formations to get a better understanding of them.<sup>63</sup>

However, leadership of the party underestimated the situation with informal associations and lost control over it. The aforementioned measures could not solve the problems of relationships with the informal associations. It was necessary to radically change approaches to public initiatives and reveal the true causes of their founding. This was hindered by the ideological bias of the Party which complicated the analysis of the problem. Fears of a negative reaction from the leadership led to the fact that information from the regions often did not reflect the real situation in the youth environment.

## CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the policy of the Party and Komsomol concerning informal youth associations in Ukraine in 1986–1988 years, I can assert that the hypotheses were confirmed, and also make the following conclusions.

1. The socio-political transformation of the Soviet regime in the mid-1980s led to a change in the policy of Party leadership towards youth initiative. It was based on the principle of cooperation in accordance with a differentiated approach to associations. It consisted of providing ideological, political and organizational influence on all youth associations, assistance to “positive” associations and uncompromising resistance to associations whose activities were incompatible with the socialist way of life.

On the basis of the analysis, it can be concluded that the party and Komsomol structures managed to establish contact, and in fact, integrated two groups of associations:

---

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 18–23.

1) non-politicized associations – the majority of subcultural associations and groups of social initiatives (ecological, cultural, historical, peacekeeping). In their activities they did not go beyond the limits allowed by the authorities; 2) politicized associations based on official ideology. This group is represented mainly by youth socio-political discussion clubs. The positive results of cooperation were the creation of effective structures for youth's interests and needs realization, the reduction of destructive manifestations, political education of young people, and the introduction of new forms of work at the Komsomol. But this process also had significant disadvantages like the control and regulation of the activities of informal youth associations by official organizations and the limitation of their initiative and innovation.

Associations that were defined by official structures as “negative”, “antisocial” or “extremist” i.e. 1) politicized groups that differed from the official ideological and political orientation (national democratic, left-wing radical, social democratic, nationalist organizations) propagating the ideas of a multi-party system and the removal of the CPSU from power; 2) non-politicized associations whose activities went beyond the limits set by the authorities. To stop their activities, the authorities used various measures, such as organizing critical campaigns in the media, discrediting the association and its leaders, moral and psychological pressure and bringing to administrative responsibility.

2. The policy of the Party and the Komsomol in regard to informal youth associations in 1986–1988 can be called “the carrot and stick policy”. On the one hand, official organizations tried to provide support, assistance and organizational independence to the associations. On the other hand, a number of factors such as the reluctance of the government to give the necessary legal status to informal associations, attempts to discredit some associations, strict regulation and restriction of activities showed that the authorities did not fundamentally change their attitude to public initiative. Therefore, in 1988 it became evident that the authorities failed to establish constructive cooperation with unofficial youth associations. I distinguish the following reasons:

- Inefficacious tactic in working with informal associations. Official structures obtained a dominant and control-regulatory role. This situation precluded the possibility of an equal and constructive dialogue between the parties.
- The absence of a coherent concept of the relationship between the government and unofficial associations which would clearly define their status, functions and the limits of interference in their activities. Such a situation disoriented local authorities and led to differences in actions at different levels of the pyramid of power.
- The dogmatism of government in the country and hostility to ideological, political and social innovations offered by informal associations which excluded the possibility of reaching a consensus in society and only aggravated the existing crises.
- The use of administrative and repressive methods to all associations that were unsuitable for the authorities, which led to decreasing authority of the government and caused growing resistance from the participants of informal associations.

All of this led to the fact that since the second half of 1988 there was significant politicization, activation and radicalization of the activities of informal organizations.

Relatively stable opposition associations of various ideological and political directions were formed and then consolidated. Their authority among young people grew against the background of the decline of official youth structures.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine

fund 1, descr. 11, file 1464.

fund 1, descr. 25, file 3318.

fund 1, descr. 25, file 3141.

fund 7, descr. 20, file 3699.

fund 7, descr. 18, file 1826.

fund 7, descr. 20, file 3944.

fund 7, descr. 18, file 2074.

fund 7, descr. 18, file 1996.

Adams R., "Harnessing Technological Development" in *Rethinking Modernization: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. J. Poggie Jr. and R.N. Lynch (Westport, 1975).

Banovi R., "Informal Networks as a Reflection of Informal Institutions in East European Transitional Societies: Legacy or Opportunism?", *Equilibrium. Quarterly Journal of Economics and Economic Policy*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2015).

Beacháin D., Polese A., "»Rocking the Vote«: New Forms of Youth Organisations in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union", *Journal of Youth Studies*, vol. 13 (2010).

Belyayeva N., "Posle dolgogo zapreta", *Izvestiya*, 17 maya 1988.

Brack N., Weinblum S., "»Political Opposition«: Towards a Renewed Research Agenda, *Interdisciplinary Political Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2011).

Evans A., "Recent Assessments of Social Organizations in Russia", *Demokratizatsiya*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2002).

Golovakha E., Bekeshkina I. and Nebozhenko V., *Demokratizatsiya obshchestva i razvitiye lichnosti ot totalitarizma k demokratii* (Kyiv, 1992).

Dmytrenko I., "Choho prahnut panove", *Radianska Ukraina*, 13 travnia 1988.

Holovenko V., Korniiievskiy O., *Ukrainskyi molodizhnyi rukh: istoriia ta s'ohodennia* (Kyiv, 1994).

Illiuik F., "Afhantsi", *Moloda hvardiia*, 27 kvitnia 1988.

*Katalog-spravochnik neformalnykh samodeyatelnykh organizatsiy i nezavisimoy pressy SSSR* (Moskva, 1990).

Kosaretskaya S., *O neformalnykh obyedineniyakh molodezhi* (Moskva, 2004).

Krawatzek F., "Fallen Vanguard and Vanished Rebel? Political Youth Involvement in Extraordinary Times" in *Eastern European Youth Cultures in a Global Context*, ed. M. Schwartz and H. Winkel (London, 2016).

Kubat M., *Teoria opozycji politycznej* (Kraków, 2010).

Levanov E., "Social and political potential of youth" (Ph.D. diss., Academy of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of CPSU, 1990).

- Levikova S., *Molodezhnaya subkultura* (Moskva, 2004).
- Levin B., Levin M., *Narkomaniya i narkomany* (Moskva, 1991).
- Levine N., "The Emerging Political Party System in Russia: 1986–1992" (Master's thesis, McMaster University Hamilton, Ontario, 1995).
- March K., Taqqu R., *Women's Informal Associations and the Organizational Capacity for Development* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982).
- Materialy XXVII syezda Kommunisticheskoy partii Sovetskogo Soyuza* (Moskva, 1989).
- Molodezh kak glavnyy obyekt burzhuaznoy propagandy* (Kiyev, 1986).
- Nolte H., "Changing minds, but not politics in Brezhnevs time", *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, vol. 5 (2014).
- "O dalneyshem razvitii i sovershenstvovanii raboty lyubitelskikh obyedineniy i klubov po interesam" in *Dokumenty TsK VLKSM 1986 g.* (Moskva, 1987).
- Pilkington H., *Russia's Youth and its Culture. A Nation's Constructors and Constructed* (London–New York, 1994).
- Plaksiy S., *Molodezhnyye gruppy i obyedineniya: prichiny vozniknoveniya i osobennosti deyatelnosti* (Moskva, 1988).
- "Polozheniye o lyubitelskom obyedinenii, klube po interesam" in *Dokumenty TsK VLKSM 1986 g.* (Moskva, 1987).
- Sungurov A., "«Think Tanks» and Public Policy Centers in Russia and Other Post-Communist Countries: Development and Function", *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review*, vol. 39 (2012).
- "Yakym zhe buty klubu? Ohliad lystiv", *Vechirniy Kyiv*, 2 hrudnia 1987.
- Yaroshenko H., "Peremoha. A, mozhe, porazka?", *Molod Ukrainy*, 10 kvitnia 1988.
- Zakon Ukrainy № 2998-XII »Pro spryiannia sotsialnomu stanovlenniu ta rozvytku molodi v Ukraini«, <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2998-12>, 05.02.1993.
- Znakov V., "Psikhologicheskiye osobennosti lichnosti »afgantsev« i ponimaniye imi situatsii nasiliya" in *Psikhologicheskiye osobennosti samodiyatelnykh podrostkovo-yunosheskikh grupp*, ed. D.I. Feldshteyn and L.A. Radzikhovski (Moskva, 1990).
- Zwierzchowski E., "Wybrane problemy opozycji politycznej" in *Ustrój polityczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w nowej Konstytucji z 2 kwietnia 1997 roku* (Lublin, 1998).
- XX syezd Vsesoyuznogo Leninskogo Komsomolskogo Soyuza Molodezhi 15–18 aprelya 1987 g. in *Stenograficheskiy otchet* (Moskva, 1987).

## The Policy of the Communist Party and Komsomol Concerning Informal Youth Associations in Ukraine (1986–1988)

The main objective of this paper is to analyze the Communist Party and Komsomol policy concerning informal youth associations in Soviet Ukraine. The author paid considerable attention to the factors that caused the emergence of informal associations' phenomenon. It is shown that if up to the first half of the 1980s state structures pre-

ferred repressive methods of influence on informal youth associations, then from the mid-1980s onwards the policy of party-state leadership changed using the principle of cooperation according to a differentiated approach to associations. This led to a decrease in destructive activities of certain associations and overcoming tensions between the informal youth and public structures. However, in general, the authorities failed to establish constructive cooperation with informal youth associations. Informal organizations became politicized, opposition informal associations formed and consolidated in the second half of 1988. Their authority among the youth was growing amid the decay of official youth structures.

#### KEYWORDS

Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), Komsomol, informal youth associations, youth policy, Soviet regime, political opposition

**SVITLANA SOROKA** – PhD in Public Administration (postdoctoral degree), PhD in Political Science, MA Degree in History, Professor at the Department of Public Administration in Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University (Ukraine, Mykolayiv). She is the author of 85 scientific publications. Member of the Expertise Board in Public Administration of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, member of the Academic Board in Public Administration Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University. In 2008–2009 received The Lane Kirkland Scholarship (Polish – U.S. Fulbright Commission) for postdoctoral research *Transformation of the state power system in Poland* and the personal Scholarship of Parliament of Ukraine as the most talented young scientist in 2015. Research interests: informal organizations in Soviet Union, history of public policy and public administration. E-mail: svet230879@gmail.com.