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Civil society: an inquiry into the usefulness of an historical term*

ABSTRACT

Civil society has been on the lips of many theoreticians of the 1989 revolutions, in the West as well as in East Central Europe. The hope is that civil society, as a concept and a programme, will help post-communist societies out of their current political predicament. How reasonable a hope is this? How useful is the concept of civil society at the present time; either in the East or the West? This paper first considers the historical career of the concept. It then goes on to examine its fruitfulness in the current conditions of western and East European society.

> 'Civil society is still only an idea; let us look at ourselves here in Budapest, as if from the island of Utopia.'
>
> George Konrad, *Antipolitics* (1984)

AN ACT OF RECOVERY

It is undeniably the case that many Central and East European intellectuals have seen the construction or reconstruction of 'civil society' as the salvation of their nations in their current predicament. Their example has inspired several western thinkers to reconsider the concept of civil society, to ask whether it may not also speak to the condition of western societies. In both cases it is the crisis of socialism, as an experience and an ideology, that has prompted this search for alternative concepts. The terms of civil society, its attractive combination of democratic pluralism with a continuing role for state regulation and guidance, make it appear hopeful to societies seeking to recover from the excesses of state socialism; at the same time it seems to offer help in the refashioning of radical politics in those societies where socialism has lost whatever appeal it once possessed.

The revival of the concept of civil society is a self-conscious exercise

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in remembering and retrieval. It is, says one of its proponents, to engage in 'a type of future-oriented memory', 'a rescuing or "redemption" of the lost treasure of authors, texts and contexts' for long neglected as outdated or merely 'bourgeois'; it is 'a necessary condition of stimulating the contemporary democratic imagination.'[1] Western scholars are perhaps more likely to stress this revivalism than their counterparts in Central and Eastern Europe. There the concern with 'totalitarianism' – another concept latterly somewhat disregarded in the West – has kept alive the idea of civil society as the antithesis and alternative to the Party-state.[2] But even here it is the unexpectedly swift collapse of the Party-state, especially in the remarkable events of 1989, that has given a new relevance and a new currency to the idea of civil society. Here too, in the sense of the recovery of certain traditions of the pre-communist past, there is the element of revival and retrieval.

In both cases then we are dealing with a concept rich in historical resonances; a concept where a good part of the appeal is the sense of many levels and layers of meaning, deposited by successive generations of thinkers. With it, as most of its uses clearly testify, we are in the realm of the normative, if not indeed the nostalgic. 'Civil society' sounds good; it has a good feel to it; it has the look of a fine old wine, full of depth and complexity. Who could possibly object to it, who not wish for its fulfilment?

Fine old wines can stimulate but they can also make you drunk, lose all sense of discrimination and clarity of purpose. What is the case for reviving the concept of civil society? What can it offer that other concepts cannot? What is its theoretical reach, and how far can this be translated into practice? To consider these questions we must first look, however briefly, at the history of the concept. For doubts about the usefulness of reviving it spring in part from its perplexing history of varying and sometimes contrary meanings.

THE CAREER OF CONCEPT[3]

Up to the end of the eighteenth century, the term 'civil society' was synonymous with the state or 'political society'. Here it reflected precisely its classical origins. 'Civil society' was a more or less direct translation of Cicero's *societas civilis* and Aristotle's *koinônia politiké*. Locke could speak of 'civil government' along with, and as an alternative term for, 'civil or political society'. Kant sees *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* as that constitutional state towards which political evolution tends. For Rousseau the *état civil* is the state. In all these uses the contrast is with the 'uncivilized' condition of humanity – whether in a hypothesized state of nature or, more particularly, under an 'unnatural' system of government that rules by despotic decree rather than by laws. Civil society in this conception expresses the growth of civilization to the point where society is 'civilized'. It is, as classically expressed in the Athenian polis or the Roman republic, a social order of citizenship, one where men (rarely women) regulate their relationships and settle their disputes according to a system of laws; where 'civility' reigns, and citizens take an active part in public life.

The connection of citizenship with civil society was never entirely lost. It forms part of the association that lends its appeal to the current championing of civil society. But there was a decisive innovation in the latter half of the eighteenth century that broke the historic equation of civil society and the state. John Keane has argued that this was an achievement of British and American thought. In the writings of Locke and Paine, and in those of Ferguson and Smith, he discerns the basic elaboration of a sphere of society distinct from the state and with forms and principles of its own. While these writers continued to use the term civil society in its classical sense – e.g. as in Adam Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767) – they were in fact establishing the distinction that was later to bring about a radical transformation in the meaning of the concept.[4]

The concern of these writers, argues Keane, was largely political. Civil society was elaborated as a concept in the eighteenth-century debates about despotism and the means to counteract it.[5] Keane is here reacting against the conventional 'property-centred' view, derived from Marx, that associates the distinction between civil society and the state with the growth of capitalism and the development of the science of political economy. In this view the refashioned concept of civil society was tied to the emergence of a distinct sphere of private property whose principal feature was an unprecedented degree of autonomy and independence from other social spheres.

Civil society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*), says Marx, 'embraces the whole material intercourse of individuals within a definite stage of the development of productive forces'. In this general, analytical sense, civil society as 'the social organisation evolving directly out of production and commerce' is always and everywhere 'the true source and theatre of all history'; it 'forms the basis of the state and of the rest of the idealistic superstructure.' But the discovery of this sphere, and the recognition of its central importance in history, could only come about at a particular stage in the development of the productive forces: the stage at which the bourgeoisie could establish an economy in principle and to a good extent in practice distinct from the state and all other regulatory bodies. Only then could civil society be named, only then its principles anatomized by the new economic science.

> The word 'civil society' emerged in the eighteenth century, when property relationships had already extricated themselves from the

> ancient and medieval communal society. Civil society as such only develops with the bourgeoisie . . .[6]

Marx explicitly attributes this view of civil society to Hegel. He refers to 'the material conditions of life, the sum total of which Hegel, following the example of the Englishmen and Frenchmen of the eighteenth century, combines under the name of "civil society". . .'[7] But an examination of Hegel's admittedly very abstract account of civil society does not really support this purely 'materialist' interpretation. What it shows rather is that Hegel is closer to the eighteenth-century, pre-Marxist, concept of civil society, and that Keane is right to insist on the richer, more complex, more political provenance of the concept.[8]

Civil society in Hegel, says Shlomo Avineri, 'is nothing else than the market mechanism.'[9] Nothing else? Certainly material interests belong here, in this 'association of members as self-subsistent individuals.' And Hegel is also, like Marx, clear that the crystallization of this sphere, as an institutionalized and differentiated entity, has occurred only relatively recently – for Hegel, in the period since the Renaissance. 'The creation of civil society is the achievement of the modern world which has for the first time given all determinations of the Idea their due.' It is, moreover, indeed the case that civil society is a realm of 'appearance', where particularity and egoism lead to 'measureless excess' and ethical life, which is essentially social, seems to be lost in a riot of self-seeking.[10]

But the appearance is of course deceptive. Civil society, as a moment in the progess of the Spirit towards the universality of the state, is not simply – as Marx would have it – a cockpit of competing individuals pursuing their private ends. Civil society is a part of ethical life, the part that provides the middle term between the family and the state. It therefore partakes of that unity of 'abstract right' and 'subjective morality' that is the formal principle of ethical life. It goes, that is, beyond individuals and the relations between individuals to encompass the life of the community as a whole. Civil society is a process of mediation. The 'concrete person' of civil society differs from the isolated subject of the sphere of morality (*Moralität*) in that he gradually comes to recognise himself as a member of society and realises that to attain his ends he must work with and through others.

> Through working in with others, his particularity is mediated; he ceases to be a mere unit and eventually becomes so socially conscious, as a result of the educative force of the institutions of civil society, that he wills his own ends only in willing universal ends and so has passed beyond civil society into the state . . . The history of civil society is the history of the education of . . . private judgement until the particular is brought back to the universal.[11]

The term *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* contains the very ambiguity that needs to be explored in Hegel and Marx. It makes no distinction between the sphere of the *bourgeois* and the sphere of the *citoyen*. Marx interprets it very much as synonymous with bourgeois society – the arena of the self-seeking economic actor. Hegel certainly includes this – civil society is not the state – but critically he also includes within it the impulse to citizenship, the passage from the outlook of civil society to that of the state. That is why the sphere of civil society contains not just economic but social and civic institutions. It includes not just the market, the system of production and exchange for the satisfaction of needs, but also classes and corporations concerned with social, religious, professional and recreational life. One of these classes is the bureaucracy, 'the universal class', the class that links the particularism of civil society with the universality of the state. The other mediating devices are the whole range of public institutions, such as courts, welfare agencies and educational establishments, which are directly concerned with civic purposes. These non-economic institutions are not peripheral or minor aspects of civil society but central to its function in Hegel's political philosophy. As Pelczynski says:

> Civil society in this sense is an arena in which modern man legitimately gratifies his self-interest and develops his individuality, but also learns the value of group action, social solidarity and the dependence of his welfare on others, which educate him for citizenship and prepare him for participation in the political arena of the state.[12]

Avineri, perversely, having sought to narrow Hegel's concept of civil society, has elsewhere tried to inflate Marx's. Marx, says Avineri, clearly distinguished civil society, 'as a sphere of economic activity unlimited by political considerations', from 'the bourgeoisie as a social class'. This allowed him to give a political interpretation of the rise of capitalism. Civil society was the creation of the communal movement of the burghers of the late Middle Ages. The stuff of civil society was the urban corporations and communes. These cleared the space for the accumulation of capital and the rise of the bourgeois class. Thus it was 'a socio-political revolution in late medieval Europe' that heralded the industrial revolution. 'Countries which did not evolve a civil society were unable to develop on capitalist lines.'[13]

This attempt to give civil society a largely socio-political character does not however really square with Marx's normal treatment of it. As Alvin Gouldner says,

> Marx normally emphasised that the social structures of civil society were *not* independent entities generating bourgeois society but were, rather, forms in which bourgeois society had emerged; that is, *they were the products rather than the producers of the bourgeois class.*[14]

Marx's tendency to dichotomize, to assign all social phenomena to base and superstructure, meant that there was no place for an independent and distinctive realm of the social. The social practices and social institutions of civil society could be no more than the forms in which the essential life of capitalist society, the economic life, was played out. Hence Marx's claim that 'the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy'.[15] The social structures of civil society were dissolved in the economic base; the economic dimension of society was expanded until it became coterminous with society itself. This left only the simple dichotomy 'society-state'. And it was quite clear which way the influence flowed. As Engels put it: 'The State – the political order – is the subordinate, and civil society – the realm of economic relations – the decisive element.'[16]

Marx's reductionist concept of civil society, argues Gouldner, led Marxism away from an engagement with the central subject matter of sociology: which has been precisely the social structures of civil society, conceived as a domain occupying the space between the individual and the formal institutions of the state. In the writings of Saint-Simon, Comte, de Tocqueville, Durkheim, Tönnies and Parsons (among others), Gouldner sees the attempt to grapple with the central problem of modern society: how to find a 'third way' between 'the atomization of competitive market society', on the one side, and 'a state dominated existence', on the other. The solution has generally been seen to lie in a structure of 'natural' or voluntary groups and organizations through which the individual develops the sense of social solidarity and civic participation.

> Sociology conceives of civil society as a haven and support for individual persons, i.e. as de-atomizing; as a medium through which they can pursue their own projects in the course of their everyday lives; and as ways of avoiding dependence on the domination by the state.[17]

Gouldner sees weaknesses in this sociological tradition, as a largely reactive and conservative response to what were perceived to be threats to social order posed by the French and Industrial Revolutions. In its pursuit of the 'organic', 'spontaneous' and 'natural' forms of society sociology, like Marxism, has been neglectful of the state and the political dimension generally. But at the same time Gouldner wishes to praise the sociological emphasis on the structures of civil society. Especially in an era in which the collectivist state has revealed the dangers and limitations of Marxism's 'liberative aspirations', sociology has an important role to play in thinking through the problem of developing 'a *self*-maintaining civil society, social organisations, and social systems.'

> No emancipation is possible in the modern world . . . without a strong civil society that can strengthen the public sphere and can

> provide a haven from and a center of resistance to the Behemoth state.[18]

This is, of course, the language of other recent proponents of the civil society idea; and we shall return to its claims. But we should note, in passing, that of all the contributions of the classic sociologists to the idea it was probably Alexis de Tocqueville who was the most incisive.

What de Tocqueville did was to refine the state-society dichotomy, common not just in Marxism but in much other discussion of the time, and introduce a third region, a third term, that kept alive the idea of a political culture below, or perhaps better around, the state. Though not spelled out in precise terminology, in *Democracy in America* (1835–40) and *The Ancien Régime and the Revolution* (1856) de Tocqueville effectively identified three realms of society. There is the state, the system of formal political representation, with its parliamentary assemblies, courts, bureaucracy, police and army. There is civil society, which is essentially the arena of private interest and economic activity, and which corresponds more or less directly to the capitalist economy that Marx also identifies with civil society. But while Marx makes this the whole of non-state society, de Tocqueville critically adds another dimension, the dimension of 'political society'.[19]

Political society draws upon the fullest development of what de Tocqueville calls the most important 'law' controlling human societies, 'the art of association'. In civilized societies there are political associations, such as local self-government, juries, parties and public opinion; and there are civil associations, such as churches, moral crusades, schools, literary and scientific societies, newspapers and publishers, professional and commercial organizations, organizations for leisure and recreation. The life of all these associations, the 'super-abundant force and energy' that they contribute to the body politic, constitutes political society. De Tocqueville notes that it is usually politics that spreads 'a general habit and taste for association', so that 'one may think of political associations as great free schools to which all citizens come to be taught the general theory of association.' But he also argues that 'civil associations pave the way for political ones'. It is there that 'feelings and ideas are renewed, the heart enlarged, and the understanding developed.'[20] It is in any case through political society that the potential excesses of the centralized state, especially in democratic societies, are controlled. Political society supplies 'the independent eye of society' that exercises surveillance over its public life. It is what educates us for politics, tempers our passions and curbs the unmitigated pursuit of private self-interest.

Something of de Tocqueville's understanding of political society returns with Gramsci, who has been called 'the Marxist de Tocqueville'.[21] Gramsci also returns to the Hegelian roots of the idea of civil society. At one point in the *Prison Notebooks* he writes of 'civil society as understood by Hegel, and as often used in these notes (i.e. in the sense of political and cultural hegemony of a social group over the entire society, as ethical content of the state)...[22] Elsewhere he says that 'between the economic structure and the State with its legislation and its coercion stands civil society' – and it is the latter that must be 'radically transformed' if revolutionary change is not to degenerate into 'economic moralism'.[23]

Gramsci here sets himself against the purely economic interpretation of civil society associated with Marx and his followers. Indeed it is possible to go further, and to agree with Norberto Bobbio when he says that, in contradistinction to Marx, 'civil society in Gramsci does not belong to the structural sphere [i.e. the 'base'], but to the superstructural sphere.'[24] Civil society for Gramsci is indeed not to be found in the sphere of production or economic organisation but in the State. The formula most commonly found in Gramsci is: the State = political society plus civil society. Political society is the arena of coercion and domination; civil society that of consent and direction (or 'leadership'). The hegemony of a ruling class is expressed through the 'organic relations' between the two realms.[25]

But, in opposing the 'economistic' tendencies within Marxism, Gramsci is usually concerned to emphasize the central role of civil society in the manufacture and maintenance of hegemony. He thus sometimes narrowly equates the state with political society, the system of direct coercive rule, leaving to civil society the main work of organising hegemony.[26] A section of the *Prison Notebooks* is headed 'Hegemony (Civil Society)...' Even where he warns against the identification of the State with political society, as merely 'dictatorship or coercive apparatus', he still singles out civil society as the area where hegemony is exercised. We must, he says, regard the State as

> an equilibrium between political society and civil society (or hegemony of a social group over the entire national society exercised through the so-called private organisations, like the Church, the trade unions, the schools, etc.).

It is 'precisely in civil society', he goes on, 'that intellectuals operate especially.' It is here that they perform their key function of supplying legitimacy and creating consensus on behalf of the ruling groups.[27]

'Force and consent; coercion and persuasion; State and Church; political society and civil society; politics and morality...; law and freedom; order and self-discipline...' Or again: 'force and consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilization, the individual moment and the universal moment ("Church" and "State")...'[28] These antinomies litter Gramsci's writings, and make clearer than any elaborate discussion just how and where we are supposed to see civil society. Civil society is the sphere of culture in the broadest sense. It is concerned with the manners and mores of society, with the way people live. It is where values and meanings are established, where they are debated, contested and changed. It is the necessary complement to the rule of a class through its ownership of the means of production and its capture of the apparatus of the state. By the same token it is the space that has to be colonized – the famous 'war of position' – by any new class seeking to usurp the old.

CIVIL SOCIETY TODAY

In seeking to excavate the concept of civil society and put it to use in current conditions, contemporary theorists are evidently mining a rich but highly variegated vein. Civil society has been found in the economy and in the polity; in the area between the family and the state, or the individual and the state; in non-state institutions which organize and educate citizens for political participation; even as an expression of the whole civilizing mission of modern society.

Can any central meaning, more or less coherent and consistent, be discerned in this intellectual tradition? How far do current concepts derive from or depend on this inheritance? What kinds of policies and practices in any case follow from current usages?

It is clear that for most western writers the classic inheritance is not simply important but determining. It is seen as the source of a new politics to revitalize a bankrupt tradition, especially on the Left. That is why thinkers such as Keane urge on us an exercise in recovery and retrieval. The concept of civil society is proffered as a piece of 'lost treasure' which will bring a much-needed lustre to contemporary political thinking. Perry Anderson too advocates the classic concept, on both theoretical and practical grounds, despite the 'multiple ambiguities and confusions' which he admits surround it as a result of its complex history. Civil society, he says,

> remains a necessary *practico-indicative* concept, to designate all those institutions and mechanisms outside the boundaries of the State system proper. . . Its function is to draw an indispensable *line of demarcation* within the politico-ideological superstructures of capitalism.[29]

If we abstract from the specifically Marxist content of Anderson's formulation, this suggests one common understanding of the concept. Civil society is the arena of non-state institutions and practices which enjoy a high degree of autonomy. Classic Marxism would make economic institutions the heart of this region of society. But latterly, especially under the influence of Gramsci and to some extent Althusser, the tendency has been for Marxists and non-Marxists alike to stress the specifically non-economic dimension of civil society, and to concentrate instead on civic, cultural, educational, religious and other organizations not directly related to the system of production. Trade unions and professional associations are included in so far as their influence goes beyond the immediate sphere of work and links their members to wider social and political purposes.[30]

This manifestly only goes so far. How, in the first place, are we to consider the issue of 'autonomy'? We are confronted here with the problem not, as in the familiar debates, of the 'relative autonomy' of the state but of the relative autonomy of society. Pierre Rosanvallon, for instance, proposes to break out of the 'nationalization/privatization straitjacket' in discussions of the welfare state by a strategy of 'bringing society closer to itself': that is, by expanding the boundaries of civil society.

> There must be an effort to fill out society, to increase its density by creating more and more intermediate locations fulfilling social functions, and by encouraging individual involvement in networks of direct mutual support.

The machinery of the welfare state, says Rosanvallon, has become increasingly 'invisible' to citizens. It is 'operating within a fog'. We do not know what services we are paying for through our taxes nor why we are paying for them. Visibility can be increased by expanding 'the sphere of the social' – formal and informal associations, long-term and temporary organizations, ranging from 'informal cooperative initiatives' such as neighbourhood and mutual aid groups to more permanent associations of welfare such as housing groups and therapeutic communities.[31]

At the same time Rosanvallon admits that 'there is no way in which the state itself can be instrumental in bringing about such a reconstitution of society.'[32] That would be for the state voluntarily to reduce its scope and power, something that, whatever its rhetoric, the modern state does not do. This leaves society to pull itself up by its own bootstraps. Is it to by-pass the state? How does it deal with the facts of state power, the state's evident desire and ability to maintain its control of society? Rosanvallon calls upon the state to be more 'pluralist' in its conception of law, to bring in a new category of 'social law' that would enable 'segments of civil society' to be 'recognized as legal subjects and enjoy the right to establish laws independent of state law.'[33] Yet again he declines to offer an account of how or why the state should respond to this call to abandon its power as sovereign law-maker. All he can do is paint a grim scenario, if the requisite initiatives are not forthcoming, of 'a bastard society in which ever stronger market mechanisms will coexist with rigid statist forms and the growth of a selective social corporatism.'[34]

John Keane does not ignore the question of the state. Indeed he warns against those who feel that the whole solution to the problem of democracy and social justice lies in the non-state sphere, in the

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institutions of civil society. 'Civil society and the state . . . must become the condition of each other's democratization.' Civil society must be boosted, certainly; this is the most urgent requirement today. And it must become 'a permanent thorn in the side of political power.' But in its turn it requires the constant surveillance of the state, if it is not to degenerate into self-paralysing conflict and 'anarchy'.

> In short, I am arguing that without a secure and independent civil society of autonomous public spheres, goals such as freedom and equality, participatory planning and community decision-making will be nothing but empty slogans. But without the protective, redistributive and conflict-mediating functions of the state, struggles to transform civil society will become ghettoized, divided and stagnant, or will spawn their own, new forms of inequality and unfreedom.[35]

Whereas Rosanvallon largely ignores the state, Keane is if anything too eager to bring it back in. His formula of socialism 'as equivalent to the separation and democratization of civil society and the state' turns out to give an enormous, potentially overwhelming, power to the state side of the balance. There will have to be 'centralized planning and coordination' to offset the 'poor coordination, disagreement, niggardliness and open conflict' that the pluralist structures of civil society invariably engender. Further, 'since universal laws cannot emerge spontaneously from civil society, their formulation, application and enforcement would require a legislature, a judiciary and a police force, which are vital components of a state apparatus.' Even 'standing military institutions', the bugbear of all democratic theories, must be accepted as 'a disagreeable necessity' so long as 'the present system of nation states and empires remains a dangerous state of nature.'[36]

It is difficult to see in what way this conception differs fundamentally from most conventional statements of liberal democratic theory. All of these grant some degree of autonomy to both sides of the state-society (or state-individual) dichotomy; all of them equally warn that neither side should expect total autonomy but must act as the guardian of the other. A different conception, if that is the intention, must surely specify the balance in a novel way. This, however, Keane, like Rosanvallon, declines to do. In Keane's case the refusal is deliberate and considered. The state-civil society dichotomy, he argues, is of considerable value in reflecting on current developments in both Eastern and Western Europe. But, especially if we are concerned about forms of political action, we should not try to go beyond 'generalizing terms' in discussing its relevance.

> Beyond such generalizations not much can or should be said about the efficacy of the distinction in specific social and political contexts.

> Efforts to maximize the level of 'concreteness' of the idea of civil society for political purposes should be resisted. . .[37]

This really cannot be accepted. It is not that an unwarranted degree of specificity is demanded; it is rather that to leave the matter at this level of generality is to sidestep a central problem of state-civil society theorising. For how, without specifying concrete mechanisms and actual resources, can we project a convincing picture of 'a secure and independent civil society'? How does civil society protect itself against the state? Must its independence rest simply upon the disinterested benevolence of the state – a most insecure basis? If, however, the autonomy of civil society is, as Keane says, to be 'legally guaranteed', who but the state will be the guarantor of this guarantee? And if it is derelict in this self-imposed duty, what kind of sanctions against the state do citizens possess?[38] It may be useful, in certain respects, to contemplate the state-society relationship philosophically, from lofty Hegelian heights; but, precisely as in the case of Hegel, it can also mean a cavalier disregard of key questions concerning the desired relationship.

Questions of this kind are even more acute for the Central and East European advocates of civil society. In this region, as we have noted, the embrace of civil society has been even more passionate, the hopes even more fervent.[39] It was above all the rise of Solidarity in Poland that sparked off the enthusiasm. Writing with reference to the Polish dissident movement of the late 1970s that was the immediate prelude to Solidarity – KOR and KSS-KOR –Jacques Rupnik proclaimed 'the end of revisionism and the rebirth of civil society.'[40] With the formation and growth of Solidarity Andrew Arato was even more emphatic. Whatever the differences within the democratic opposition in Poland, he wrote in 1981, 'one point unites them all: the viewpoint of civil society against the state – the desire to institutionalize and preserve the new level of social independence.'[41]

At the heart of the Solidarity experience – before the unexpected achievement of power in 1989 – was seen a movement of the 'self-defence' and 'self-management' of society. The elevation of civil society meant not so much a new relationship between state and society as their virtual uncoupling. The state was not to be directly challenged; it was to be ignored. Civil society turned its back on the state, and sought to build a democratic pluralist order so far as it could within the confines of a still powerful party-state. Civil society aspired to be an alternative society, a 'parallel society' co-existing, for the time at least, with a delegitimized and weakened official state. But the emphasis was clear. Nowhere than in the societies of 'real socialism' did it seem more important to insist on the horizontal integration of civil society as against the vertical integration of the state.[42]

The strategy of 'dual-power' was perfectly understandable in the conditions of the party-state in Poland and elsewhere. As Michnik argued, to engage the state head-on would be a suicidal venture for the opposition movement in these societies. Nothing that happened later, up to and including 1989, contradicts this. The rulers in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere in the erstwhile Communist bloc, capitulated in 1989 not because of the irresistible force of the opposition movement but because, for reasons of its own internal problems, the Soviet government declined to support its client states and even went out of its way to undermine them.[43] Thus what Solidarity aimed for, and to a considerable degree achieved, reflected a realistic and sophisticated reading of the situation in its kind of society.[44]

In other respects, however, the linking of civil society to Solidarity has been unfortunate. It has tied the conception of civil society largely to *a social movement* – a spectacularly successful one, admittedly, but with characteristics which limit its usefulness as a general model. Solidarity sought to unite all the forces of civil society in a single all-encompassing movement that would offer itself as a sort of counter-power to the party-state. But it had little idea how it would relate to the state nor, in the (unlikely) event that it supplanted it, what sort of state it could itself constitute. The question, what kind of civil society, left not merely unresolved but unexamined the question, what kind of state.

Solidarity lacked, in other words, an account of its ultimate political role. It had few ideas concerning the political institutions that would be necessary to accompany its take-over of power and to stabilize the new post-communist regime. This was hardly surprising. The Solidarity leaders had had virtually no experience of the requisite kinds of institutions and practices – parties, political associations, electoral competition, a democratic constitution – in the previous forty years of communist rule. Equally important a public sphere, in the sense of Jurgen Habermas's '*offentlichkeit*', hardly existed. What Solidarity was able to provide, on a heroic scale, was the structure and practice of a social movement whose hallmarks were national mobilization and monolithic solidarity. This served it well up to 1989 – especially, we might say, in its underground period following General Jaruzelski's imposition of martial law at the end of 1981. But the strengths of its period of opposition became the weaknesses of its period of rule, and of its relevance as a general model of civil society. By being the one and only (society-wide) organization, it inhibited the creation of a genuine pluralism of opinions and interests. It proved incapable of evolving the institutions that would be necessary for a safe transition to democracy. After 1989 Solidarity, the only possible ruling force, fragmented into sectional squabbles and personal rivalries, leading many observers to fear for the future of the new democratic state and to draw ominous parallels with the 1930s.[45]

Civil society theorists in Central and Eastern Europe have been well aware of the specific and to some extent exceptional features of Solidarity. Solidarity operated in a context where any attempt to challenge the state directly invited Soviet intervention – the constant and pervasive fear. Hence the problematic concept of dual or parallel power was more or less enforced.[46] The example of Solidarity has nevertheless remained mesmerizing. Poland was after all the one society in the Communist world to develop something like an independent civil society, distorted as it had to be. Its experience must therefore, to societies even more lacking in traditions of independent association, appear exemplary. It has in any case proved impossible to depart too far from its basic conception of civil society: as an organization (or 'self-organization') of society *against* the state.

Given the nature of many of the post-communist regimes, this may turn out in the end to be not such a bad thing after all. But in the current situation, where some relation between civil society and the new states has to be worked out, this conception of civil society is peculiarly disabling. It pushes to an extreme degree the tendency, common to most advocates in the West as well as in the East, to elevate civil society above the state. Civil society becomes a utopia – the solution to all the problems accumulated by 'real socialism'.[47] When the state has to be considered, as after 1989, it is simply embraced by a more inclusive concept of civil society. A recent pronouncement on civil society by the editorial board of the Romanian journal *22* states

> Romanian civil society is beginning to be configured. We have begun to talk with a firmer voice, and the themes of our discussions are: pluralism, political parties, free elections, independent unions, parliament.[48]

These may indeed be, as the editors claim, 'the signs of a democracy'; but such an inflation and conflation of institutions and practices make it impossible to maintain the distinctiveness of civil society as an entity, or to suggest any coherent relationship of it to the state. Civil society simply becomes all that is desired in the making of a democratic society (significantly, and typically in the East European usage, economic institutions are not mentioned).

The failure in Eastern Europe of revolution (Hungary 1956) and reform from above (Czechoslovakia 1968) led in the 1970s to the idea of a third way: reform from below, by the construction or reconstruction of civil society. The Polish experience of the 1980s seemed to confirm the validity of this strategy. But whatever its strength as an oppositional strategy – and this has been overestimated by both participants and outsiders – it offers little guidance to societies seeking to construct a genuine *political* society out of the debris of post-communist systems. Solidarity as a social movement achieved something like 'hegemony' in Polish society; it left open the question of how this hegemony should express itself in political terms, in terms of the organization of the state. One consequence of the concern with civil society is that the theory of the state in post-communist societies is in total disarray.

DEMOCRACY OR CIVIL SOCIETY?

It is evident, as the example of Solidarity well illustrates, that the concept of civil society that is most widespread today is fundamentally Gramscian. The East has in this as in other respects caught up with the West. Gramsci's general position concerning bourgeois rule in the West was that it was mainly exercised through the 'consent' ('hegemony') of civil society rather than the 'coercion' of the state. This has appealed to western radicals anxious to avoid both 'economism' and Jacobinism (or what Gramsci called 'statolatry'). It has, for quite different reasons, also appealed to East European thinkers, in the circumstances of whose societies a concentration on 'society' rather than the state appeared not just theoretically desirable but practically necessary. In both cases, as with Gramsci's own inclination, the right direction to move is seen in the fullest expansion of civil society – identified with the realm of freedom – and the greatest possible contraction of the state or 'political society', identified with the sphere of coercion.[49]

The dangers of this position are clear, and have often been pointed out. It turns attention away from the real degree, historically and potentially, of coercion involved in the maintenance of political power in modern societies. East European societies, in the post-1989 euphoria, need to be reminded of this as much as western societies. The problem relates to all modern states, 'democratic' as well as authoritarian, and cannot be wished away by a concentration on the institutions of civil society. Nor is it, as Perry Anderson points out, merely a question of noting the role of force or repression. We have to see the extent to which the form of the state – specifically the modern representative parliamentary state – is itself one of the most powerful agents of ideological hegemony. As much as the institutions of civil society – churches, schools, the mass media, etc. – the democratic state, with its juridical rights of citizenship and civic freedoms, also plays an indispensable 'cultural-ideological role.'[50]

The second point also applies equally to western and post-Communist East European societies. Civil society is, no more than state power, a panacea. Its divisions and discontents remain a source of inequality and instability. The anatomy of civil society conducted by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theorists, from Ferguson to Durkheim, was directed specifically by this perception: that society could be as pathological as the state. That above all was the lesson taught by Marx, perhaps too well learnt. But it is surely not a lesson to be discarded now, when states of both West and East seem eager to give civil society its head and to let it run away with itself. As Ellen Wood has said, 'the new concept of "civil society" signals that the left has learned the lessons of liberalism about the dangers of state oppression, but we seem to be forgetting the lessons we once learned from the socialist tradition about the oppressions of civil society.'[51]

It might seem from this that Hegel's concept of civil society, as a realm of association interpenetrated by the state, remains the most satisfactory. It has the great merit of acknowledging the complementarity of state and civil society, of their need for one another in the maintenance of both individuality and sociability, private interest and communal purpose, freedom and regulation. But if civil society theorists today are apt to be too uncritical of civil society and too indifferent to questions of state power, Hegel notoriously has the opposite weakness. In his focus on the state as the true realm of reason and universality, he fails to consider carefully enough just how civil society protects itself against the incursions of a potentially authoritarian and even totalitarian state.

One thing that might follow from the above is the need to avoid the use of civil society as a general category abstracted from particular social philosophies. In the uses of Hegel, Marx, Gramsci and others we can see the reasons for using the term, and the particular value of doing so. Some of these reasons may still persist (although it is interesting that Marx found little use for the term in his later writings, being content simply with 'society'). Nothing but confusion can follow, though, from the attempt to bundle all these uses together into some supposedly neutral social-scientific category for everyday sociological analysis. As with so many other concepts in modern sociology – alienation and anomie spring immediately to mind – the procedure is as arbitrary as it is generally arid. If we wish to continue to use the concept of civil society, we must situate it in some definite tradition of use that gives it a place and a meaning.

The deeper question, however, must be whether we need the concept of civil society at all. Is the resurrection of this old concept necessary, or profitable? We can understand why, in the recoil from a wholly alien and unresponsive state, intellectuals in Central and Eastern Europe felt driven to turn their attention to those areas of society that they could in some sense manage and seek to change. We can also understand why socialists in the West have sought to restore their morale and bring some credibility to their beliefs by attending to those problems neglected in the classic texts, and often ignored in the practices as much of West European social democracy as of the societies of 'real socialism'.[52]

But, apart from the difficulties with this position that we have already examined, we must ask what the concept of civil society adds that other more familiar concepts do not already cover, and perhaps more adequately. If we are concerned about the abuses of state power, with recognizing and promoting pluralism and diversity, with defending rights and enabling individuals to act politically, what is wrong with the language and terms of such concepts as constitutionalism, citizenship, and democracy? None of these, it appears, need to invoke the concept of civil society.[53] All deal, both in the traditional and in the newer literature, with precisely the problems that seem to preoccupy the advocates of civil society. This seems particularly the case in Eastern Europe, where both in the Soviet Union and in the former communist states the overriding problem seems to be democracy: how to achieve it, how to institutionalize it. The agreement on a democratic constitution, one might say, is the necessary condition of political progress in the region.

And not only in that region. Throughout Western Europe there has been a renewed concern with citizenship and civic rights, with charters and contracts. There is an expressed sense that many of the gains of the democratic revolution – the legacy of the eighteenth-century American and French Revolutions – have been lost or are under threat. The demand has been that these achievements need to be secured and expanded – perhaps by the addition of a 'Social Charter' – by the enactment of concrete constitutional guarantees. And specifically in Britain it can hardly have escaped anyone's notice how much today there is a new awareness of constitutionalism, a new feeling of the inadequacy of relying on the informal conventions and practices of the British political tradition. For both nationalists in the non-English regions of the UK, and democrats concerned at the erosion of civil liberties and the apparently unchallengeable power of the British state, an urgent requirement seems to be a new constitutional settlement. 1688 has to be renewed; rights and powers must be entrenched, preferably in a written constitution accompanied by a formal Bill of Rights or Citizens' Charter.[54]

De Tocqueville, we may remember, noted that it was politics that spreads 'the general habit and taste for association'. In other words, politics precedes civil society. The establishment of a democratic polity and a public sphere of political debate and political activity are the primary conditions for a thriving civil society of independent associations and an active civic life. In Romania today, Gail Kligman observes, the attempt to revitalize civil society 'from below', as it were, is premature and misguided: 'the establishment of public life itself is prerequisite to constituting a civil society.'[55] This would seem to be the general lesson taught by both the history of western societies and the current efforts of East European societies to re-start their political life. It underlines the point that the central problems in both East and West relate not to the institutions of civil society but to the institutions of the state and the reconstitution of a functioning political society. To rediscover civil society, to retrieve an archaic concept, may be an interesting exercise in intellectual history but it evades the real political challenges at the end of the twentieth century.

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NOTES

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1. John Keane, 'Remembering the Dead', in *Democracy and Civil Society*, London, Verso, 1988(a), pp. 33, 64.

2. See Jacques Rupnik, 'Totalitarianism Revisited', in John Keane (ed.), *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*, London, Verso, 1988(b), pp. 284–7.

3. For the following account I am largely indebted to the studies by Manfred Riedel, '"State" and "Civil Society": Linguistic Context and Historical Origin', in *Between Tradition and Revolution: The Hegelian Transformation of Political Philosophy*, trans. Walter Wright, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 129–56; Norberto Bobbio, 'Gramsci and the Concept of Civil Society', in Keane, 1988(b), *op. cit.*, pp. 73–99; Keane, 'Remembering the Dead'; 1988(a), *op. cit.*; Keane, 'Despotism and Democracy: The Origins and Development of the Distinction Between Civil Society and the State 1750–1850', in Keane 1988(b), *op. cit.*, pp. 35–71. For a different approach, which considers civil society as an aspect of Habermas's concept of the 'life-world' and its development, see Andrew Arato and Jean Cohen, 'Civil Society and Social Theory', *Thesis Eleven*, vol. 21, 1988, pp. 40–64; also their book, *Civil Society and Democratic Theory*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1992. There is also much relevant material in Lucien Febvre, '*Civilisation*: evolution of a word and a group of ideas', in Peter Burke (ed.), *A New Kind of History: from the writings of Febvre*, trans. K. Folca, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973, pp. 219–57.

4. Keane, 1988b, *op. cit.*, pp. 36–50.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

6. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. R. Pascal, New York, International Publishers, 1963, pp. 26–7.

7. Karl Marx, 'Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy', in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962, Vol. 1, p. 362.

8. This comes out in Riedel's account of Hegel's concept of civil society, despite his emphatic claim that 'one might well say that before Hegel the concept of civil society in its modern sense did not exist.' The term in its modern sense may well originate with Hegel; the thing however seems clearly to predate him (as Marx, for instance, accepts). See Riedel, *op. cit.*, pp. 147, 148–56; also his essay, 'The Hegelian Transformation of Modern Political Philosophy and the Significance of History', in *The Hegelian Transformation of Political Philosophy*, pp. 159–88.

9. Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 12; see also pp. 132–54.

10. T. M. Knox (ed.) and transl., *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1942, para. 157, p. 110; Add. to para. 116, p. 266; Add. to para. 185, p. 267.

11. T. M. Knox, *op. cit.*, editorial note, pp. 353–4, 365.

12. Z. A. Pelczynski, 'Solidarity and "The Rebirth of Civil Society" in Poland, 1976–81', in Keane (ed.), 1988(b), *op. cit.*, p. 364. See also Pelczynski's 'Introduction' to Z. A. Pelczynski (ed.), *The State and Civil Society: Studies in Hegel's Political Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

13. Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp. 155–6.

14. Alvin Gouldner, 'Civil Society in Capitalism and Socialism', in *The Two Marxisms*, London, Macmillan, 1980, p. 356. (Gouldner's emphasis). A similar criticism was earlier powerfully made by Leszek Kolakowski, 'The Myth of Human Self-Identity: Unity of Civil and Political Society in Socialist Thought', in Leszek Kolakowski and Stuart Hampshire (eds), *The Socialist Idea: A Reappraisal*, London, Quartet Books, 1977, pp. 18–35. And more recently Jean Cohen has repeated the charge: the 'fundamental flaw' in Marx is 'the reduction of civil society to the capitalist mode of production.' J. Cohen, *Class and Civil Society: The Limits of Marxian Critical Theory*, Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1982, p. 48, and generally, pp. 23–52.

15. Marx, 1962, Preface to a Contribution. . ., *op. cit.*, p. 362.

16. F. Engels, 'Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of German Classical Philosophy', in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Vol. 2, pp. 394–95.

17. Gouldner, 1980, *op. cit.*, p. 370. For a similar account of Marxism's failure to deal with the 'germ-cells' of social organization, see Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Boston, Beacon Press, 1958, 80–98.

18. Gouldner, 1980, *op. cit.*, p. 371 (Gouldner's emphasis).

19. For this interpretation of de Tocqueville, see Jeff Weintraub, *Freedom and Community: The Republican Virtue Tradition and the Sociology of Liberty*, Berkeley, University of California Press, forthcoming.

20. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. by J. P. Mayer, trans. by George Lawrence, New York, Harper and Row, 1988, pp. 244, 515, 517, 521–22.

21. Jeff Weintraub, private communication.

22. A. Gramsci *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1971, p. 208.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 208–209.

24. Bobbio, 'Gramsci and the Concept of Civil Society', *op. cit.*, p. 82.

25. Hoare and Nowell Smith, 1971, *op. cit.*, pp. 52, 57. For a good account of the evolution of Gramsci's thinking on the state-civil society relationship, see Perry Anderson, 'The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci', *New Left Review*, no. 100, (November 1976–January 1977), pp. 5–78, esp. pp. 12–34.

26. 'What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural "levels": the one that can be called "civil society", that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called "private", and that of "political society" or "the state". These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of "hegemony" which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of "direct domination" or command exercised through the state and "juridical" government.' Gramsci, 1971, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

29. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

30. For this general conception of civil society, see, e.g., Andrew Arato, 'Civil Society Against the State: Poland 1980–81', *Telos*, vol. 47, 1981, pp. 23–47; John Keane, 'Introduction' to Keane, 1988(b), *op. cit.*, p. 1; Janina Frentzel-Zagorska, 'Civil Society in Poland and Hungary', *Soviet Studies*, vol. 42, no. 4, 1990, p. 759; see also the entry 'Civil Society' in D. Miller (ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987, p. 77.

31. Pierre Rosanvallon, 'The Decline of Social Visibility', in Keane (ed.), 1988(b), *op. cit.*, pp. 206–7, 210–11.

32. Rosanvallon, *ibid.*, p. 204.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 217.

35. John Keane, 'The Limits of State Action', in Keane, 1988(a), *op. cit.*, p. 15.

36. 'The Limits of State Action', pp. 22–23. This conception of the relation of the 'universal' state to 'particularistic' civil society is evidently Hegelian.

37. John Keane, 'Introduction' to Keane (ed.), 1988(b), *op. cit.*, p. 23.

38. See Christopher Pierson, 'New Theories of State and Civil Society: Recent Developments in Post-Marxist Analysis of the State', *Sociology*, vol. 18, no. 4, 1984, p. 569.

39. See, e.g., George Konrad, *Antipolitics: An Essay*, trans. from the Hungarian by Richard E. Allen, London, Quartet Books, 1984; Adam Michnik, *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*, trans. Maya Latynski, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985; Vaclav Havel, *Living in Truth*, ed. Jan Vladislav, London, Faber and Faber, 1989. The literature of the 1970s in Poland and elsewhere is well reviewed by Arato, 1981, *op. cit.*,; see also Jacques Rupnik, 'Dissent in Poland, 1968–78: the end of Revisionism and the rebirth of the Civil Society', in Rudolf Tokes (ed.), *Opposition in Eastern Europe*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979, pp. 60–112; and the references in Gail Kligman, 'Reclaiming the Public: a Reflection on Creating Civil Society in Romania', *Eastern European Politics and Societies*, vol. 4, no. 3 (Fall), 1990, p. 421 n45. There has been some questioning of this emphasis on civil society since the 1989 revolutions in East-Central Europe but, as Arpad Szakolczai observes, 'civil society still seems to be the most popular concept, though with some shift in emphasis.' Moreover, while it was previously not very important in the Soviet Union, 'now it is taken up with a vengeance even there.' 'Were State and Society Ever Identical?', paper presented to the 1991 Congress of the Hungarian Sociological Association, Budapest, June 1991, pp. 1–2. For the importance of the concept in recent Soviet debates, see Gail Lapidus, 'State and Society: Toward the Emergence of Civil Society in the Soviet Union', in Seweryn Bialer (ed.), *Gorbachev's Russia: Politics, Society and Nationality*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview, 1989; Richard Sakwa, *Gorbachev and His Reforms 1985–1990*, Hemel Hempstead, Philip Allan, 1990, pp. 198–230. In the popular resistance to the attempted coup against Gorbachev in August 1991 several commentators discerned the revival of civil society in the Soviet Union. See Francis Fukuyama, 'There's No Stopping Them Now', *The Independent on Sunday*, 25 August 1991; Martin Malia, 'The August Revolution', *New York Review of Books*, September 26, 1991, pp. 22–28.

40. Rupnik, 1979, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

41. Arato, 1981. *op. cit.*, p. 24. See also Pelczynski, 'Solidarity and "The Rebirth of Civil Society" in Poland', pp. 361–80; Frentzel-Zagorska, 1990, *op. cit.*, p. 768. On the 'seminal' importance of the example of Solidarity, see Timothy Garton Ash, *We, The People: The Revolution of '89*, Cambridge, Granta Books, 1990, p. 134, also his *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1983; Konrad, 1984, *op. cit.*, pp. 136–145.

42. For this conception of civil society, see especially Adam Michnik, 'The New Evolutionism' [1976], 1985, *op. cit.*, pp. 135–148. This remained the dominant view of Solidarity's mission – inherited from KOR – up to the very last days before it was driven underground by the declaration of martial law in 1981. See Michnik, 'What We Want and What We Can Do', *Telos*, vol. 47 (Spring 1981), pp. 66–77. The strategy was described by Michnik as 'the crossing of the totalitarian structure of power with the democratic mechanism of corporate representation.' For this strategy of 'societal pluralism' (or 'pluralism restricted to civil society'), see Arato, 1981, *op. cit.*, pp. 36–43. And cf. Elemer Hankiss on the parallel idea of the 'second society' in Hungary as the positive counterpart to the official society: E. Hankiss, 'The "Second Society": Is there an Alternative Social Model Emerging in Contemporary Hungary?', *Social Research*, vol. 55, nos. 1–2 (1988), pp. 13–42.

43. See K. Kumar, 'The Revolutions of 1989: Socialism, Capitalism and Democracy', *Theory and Society*, vol. 21, 1992, pp. 309–56.

44. For the very real achievements of Solidarity, following this strategy, up to 1981, see Andrew Arato, 'Empire vs. Civil Society: Poland 1981–82', *Telos*, vol. 50

(1981–82), pp. 19–48; see also Frentzel-Zagorska, 1990, *op. cit.*, pp. 770–772.

45. The problem, as Janina Frentzel-Zagorska has put it, is that 'a leading part of "the civil society against the state" became a leading part of the state' – and was ill-prepared for it. 'Patterns of Transition from a One-Party State to Democracy in Poland and Hungary', in R. F. Miller (ed.), *The Development of Civil Society in Communist Systems*, London, Unwin Hyman, 1992.

46. See Arato, 1981–82, *op. cit.*, p. 23. By the same token however this also limits the applicability of the Solidarity model to the West – despite Arato's claims on this score: *ibid.*, p. 23; see also Arato and Cohen, 1988, *op. cit.*, p. 60. Arato has elsewhere indicated the contrary need, for East-European theorists to learn from western discussions of civil society: see 'Revolution, Civil Society and Democracy', *Praxis International*, vol. X, no. 1/2, April-July 1990, pp. 40–55.

47. A tendency already remarked by Jerzy Szacki, 'The Utopia of Civil Society in Poland Today', mimeographed paper, Warsaw, 1987. See also C. M. Hann, 'Second Economy and Civil Society', in C. M. Hann (ed.), *Market Economy and Civil Society in Hungary*, London, Frank Cass, 1990, p. 31. For an interesting defence of the concept of civil society as a 'self-limiting utopia', linked to Habermas's idea of the democratization of the 'life-world', see Arato and Cohen, 1988, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–3.

48. Quoted in Kligman, 'Reclaiming the Public', 1990, *op. cit.*, pp. 395–6. For Kligman this statement 'succinctly encompasses the characteristic markers of "civil society"'.

49. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 1971, *op. cit.*, pp. 238–9; on statolatry, see pp. 268–269.

50. Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 28–9.

51. Ellen Meiksins Wood, 'The Uses and Abuses of "Civil Society"', in R. Miliband and L. Panitch (eds), *The Socialist Register 1990*, London, The Merlin Press, 1990, p. 63. See also Hann, 'Second Economy and Civil Society', pp. 29–35. A similar position is forcibly stated by Frank Parkin, 'Civil Society and the State in Classic Social Theory', paper presented to the 1991 Congress of the Hungarian Sociological Association, Budapest, June 1991.

52. See especially Keane, 'The Limits of State Action', 1988(a), *op. cit.*, pp. 1–6; Keane, 'Introduction to Keane (ed.), 1988(b), *op. cit.*, Wood, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–80, has some incisive comments on this rediscovery of civil society by the left.

53. See, e.g. Derek Heater, *Citizenship: The Civic Ideal in World History, Politics and Education*, London, Longman, 1990; J. M. Barbalet, *Citizenship*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1988; Geoff Andrews (ed.) *Citizenship*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1991. We should note too that T. H. Marshall's discussion of citizenship does not rely on any concept of civil society: 'Citizenship and Social Class', in *Sociology at the Crossroads, And Other Essays*, London, Heinemann, 1963, pp. 67–127. No more does Bryan Turner's restatement and defence of Marshall's position: *Citizenship and Capitalism: The Debate Over Reformism*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1986. For the view that, on the contrary, the concept of civil society is preferable to that of democracy, see Ernest Gellner, 'Civil Society in Historical Context', *International Social Science Journal*, vol. XLIII, no. 3, 1991, pp. 495–510.

54. See Sarah Benton, 'Citizen Major', *Marxism Today*, July 1991, p. 9. For the need of a new constitutional settlement in Britain, see David Marquand, *The Unprincipled Society*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1988; see also the widely published Charter 88 *Manifesto* (e.g. *The Independent*, 24 August, 1991); and Tony Benn's proposed Commonwealth of Britain Bill, published in *The Independent*, 11 July, 1991.

55. Kligman, *op. cit.*, p. 426.