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## CIVIL SOCIETY IN MICHAEL POLANYI'S THOUGHT

### 1. Introduction: civil society in Eastern Europe

Why should we deal with Polanyi's views about civil society if Polanyi never used this term? As is amply pointed out in the literature, Michael Polanyi was not a "professional" philosopher and "gave little detailed attention to other philosophers writings" (Allen, 1990, p. 15). He worked out a vocabulary of his own, beginning in the thirties when struggling against totalitarianism, and he developed a way of looking at things which organises the positions and the place value of every particle of his theoretical edifice. The "Polanyian flavour" means that even the categories and concepts he had taken over from the traditional language of philosophy are through and through imbued with his idiosyncratic prospective. They always need interpretation. Yet, it is also acknowledged that any themes he entertained deserve attention, for his argumentations and conceptions are often very instructive to anybody attacking a particular problem. We may presume that this holds too for the topic of civil society.

On speaking of civil society in this paper I intend to refer to citizens freely forming alliances, institutions and associations designed to further private ends and social interests. I will focus upon the recent history of the notion of civil society, especially as it applies to Eastern Europe.

The idea of civil society was taken up by Polish "dissident" intellectuals (Michnik, Kuron, etc.) who were followed swiftly by Hungarians (Bence, Kis) in the late seventies (see Frenzel-Zagorska, 1990; Arato, 1990). Civil society as a topic was a magnet for those with political aspirations and engaged in discussions of human rights, rights of association, alternative media and free public inquiry, but not seizing the political power. Far from it. The representatives of oppositional intellectuals gave the Communist leadership the greatest surprise by their taking seriously the "socialist" Constitution that, imitating the institutional framework of Western parliamentary democracy on the "surface", *seemingly* guaranteed human rights. However, these rights were confiscated in the details of the jungle of law, or else, to give a striking example, in the measures taken by a policeman. Thus the conception of civil society signalled a "velvet" struggle against the Communist regime, inasmuch as it only sought to eliminate its "anomalies" and "dysfunctions". As the opponents of the regime, no more than anybody else at that time, could not expect the dissolution of the Soviet empire, the suggestions were subsequently approved.

If one opens a book at random about Eastern European changes since 1989, one will find an interpretation of why civil society became a battle-cry heralding the end of Communism. B. Ackermann locates the problem of civil society within the context of Marxist teachings about bringing up the "socialist type of man" who should sacrifice his private interest on

the altar of the general interest of the whole of society. He then argues as follows: Eastern Europeans have developed a rich literature of 'civil society', emphasizing the crucial need to construct institutional spaces that might serve as a buffer against the totalitarian pretension of the state. The aim here is to describe a more modest kind of political involvement in which citizens can control the state without merging their identity into the collective whole" (Ackennann, 1992, p. 33). As an example, in a pamphlet of leading representatives of the Hungarian opposition, they suggested to the Party leaders to divide the political power so that the Communist Party would maintain its sovereignty over a part of foreign policy (mainly bearing upon the affairs relating to Warsaw Pact and Comecon) while letting the rest of the issues be handled by society (see. Kis, Koszeg, Solt, 1987, p. 10). This proposal was put forward in the second half of the eighties and as could not have been imagined earlier, would probably have led to the change of political system in the long run if the Party elite would have accepted it. As such this conception really transcended the role of civil society as being the "buffer" ascribed to it by Ackennann.

Yet, an older conception of civil society existed in Eastern Europe alongside the tempered political aim as outlined above. This was its economic side. It is known that Hegel and Marx spoke in their theories not about civil but about bourgeois society, *biirgerliche Gesellschaft*, and Marx identified it with the sphere of capitalist economy. Drawing on the possibility inherent in the French language, he, first, in his philosophical period, opposed the selfish bourgeois to the altruistic *citoyen* and wanted the latter to prevail over the former in a true, Rousseau-like, direct democracy or else in a democracy as found in the Greek polis. Later on, in his *Grundrisse* of the early sixties, he despised even the citizen, and tried to point out that the endeavours of the citizen to support equality, liberty, and fraternity were but manifestations of the concealed aims of the selfish bourgeois for the rule of society. Since the existence of the bourgeois - and capitalism itself - was based on private property, the latter must be eliminated by a workers' revolution.

It was then but a logical upshot of civil society movements that when, in the late eighties, the change of system was put on the agenda in Eastern Europe, the other side of civil society, the economic one with the requirement of the rehabilitation of private property and the market economy, became subsumed under the concept of civil society. An intimate observer of East Europe, Timothy Garton Ash, saw fairly well this conjuncture of the two sides of civil society: "For what most of the opposition movements throughout East Central Europe and a large part of 'the people' supporting them were in effect saying was: Yes, Marx is right, the two things are intimately connected - and we want both! Civil rights and property rights, economic freedom and political freedom, financial independence and intellectual independence, each supports the other. So, yes, we want to be citizens, but we also want to be middle-class, in the sense that the majority of citizens in the more fortunate half of Europe are middle-class. We want to be *Burger* AND *burgerlich* Tom Paine but also Thomas Mann." (Ash, 1990, pp. 148-149)

This view was not without antecedents. Sociologists noticed already in the seventies, especially in Hungary, an "economic civil society" in the making. There had been a "shadow economy" beside the state controlled one all along during the history of Socialism. It was not a "black market economy" in its entirety. The most important form of the legal and partly private economy was small plot farming. The land was owned by the *kolkhoz* but privately used by families. Small plot farming closely connected with the *kolkhoz* provided the family with seed-corn, animals for breeding, crops for selling, etc. This symbiosis of two kinds of economy has remained the most successful economic branch ever since in Hungary, whereas other East European countries had often to cope with food shortages. In the mid-eighties a third of the production in certain agrarian sectors was yielded by small acreage farmers, while the entire agriculture of Hungary became one of the most export oriented branches of the national economy. Furthermore, the small farmers were followed by private industrial associations, economic co-operatives, factory co-operatives, small co-operatives, etc. They were joined by a tiny fraction of craftsmen and tradesmen who have always existed in Hungary. Essentially, these economic activities were described as a "second economy".

It was I. Szelenyi - a sociologist expatriated in the mid-seventies, now a professor at UCLA - who named the whole process just outlined "embourgeoisement". He saw it as the formation of the new middle class that T. G. Ash was talking about in the above quotation. However, Szelenyi had precursors who already realised the rise of the new middle class (Zsille, Juhasz, Lengyel, Magyar). Yet, they also described it as being "distorted", "incomplete", "one-sided" under the given political circumstances. As I. Kemeny articulated clearly in the title of his essay (which gives an outstanding summary of the relevant literature; see Kemeny, 1991, pp. 131-146), the process involved was "embourgeoisement without civil rights". But Szelenyi mostly emphasised the economic side. He took over the theory of P. Juhasz about the so-called interrupted embourgeoisement (the claim that it was stopped by the Communists at the end of the forties) and tested it empirically. While he corroborated the emergence of new middle classes, he transposed the results onto another, rather "ideological", level by stating that it originated a "Third Road" between Capitalism and Socialism, a theory which was in fruition among Hungarian "populist" writers before World War II. While most of the sociologists celebrated the process for it produced economic actors as entrepreneurs independent from the state, Szelenyi considered them, and named them, "socialist entrepreneurs" (Szelenyi, I. 1987). Socialist embourgeoisement, he argued, was a successful "silent revolution from below", since "classes struggle to achieve compromises to alter the distribution of power between classes at the point of production and by establishing an alternative economic system". He added that "in Eastern Europe it is the public-political sphere where the least action occurs!" (Szelenyi, 1987, p. 8). Thus Szelenyi hoped that Eastern European societies will not join the Western type of market economy but, in the long run, transform themselves into a new social-economic formation which would be neither Capitalist or Socialist. After Communism collapsed he adjusted his tenet so that it was this revolution of small people, peasants and workers that undermined the regime, since they did not attack face to face the castle of the state but "came around by the kitchen door".

Yet, there was less talk of the problematic side of embourgeoisement, and Szelenyi himself hinted at the time that the bourgeois needs to become not only entrepreneur but citizen, too. In a broadcast interview Szelenyi wittily stated that "a bourgeois was one whose grandfather had already been also bourgeois". However, the moral and political deficiencies of embourgeoisement matter. Indeed, there were disenquiting harbingers of problems. An American ethnographer of Hungarian extraction, M. Sozan, outlined the numerous kinds of thefts wide-spread among members of cooperatives and concluded his empirical research by making the final statement: "Each knows well the system, accordingly, it is not the fact that here everything is reposing upon stealing that demoralises the membership but if they could not steal enough" (Sozan, 1985, cited by Kemeny, 1991, p. 108). But one could cite other kinds of "negative reciprocity" by referring to the American social-anthropologist, M.D. Sahlins, who, following A. Gouldner, carried out the topology of the exchange relations of goods prevailing within primitive tribes (Gouldner, 1960, Sahlins, 1965). According to Sahlins negative reciprocity occurs, as against generalized and balanced ones, when partners of commodity or good exchange act immorally. It goes without saying that the economic mentality of negative reciprocity has not been confined only to the members of co-operatives, but is found inside circles of society. Of course, there were exceptions, for the author of this essay also found sporadically in his empirical researches entrepreneurs who went beyond their direct material interests and established themselves as being both bourgeois and citizen. Yet, this does not call into question the validity of the statement that the whole of society was informed by the mentality of negative reciprocity.

This problem was a crucial point which, in my opinion, theoreticians and sociologists dealing with civil society and embourgeoisement did not take into account. Nor can one find any serious tackling of this problem by glancing at the huge literature of the political sciences. Political scientists laid stress always upon the so-called "interest articulation" of various social bodies, whether already existing, like "official" unions, professional chambers, or those to be established. For existing bodies had always to surrender to the Party-line. The keen advocates of civil society wanted these bodies to become independent from the Party by letting them articulate their interests. But the question, how then could these bodies of civil society be prevented from falling into local, professional parochialism, had never been raised. To sum up, there were two points missed in these theoretical and empirical assumptions. The first one bears on the economic side of civil society, the embourgeoisement. The economic mentality of negative reciprocity must not be conflated with Max Weber's "spirit" of modern capitalism. Weber described "adventure capitalisms" (like trade capitalism, war capitalism, etc.) that served as obstacles to the formation of modern capitalism. To characterize the spirit of these pre-modern capitalisms, Weber recalled as a symbol the Dutch captain who "was ready to travel for the gain down into the underworld, even if his sails would get burnt", a mentality, he adds, that is well-known up till now to anybody getting acquainted with coachmen and boatmen in Naples, Italy, not to mention similar types in Asia. The unlimited (e.g., morally not moderated) "drive for gains" and "desire for acquisitions" has in itself nothing to do with the spirit of modern capitalism that had to defeat them for its coming into being at the dawn of European modernity. It was the Protestant ethic that helped the emerging modern capitalism to win over the unlimited

"desire for money acquisition". However, once capitalism was firmly rooted at the onset of the nineteenth century, it needed not this religious basis any more, since thereafter fair and decent economic behaviour was obtained by the force of the impersonal economic mechanism. But, henceforth, can the overall negative reciprocity, the innumerable manifestations of which are being experienced both by tourists and businessmen getting in touch with all sorts of economic conditions and actors throughout Eastern Europe, be eliminated at all if there is no religious support to economic activity under the conditions of a secularised world?

The second point missed by sociologists and political scientists closely relates to the first one: the miserable state of morality in general in Eastern Europe. Undoubtedly, there were authors who emphasised the part the moral component played in the revolt against the communist rule. However, even those having taken notice of it discussed rather the social and economic background. For example, Jadwiga Staniszkis, a former adviser of the Polish Solidarity, did not overlook the moral component and put it this way: "It was a moment when individuals, brought up in the totalitarian situation (characterised by a gap between common-sense morality and rules imposed in the name of 'objective reason') were able to overcome their own moral indifference to society and to themselves. The moral experience of Solidarity strikes was also a peculiar cognitive experience. People discovered that they were ready to risk in the name of values and that others would act in similar way" (Staniszkis, 1991, p. 237). In similar vein, B. Ackermann recalls Vaclav Havel's slogan to "live in truth" (see Havel, 1988). In Ackermann's interpretation it "evokes the best of liberal spirit in opposition to the oppressive banalities of bureaucratic totalitarianism" (Ackermann, 1992, p. 32). He also hinted at the term "anti-politics" introduced by the Hungarian writer, Gyorgy Konrad, who, by this term, promulgated an "ethical revolution" politics as such. He scornfully looked down upon politicians of East and West equally and addressing himself to individuals, called them to change their personal life from the most intimate sphere to the realm of environmental protection. Thus, intellectuals in Eastern Europe proclaimed a moral revolution since, at that time, the Soviet Empire seemed not ready to be overthrown in the foreseeable future. And at the "moment of truth", 1989, when Communist regimes crumbled at astonishing speed, such moral factors like longing after truth were causally as instrumental to the elimination of the system as they were in Hungary in 1956. Remember "The Message of the Hungarian Revolution" and "Beyond Nihilism" of Michael Polanyi, who quoted Hungarian and other East European writers and poets who had decided to form "a firm alliance for the dissemination of the truth" (Polanyi, M., 1969, p. 20). Coincidences between the two events, 1989 and 1956, are brilliantly clear. It has always mattered to reassert the moral values, like truth, justice and solidarity. And ordinary people understood the teaching of intellectuals and revolted against the structure of organized lying, against the "devastated moral environment" (V. Havel).

However, the fusion between intellectuals and the masses could not endure forever. That correlates to the very nature of any kind of "moral revolution". The change of system in Eastern Europe was the work of intellectuals in the last analysis (see Ask, 1990, pp. 135-136). There were playwrights, historians, actors, philosophers and economists who initiated,

promoted, proclaimed the "moral revolution", stirred up one masses and settled down the peaceful overtaking of power ("round tables" in Poland and Hungary). But at the onset it was all "anti-political", since there seemed not to be any real force that one could expect to begin the fight with a real hope of success.

This anti-political, moral attitude has been characteristic of intellectuals throughout history, as Max Weber demonstrated in his *Religionssoziologie*. Weber argues that intellectuals seek to fill the chaotic universe with "meaning", and when this endeavour should necessarily face the social and economic order prevailing in the real world, a desire to "escape the world" happens to intellectuals. Intellectuals can escape into "unspoiled nature" (Rousseau), promulgate "moral self-perfection" (Tolstoy), or join the "people" untouched by distorting human traditions (the Russian Narodniki), and this escapism can take on overtly religious shape, aim for individual redemption, or else, aspire to change the world, not with social and political revolution, but in a collective ethical-revolutionary way (see Weber, 1964, pp. 381-392).

Thus, the intellectuals of Eastern Europe who proclaimed the moral revolution joined a particular style of escaping the world characteristic of certain intellectuals under certain historical conditions. Yet, this assumption must be qualified. It is true that the intellectuals involved promulgated a "collective-ethical revolution" in Weberian terms, but while they repudiated the whole of oppressive state and totalitarian power they did not reject the public sphere or "society" as such. And it was just this moment of their "ideology" that led them to proclaim a free civil society. It follows that the slogan of "anti-politics" was substantially but a postponed politics, an oblique politicization opposed to totalitarian rule. As J. Staniszkis plainly puts it, civil society movements were "to take over the function of the state" and it turned out to have been "an effective instrument of political struggle" (Staniszkis, 1991, p. 182).

However, moral ideals have been lost since 1989. Intellectuals who acknowledged the moral requirements to be instrumental in the collapse of the Communist regime and who, thereby, took the position of the moral authority almost equal to that which the Church had in the Middle Ages, began to dispense with moral considerations, and, instead, to speak more and more in terms of mere economics, party politics and articulation of material interests. For example, J. Staniszkis, cited often above, finally reduces the moral component to "neo-traditionalism" that added to anti-secularization, anti-individualism and, finally, anti-capitalism (See Staniszkis, 1991, p. 236). She disregards the fact that the moral coefficient, according to Max Weber, was a pre-condition to the rise of a working market economy. In a similar vein, B. Ackermann restricts the scope of validity of Havel's calling to "live in truth" by stating that "the aim of the liberal revolution is not collective truth but individual freedom - freedom for each person to assert his or her moral ideals, even if a neighbour considers them 'wrong'" (Ackermann, 1992, p. 32) - as though moral ideals such as truth were a private affair without universal validity intent.

Giving up moral considerations has been one of the strains characteristic of intellectuals since 1989. Another one is that intellectuals who gained the status of a secularised clerisy during the revolution have stripped themselves from the charisma of a moral authority by getting entangled with everyday party politics. Moreover, another, perhaps larger, segment of them have become disgusted with political altercations (which, by the way, unavoidably belong to any parliamentary democracy). As a result, ordinary people who fused with intellectuals and their moral ideals in the magnificent heyday of the revolution, were, by now, left alone. They have to face predicaments to which they were not at all prepared (impoverishment, unemployment, etc.).

And now, it also turns out that these people could not get rid of the backwardness of the political culture characteristic of the Eastern European region before the Communists seized the power at the end of 40s. Istvan Bibo, minister in the government of Imre Nagy in 1956, a man who was the last to leave the Parliament building on the 4th of November when it was already occupied by Red Army, and whose sociological and political writings influenced public thought the most in the late 70s and 80s in Hungary, uncovered the "inherently backward political culture" in this region of Central and Eastern Europe. We cannot digress in detail on the distresses, as Bibo called them, tormenting these peoples, but some of them can be mentioned which clearly show the deep historical soil on which peoples of Central and Eastern Europe are acting now that they have regained their freedom. According to Bibo, the backward political culture manifested itself in "confused, vague and false political philosophies", "anti-democratic nationalism" and "deformation of political character". Bibo sums up concisely the consequences as follows: "The distorting psychological symptoms of the inability to keep a healthy balance between desires and reality are clearly evident in the self-contradictory behaviour of the peoples of this region: exaggerated self-documentation and inner insecurity, oversized national vanity and sudden self-humiliation, the constant mentioning of achievements and the obvious decline in the real value of achievements, moral demands and moral irresponsibility... Under such conditions, the sense of political values are pushed into background" (Bibo, 1991, pp. 45-46).

Could we believe that all these deformations of political culture vanished without trace just in the years of Communist rule? It can hardly be so. Under changed historical conditions they should have survived in the souls, minds, attitudes, mentality of the population involved. In "Beyond Nihilism" and "The Message of the Hungarian Revolution" Polanyi listed some possible dangers threatening the future. Polanyi was afraid of religious bigotry and especially of national feeling that "has proved in the past no safeguard against the descent of dynamism into moral inversion" (Polanyi, 1969, p. 22). Furthermore, he also reminded us in *Personal Knowledge* of the possible perils of distortion of "civic thought" by insisting that the institutions of loyalty, property and authority can be distorted into local parochialism (say nationalism), greedy appetite and sheer violence, respectively, since they rely "ultimately on coefficients that are essentially at variance with the universal intent of intellectual and moral standards" (Polanyi, 1962, p. 215). And having taken a look over the mental panorama of Eastern European countries, one can sense the foreboding presence of factors that Polanyi guessed and contemporary observers (see Ash, 1990, pp. 143-149; Staniszkis, 1991, pp. 236-237) took notice of.

Thus, having given a brief account of the actual state of the morality of the masses in Eastern Europe and having taken into consideration the attitude of intellectuals to it, we can rightly state with Polanyi that "all the logical antecedents of inversion are present today as they were before" (Polanyi, 1962, p. 22). That is why we reconstruct Polanyi's view on civil society even though he never used this term. For, by contrast to the prevailing conviction according to which free society can repose in free interest articulation and observation of the rule of free market, he always and frequently emphasized that free society must be guided by "transcendent values" and dedicated to "moral and intellectual order", and, thereby, the market can also accomplish its practical task to "provide a framework for making a living" (Polanyi, 1945, p. 1).

In the following sections of this essay we will analyse the development of Polanyi's social theory from the 30s up to *Personal Knowledge* focusing on the elements which relate to the web of civil society. As we outlined elsewhere the historical paradigms of civil society (though in Hungarian, see Nagy, 1991) it is sufficient to present the paradigm that we use in our investigation. This is the Hegelian construction of civil society. As an outstanding German interpreter points out, Hegel "separates the political sphere of the state from the realm of 'society' which has become 'civil'. In this way the expression 'civil' gains a primarily 'social' content as opposed to its original meaning and it is no longer taken to be synonymous with 'political' as it was in the eighteenth century" (Riedel, 1984, p. 139). Civil society is structured for it encompasses "the system of needs" (identical with political economy, viz. "pure" economics), the corporations (professional chambers, guilds), the jurisdiction by virtue of which the *Burger* make decisions in suits among them, the police who watch over the public order. Hegel considers the whole of civil society as a mediating sphere between the family and the state, for individuals develop step by step from their selfish particular interests to an insight into the general interest that is presented by the bureaucracy, the representatives and the monarch. However much Marx criticised Hegel's conception and historical conditions have changed since the death of Hegel, we are still living according to this paradigm. Even totalitarianism did not add to the conception of civil society, since it completely did away with it. At most, one can state that totalitarianism extended the border-lines of civil society for it prohibited the citizens from organizing even the most "innocent" union, e.g. a union of philatelists, if it did not want to integrate its activities into the official framework of institutions. Thereby in totalitarianism each small circle could eventually take on a "public" character when becoming a hotbed of - as Polanyi would say - "independent thought".

In what follows we confine ourselves to the reconstruction of Polanyi's concepts relating to problems which arose and still are arising in civil society. We have made an effort to concentrate on the unpublished manuscripts for they can throw light on the words published and already known.

## 2. Anti-totalitarian starting-point

As is well documented in literature and also repeatedly discussed by himself, M. Polanyi became obsessed facing the miserable plight of government-run science in the Soviet Union and Germany (Polanyi, 1967, p. 3), and that caused him to fight against it with intellectual means. Reflecting on the experiences gained on the spot in the Soviet Union, he recognised a close connection between the corruption and backwardness of science and the peculiar type of society functioning there. So he drew the consequence that the denial of the very existence of independent scientific thought follows inevitably from a philosophy he called in the context "Social Absolutism", and this closely correlates to the organising principles put into effect in the society. On the one hand, Social Absolutism endows itself with the right to represent society's interest and to judge good and evil, truth and falsehood, assuming intelligent control of all affairs including the ideas of the citizens (Polanyi, 1941 /V, p. 15). On the other hand, Social Absolutism conceives central planning as the comprehensible organizing principle to be practised throughout society, including science. Planned society coupled with planned science was such a mortal danger for independent science and free society that Polanyi staked his entire scientific career to fight it.

This anti-totalitarian motive provided Polanyi with a starting aspect from which he approached social issues (cf. Prosch, 1986, pp. 176-199; Gelwick, 1976, pp. 35-41). This anti-totalitarian starting point can be said to be his "Archimedean immovable fixed position" from which he was going "to jolt the world" by constructing a new theoretical space that he equipped with proper notions having suitable positions and specific weight. Consequently, we have to suppose civil society fit into this theoretical space.

Polanyi's leading ideas were centered around science which provided him a vista constituting, thereby, a field of elements uniquely characterizing his conceptual framework on totalitarianism. Being concerned about independent science he inferred that free thought was an inescapable presupposition for its existence. Looking at things from this vista he was actually forced to conclude that other intellectual spheres cultivated by society like art, religion, law, etc., also required free thought that, in turn, presupposes free society, too. Polanyi equated the issue of the freedom of science with the destiny of Western civilisation (cf. Prosch, 1986, pp. 176). For he was seeking "to restore and reconsolidate the essential elements of a civilisation which is in the process of breaking down" and "to reconsider the very purpose of society" (Polanyi, 1945/1, p. 1). This consists of recognising "transcendent obligations", e.g. "moral and intellectual purposes" (Polanyi, 1945/III, p. 1). Any society fostering, defending and disseminating free thought in various shapes can be called a "dedicated society". And at this point civil society as exposed in the introduction in terms of Post-Marxist thinkers of the 70s and 80s appears in Polanyi's thought. Civil society is an aggregate of smaller and larger circle's, groups of individuals who independently govern themselves for their own sake under the rule of law. We will realise that Polanyi elucidates these circles as "effectively fostering the intrinsic power of thought" and that is why they are not tolerated in totalitarian regimes. "They are feared more than any scientific associations, because the truth of literature and poetry, of history and political thought, of

philosophy, morality, and legal principles, is more vital than the truth of science. This is why the independent cultivation of such truth has proved an intolerable menace to modern tyranny "(Polanyi, 1967, p. 84).

We have to stop at this stage of our discussion. We have anticipated to some extent the outcome to which we are going to come at the end of our argumentation. It has proceeded without proof, on trust that the reader will find our arguments sound. The final results of our discussion of Polanyi's conception of civil society must subsequently corroborate all that we outlined so far if it is to be successful.

### 3. Logical time-structure of Polanyi's thought

We consider *Personal Knowledge* as the culminating fruition of Michael Polanyi's scientific career. All trends of thought emerging from the second half of the thirties flow into *Personal Knowledge* and occupy their proper place in its conceptual space. We would argue that all notions uniquely characteristic of Polanyi will not undergo any considerable change in specific weight or in significance hereafter. What will happen to them in *The Tacit Dimension* (1964), in the essays of *Knowing and Being* (1969) or in *Meaning* (1975) are a deepening or an expansion into new domains. For instance, the term "from-to knowledge" appears in *The Tacit Dimension* (Polanyi, 1967, pp. 3-25) but anybody who would try to deny the presence of equivalent thought in *Personal Knowledge* (Polanyi, 1962, pp. 55-58) would be wrong. We suppose the same is true of civil society in Polanyi's thought. Its most mature structure can be found in *Personal Knowledge*. However, he omitted certain elements from the final composition of the theory of civil society in *Personal Knowledge* because, partly, he dealt with some of them in *The Logic of Liberty*, and partly, the topic in question had to be submitted to the requirements of the internal logic of the work. Yet parts omitted have to be integrated in the interpretation which seeks to focus on the nature and meaning of a specific concept like civil society. For this reason we follow the path of thought from the second half of the thirties up to that of *Personal Knowledge*.

After having wrestled with the monster of totalitarianism, Michael Polanyi seemingly felt prepared to outline a book plan that remained in manuscript. The intended book was given the title: "The Struggle of Man in Society." The summary of the seven chapters shows the main issues to which detailed argumentation and commentaries are put forward. The text is revealing for both the genesis of Polanyi's social theory in general and that of civil society in particular.

In the notes Polanyi unfolds his "Archimedean fixed position" of attacking unshakably the totalitarianism that utterly permeates every particle of argumentation. He also undertakes to set out his basic "musical themes" henceforth, underlying each topic of his oeuvre. If we look back from the position reached in *Personal Knowledge* to this stage of his conceptual development, we see that the notions vaguely elaborated so far can be considered as being forward-pointing clues to the set of notions laid down later on. Polanyi now sees clearly why and what he wants to express but without yet finding the proper terms.

He provides the conceptual scope of notions flexibly circumscribed and puts certain contents into them. However, both their border-line and contents will incur considerable shifts and substantial modifications before *Personal Knowledge*. Thus this never published essay shows itself to have an abundant ensemble of groping formulations, several of which will be echoed by matured forms. We "only" need to unstitch these strands still wrapped in the texture of argumentation.

When sketching his outline, Polanyi was intending to write a comprehensive book that would unify scientific, social and economic matters in itself. This is worth mentioning, for he abandoned this plan in 1944/45 and published three books (*Free Trade and Full Employment*, 1945, VI; *Science, Faith and Society*, 1946; *The Logic of Liberty*, 1951) instead of one (see Polanyi, 1944). "The Struggle of Man in Society" throws light on a unifying principle, on a "Weltanschauung" that makes the essay an organic unity. Several formulations which appeared earlier can be integrated in later contexts though they do not figure explicitly in the latter.

For example, the notion of "sectionalism" played an important part in "The Struggle of Man in Society" but ceases to operate in *The Logic of Liberty*, turning into "policentricity", and reappears in *Personal Knowledge* under the term "administration of undivided and civic culture."

#### 4. Development of thought in the 30s and 40s

Concentrating now on the main strain in "The Struggle of Man", we realize that Polanyi postulates free society as an ideal and opposes it to totalitarianism. Briefly, he saw science to be threatened by a totalitarianism that caused corruption, backwardness and loss of independence. Man should revolt against it. But the struggle for independence for science as part of any free society needs intellectual arms. Polanyi searches for the means by which co-operation, co-ordination and integration in society can be achieved. His endeavour implies a critical element on this level of problem posing. He tries to point out that public good can be wielded by one center but cannot be put directly into effect. In contrast, the supporters of totalitarianism claimed the superiority of central planning over liberal ways by trying to demonstrate the possibility of direct governing of public good. Already in a manuscript prior to "The Struggle of Man in Society" Polanyi affirmed that the idea of revolution first implemented in the Soviet Union "consists of the belief that gradual conciliation cannot lead to an effective improvement of social justice and that therefore human consideration has to be temporally set aside in order to establish better institutions" (Polanyi, 1938, p. 1). Following the original Marxist tenet about the priority of the economic substructure to the social and ideological superstructure, the Communists first undertook to set up a new economic system (planned economy) to substitute for the market economy full of "cash nexus", "commodity fetishism", in brief, "anarchism" (Polanyi, 1939, pp. 3-4). The Marxists, Polanyi maintained, concealed their moral claims by evoking an explicit contempt of moral values as being merely derivatives of class interests (moral inversion; see Polanyi, 1951, p. 106; Polanyi, 1962, pp. 227-237; Gelwick, 1977, pp. 6-14; Prosch, 1986, pp.

86-88). They were driven, so to say, by the strength of logical inference to conclude that not only economics should be submitted to a central authority to plan for the welfare of the community, but so should the domains of society in which moral and intellectual claims are embodied. As these spheres of society left alone would run wild in anarchy, they ought to be abolished in favour of a planned economy (Polanyi, 1939-40, pp. 69/81), Marxists maintained.

Polanyi also strives to uncover the different kinds of integrative coefficients operating in the making and unified functioning both of totalitarian and liberal society. Therefore, he investigates social co-operation which can occur on a smaller and larger scale. In his initial investigation in 1939-40 he found that there was no general idea discovered "by which cooperation of a multitude of men can be achieved in an impersonal way" (Polanyi, 1939-40, p. 34) as opposed to a personal one. However, one can find two *different* kinds of principles of freedom which can not be reduced to a common ground. The first one is the market operating for production and goods and services by the division of labour. The other is found in the scientific community by the help of which the co-ordination of scientific production is secured.

Henceforth Polanyi himself set out to investigate the principles of co-operation underlying both the economy and science. Undoubtedly, the machinery of A. Smith's "invisible hand" served to him as leading ideal for not only economic but general freedom. He stated in 1938 that by the "production of commodities for the market, the acquisition of money is turned by the proverbial invisible hand into the service of the community" (Polanyi, 1938, p. 3). The performance embodied in this statement may not be overvalued because it postulates the possibility of wielding the public good without mediation by a central authority that would be uniquely opposed to carrying it out, as proponents of central planning assert. Consequently, Polanyi goes on to conclude that "collectivism as a claim of supremacy of general interests over that of the individual concerned, can be manifested in various examples which are not related to planning" (Polanyi, 1939-40, p. 40). To illustrate this he opposes *growth* to *construction*. The condition of growth, he argues, lies in the capacity of the community to improve through a very large number of gradual changes, each of which is due to the action of an individual and is profitable to that individual. In contrast, construction is a change in which essentially incomplete stages appear under immediate domination. The latter seems to be dimly defined, but Polanyi explains that construction operates as described because the planners must necessarily leave a large part of their work to be undefined since they lack the precise knowledge of all single facts.

Since at this stage of his intellectual advancement Polanyi considers growth and construction as distinct mostly by the difference of view-points from which they are envisaged, we may see them retrospectively to be antecedents of two kinds of *order* that Polanyi will usher in the next year, 1941. These will play a decisive part in his social theory up to 1951. Already at that time in question he is seemingly bent to relate growth to the ideal of free society while construction to that of totalitarianism. But it is not yet clear. As he analyses the problem of co-ordination on an abstract level he has to acknowledge that a community

continuously has problems to tackle by the way of construction (e.g., if the birth rate is too low) when an organiser of the general interest of the community might step in. Even more, he does not intend to exclude authorities from both forms of organisations. Far from it, he indicates that there are "influential" persons, briefly, "authorities" within the scope of growth, as we shall see soon.

Coming now closer to our' subject, civil society, we can find important passages in the text in question. We have seen that Polanyi was striving to outline the main features of the general principle organising society. Let us switch our attention to how individuals grow. Polanyi points out that the new-born gradually grows into an *impersonal* complex social context made up by various sectors. In one sector (*section*) individuals act but within the scope of their profession and are judged publicly without regard to the rest of their lives. In turn, they demand their private life to be respected by others. Within "office hours" they are submitted to leadership of different kinds. Yet the question now arises as to what coefficient makes these independent sectors (or spheres) hold together, or, in other words, what is the organising general principle that Polanyi is going to establish? The answer is that there is competitive leadership within each autonomous sector and it, as such, is opposed to "immediate domination of totalitarianism" (Polanyi, 1939-40, p. 8). The competitive leadership is a function discharged by a wide range of influentials seeking to rival each other. Within and between sectors they are continuously about "to modify the structure and contents of their spheres in accordance with the standards of public opinion, and of those closely participating in the particular spheres" (Polanyi, 1939-40, p. 48). Competitive leadership as a motive force of free society infiltrates all parts of it, like the proceedings in the law courts, rival canvassing of parties, charities, and schools of thought, with a public spirit that enters upon the struggle against totalitarian domination. That is why "all prospective dictators try to abolish parties which are the matrices of competing leadership..." (Polanyi, 1939-40, p. 46). In such a free society it should be taken for granted that the State itself may be but one of the authorities in society that is distinguished from the others by the fact that everyone belongs to it and that it is the main source of organised physical power (Polanyi, 1939-40, pp. 48-49). We have seen an *impersonal sectionalism* emerging in free society. This sectionalism is essential in our search for the place and significance of civil society in M. Polanyi's thought. Therefore it is indispensable to quote a large passage of "The Struggle of Man" in which the substantial elements of sectionalism as related to civil society are revealed:

Sectionalism implies the existence of a number of unrelated authorities... Every section has its hierarchy ... so that it really has a multiple internal structure. The various spheres competing for the attention ... are trying to maintain or to exalt some sectional ideal of their ownj even those concerned with the whole of society are, in reality aiming at a section only, though the section might go right across society... The wealth of liberty which society can offer increases directly with the number of separate authorities... The basis for these quasi-independent authorities must be that they present partial aspects of life each of which has a system of its own by which it sets its standards and carries out its functions. It is the assumption that the true way

of living is not wholly known but must work itself out, by giving scope to the activities of more or less autonomous interests... By the same token which causes the free citizens to enter impersonally into the various equations left open to him by society, he is also deprived of aiming in the resulting activities at the good of society as a whole. The supreme good is not institutionally represented. There is no profession of guardianship of supreme welfare in a free society... In this sense the complex physiognomy of society is a democratic representation of the response of society to the channels to it by its social inheritance (Polanyi, 1939-40, pp. 47).

We emphasize that though the system of thought Polanyi reached at that time will become more sophisticated, new notions will be introduced and worked out, and the established concepts will incur modifications, the important and main characteristics that are ascribed to civil society will not be essentially changed.

Between 1941-1951, in the second stage of Polanyi's intellectual development one of the most important events consisted of Polanyi's taking over the notion of "order" from Kohler. This took place sometime in 1941 (Polanyi, 1941/IV, p. 4). Following Kohler he elaborated the order in a more general sense (order in space and time; Polanyi, 1941/1) and then defined two kinds of order in society. The first one was identified in "The Struggle of Man" as "construction", the other as "growth". Now "construction" is replaced by "corporate order", "growth" by "dynamic order". Furthermore, what was designated as "competitive leadership" assumes the new term "mutual adjustment". We will meet it again in *Personal Knowledge*, where, after it had played an important part in *The Logic of Liberty*, it ascends to a central position while two kinds of order will cease to operate in *Personal Knowledge*.

The corporate order consists, in the more abstract sense, of sorting out things and assigning to each a place according to a prearranged plan. This kind of order in society is put under one authority and exists on a vast scale, e.g., in the army and various governmental departments. In contrast, dynamic order is brought about if one leaves things alone, since then, order is achieved by *internal forces* between particles, that is, by *mutual adjustment*. Competing private enterprises work in dynamic order. Yet Polanyi emphasises that there are other examples of greater importance than those of material production: "literature, art, and sciences, custom, and law, in fact the entire progress of our cultural heritage is achieved by a co-operation based on the mutual adjustment" (Polanyi, 1941/11, pp. 2, 4). These spheres of autonomous activity are given a new term: city. Cities can be broader or narrower in scope, but each incorporates mutual adjustment. (Cities of businessmen, clergymen, etc. form a more or less independent body politic. "There are certain general principles common to all these structures and these can be best made clear by systematically comparing and contrasting the various spheres. This book traces many such comparisons, all centering around science, and attempts to gain as a result, a complete analysis of the scientific body coupled with at least a general characteristic of the other bodies which surround it and form, in an aggregate, the rest of society". Polanyi conceives so in an introductory chapter of a planned book drafted on December 16, 1941 (Polanyi, 1941/III, p. 1) that throws light on the further crystallization of the concept of structure and dynamics of free society. Take notice

of how firmly Polanyi sticks to the idea that the coordinating principle of science has to be expanded to the rest of society and to prevail there (though corporate orders can occur sporadically in free society, too; Polanyi, 1945/11, pp. 7-8).

In the 40s Polanyi went on with developing his conception and disentangling hidden implications from it. It is worthwhile presenting some of them. Firstly, moral and intellectual standards which were already called into being in "The Struggle of Man" (Polanyi, 1937-40, p. 38) become now conspicuous as "definite principles". They afford protection. Even more, free society "is not based on freedom of individuals but on freedom of principles... Absence of government control is balanced and may be outweighed by the acceptance of control by definite principles" (Polanyi, 1945/IV, pp. 1-2). Polanyi minutely points out that neither economy nor jurisprudence can operate unless they incorporate into their functioning the ideals of fairness, decency and truth (Polanyi, 1945/V, pp. 4-5). To sum up: definite principles' are the basis for the social edifice, and without putting them into effect no sound society can prove well grounded or habitable.

Secondly, Polanyi makes a clear distinction between individual and public functions, which may be considered as pointers to the distinction between individual and civic culture made in *Personal Knowledge*. Furthermore, he divides dynamic order into three kinds: "Intellectual: of individual efforts contributing to an established system of ideas. Productive: of producers managing resources for commercial profit. Distributive: of consumers sharing current productions and awarding rewards to producers through market" (Polanyi, 1945/IV, p. 3). These activities are subsumed under individual functions. Public functions are also threefold: cultural, when the individual participates in preserving, transmitting or expanding the intellectual heritage; civic, when he appears as a witness or acts as a jurymen; democratic, when he responds with criticism or support of political leadership, or offers himself as a leader and achieves leadership (Polanyi, 1956/V, p. 1). Polanyi adds to this that "The range and complexity of these functions, particularly in the cultural field, is a measure of the extent to which society depends for its very life on the liberal way" (Polanyi, 1945/IV, p. 2).

Thirdly, a novel trait of the State deploys into the system, Polanyi perceives that the State must enter the scene of public interest adjudicating between competing interests for they are not able to judge between themselves. "It would suppose a choice between rival Interests on the basis of principles which override interests" (Polanyi, 1945/IV, p. 3), If Some of the interests directly involve the public they should be properly safeguarded fey the State, Consequently, the State may be said to be responsible, in the Ultimate resort, for, "definite principles".

All intellectual achievements and orientations elaborated on in the thirties are collected and brought to a fitting climax by M. Polanyi in *The Logic of Liberty*\* As Harry Proseh presented a large-scale interpretation of it in every respect, we need not provide a detailed analysis of its inherent conceptual arrangement We only recall that Polanyi in this book (Polanyi, 1951) enlarged the number of examples, consolidated the contours of notions,

reasserted tenets in more sophisticated ways, and gave more striking examples, but he did not essentially modify the results up to the beginning of the fifties. It is sufficient to mention that he replaced "dynamic order" by "spontaneous order" and ushered in the term "poliocentricity" (Polanyi, 1951, p. 184) for describing the interrelating aggregate of "cities" joined to each other by mutual adjustment. We may thereby pass on to *Personal Knowledge*.

## 5. Fruition of thought in Personal Knowledge

With *Personal Knowledge* the reader enters a new world of M. Polanyi's theory. New terms, notions and concepts overwhelm the philosophical scene so as to enlarge the perspective. We have to suppose the reader to be familiar with this world. Let us focus on issues closely related to the subject of civil society so as not to stretch the frame of this paper too far. Thus we will be confined to novel elements only germane to our subject matter. Nevertheless, these new elements are not without antecedents, since almost all of them appeared earlier at least in germinal shape. Taking the chapter on "conviviality", we face a notion we have not yet met. Polanyi ushers in the convivial element after he had dealt with intellectual passions of universal intent by bringing to light the civic coefficients of these intellectual passions. He affirms that "an intellectual passion can survive only with the support of a society which respects the values affirmed by these passions" (Polanyi, 1962, p. 203). Thus conviviality, apart from its bearing on intellectual passions, is similar to *Vergesellschaftung* described in German sociology (Simmel, Weber, etc.).

As for the content of conviviality, Polanyi uncovers it as the procedure through which fellowship comes into being. Two forms of it are sharing of experience and participation in joint activities, e.g., in rituals. These are instances of "pure" conviviality as lower forms of coherence, preceding the stage of organised society. Pure conviviality embraces (by sharing of experience and rituals) "a wide range of common values which are continuous with the impersonal appreciations laid down by morality, custom and law" (Polanyi, 1962, p. 212). It follows from this that "the group has a claim to the conformity of its members, and that the interests of group life may legitimately rival and sometimes overrule those of the individual. This acknowledges a common good for the sake of which deviation may be suppressed and individuals be required to make sacrifices for defending the group against subversion and destruction from inside" (Polanyi, 1962, p. 212). Thus for the administering of the common good, convivial institutions take shape. This was not taken into account by Polanyi in the 40s, though a thorough investigation can possibly discover its seed.

As was already said, pure conviviality does not suffice to bring about organised society. To make this it is necessary for four coefficients to work in societal organisations, namely, sharing of conviction, sharing of fellowship, co-operation, authority or coercion. These are embodied in four kinds of institutions: those of culture (universities, theatres, churches, etc.); of conviviality (group loyalty, group rituals, common defence, social intercourse); of economics (property); of public power (which shelters and controls the cultural, convivial and economic institutions). The latter are civic institutions.

Remember the order as outlined in "The Structure of Liberalism." There we encounter three dynamic orders (intellectual, productive, distributive) and three public functions of the individual (cultural, civic, democratic). Positions of these elements within the theoretical framework are now rearranged in *Personal Knowledge*. Intellectual and cultural functions are fused into a new complex named "individual culture", productive and distributive actions are fitted into economics, and the state that was appended to others from outside is a fourth institution. Convivial, economic and state institutions belong to civic culture. Though individual culture is guided by its own standards and prompted by its own passions it must be secured by established cultural institutions if its standards are to be socially cultivated. Yet, they are, at second hand, dependent on civic institutions, i.e., group loyalty, property and power. While civic culture is sustained by civic institutions, individual culture is not, as expected, sustained by cultural institutions alone, but also by civic institutions. It follows that though culture, both individual and civic, proceeds under the influence of intellectual and moral standards, the civic pole relies ultimately on institutions of civic culture, that is, on group loyalty, property and power. Furthermore, as group loyalty is parochial, property appetitive and authority violent, civic culture can be at variance with moral and intellectual standards. As a result, "the genuineness of moral standards will be rendered suspect when it is realized that they are upheld by force, based on property and imbued with local loyalty" (Polanyi, 1962, p. 216). This distortion can take place at a critical age when civic institutions degenerate into local parochialism (ethnocentrism, nationalism), greedy economic interest (when actors of economics fall short of fairness, decency, and the running of the economy is not tempered by humanistic social policy), and the mere violence of state power. In this critical age "this depreciation of thought will tend to spread and to bring about eventually the subjection of all thought to local patriotism, economic interest and the power of the State" (Polanyi, 1962, p. 216).

This is one of the extremes of civic institutions. However, on the other hand, there can exist, it might be said, a positive extreme too. This is the case of "happy people" to whom their civic culture is their civic home, as Polanyi conceives it, for their intellectual and moral passions sustain the civic culture in an esoteric way. Morality (with its allies, custom and law) becomes an instrument of civic culture, and this intertwining of civic exigencies with the ideals of morality lets civic matters take shape by the same principles which effectively sustain the freedom of individual thought, i. e., of individual culture. The two kinds of culture need a twofold administration. Individual culture is administered by the mutual adjustment that Polanyi presents with the example of science. We are already familiar with it. Yet it is noticeable that the administration of civic culture has no peculiar machinery akin to mutual adjustment. On the basis of our tracing the formation of Polanyi's thought, we venture to state that Polanyi did not build up any specific organising machinery for the administration of civic culture not because of negligence but because for him it was taken for granted that mutual adjustment was essentially inherent within civic culture too (think of the "invisible hand" in economics). This is the reason why when dealing with the administration of civic culture he only emphasizes the moral improvements which are embodied in humanistic laws and its institutions.

The question to be answered now arises: Where should we locate civil society within the context of conviviality? Undoubtedly, we may exclude the state. But convivial and economic institutions are organic parts of civil society as two fields of public life which, in a free society, are instrumental for sustaining the individual culture (e.g. support for arts, churches, etc.). In totalitarianism or autocracy, autonomous convivial and economic initiatives belong to civil society rather than the private sphere. This is so that they can free themselves from the domains controlled by the state.

Yet, may the individual culture be subsumed under the concept of civil society?

To gain an apposite answer let us remember that Polanyi taught about the republic of science. It should be taken for granted that a lab or a department of any science in any university does not imply, in itself, membership in civil society, but if they take part in the inner public life of a university (e.g. decision on budget) they form part and parcel of the university's "civil society", for their activity in this case goes beyond that of strict science. Do not forget: "civil" means activities turned into the public sphere beyond privacy, be the latter that of a private person or a body of any kind. Therefore, a citizen differentiates himself as a private person from himself as "public person" by his interfering with public affairs ("res publica"), and so do associations, unions, circles, etc. of any kind. However, there is no clear-cut or eternal demarcation between private and public. In totalitarian regimes the border-line of public shifts closer to the private sphere since totalitarian power seeks to control people's behaviour and thought, even in the family. The latter happened in the climax of Fascism and Bolshevism. Its extreme form ceased to hold in *Spartsozialismus*, but still worked in a more hidden form and between tighter limits until the collapse. Few know in Western countries that an officer of the political police (a "communicator") was delegated in each university whose task was to control the behaviour of students and the teaching staff. This person took the "necessary measure" if he took notice of some "objectionable behaviour". Polanyi knew fairly well the actual situation even of everyday life in Communism, and accordingly, he was able to state concisely that circles and professional associations are feared and hated by modern totalitarian rulers (See Polanyi, 1967, p. 84). This means that all elements of the theory we can legitimately interpret as Polanyi's conception of civil society are dynamic in Polanyi's thought. This is true, first, because a part of the activities of associations in question is one mediating to public spheres, second, because their activity though being in itself "neutral" can be threatened in particular historical circumstances (e.g., in totalitarianism), and it is just because they are threatened by public power that their activity can be qualified as public.

By pointing out the dynamism of Polanyi's conception of civil society (a conception that we took in our interpretation of recent discussion in Eastern Europe) we have come to the end of this essay. However, we have to deal briefly with some objections which cast doubt on Polanyi's constant endeavour to expose the republic of science as a model valid for civil society.

## 6. Can science be a model for society?

In an unpublished manuscript written by Polanyi in 1945 stands the following phrase: "The autonomy of science as a paradigm of the liberal way" (Polanyi, 1945/II, p. 4). Polanyi also explains the reasons for it. He argues that both science and free society can be guided by "transcendent values" the observation of which by independent individuals establishes the moral and intellectual order. On the basis of it "a considerable scope for civic functions" comes into being. By the same token there is "a dynamic order of co-operating scientists, lawyers, artists, scholars, divines" (Polanyi, 1945/II, pp. 1-2).

These thoughts of Polanyi were our directing stars in this essay, and in compliance with it we cannot agree with the views that attack the conception of "The Republic of Science" for its suggestion that science resembles the body politic of, say, civil society.

Bertrand de Jouvenel questions whether "the model of the dedicated company can, with proper adjustment, be used for civil society as Polanyi seems to suggest" (de Jouvenel, 1961, p. 136). De Jouvenel argues that since dedicated companies, like science, repose on principles diametrically opposed to those embodied in the rest of society, the latter has no common criteria of good and bad other than that of preservation of society itself. Accordingly, de Jouvenel maintains, the aim of preservation beyond morality irresistibly leads up to possible distortion of society, for "where no truth is acknowledged, fanaticism is impressive".

Since we concerned ourselves with this view elsewhere (see Nagy, 1992) it is sufficient to confine ourselves to some comments. De Jouvenel seems to overlook that Polanyi was aware of possible distortions of civil society when he stated, e.g., in *Personal Knowledge*, that "civic culture still remains dependent on force and material ends, and remains therefore suspect" (Polanyi, 1962, p. 226), but, in spite of this (or: just for this reason) he declines to state that the operating principles of free society should be akin to those of science. Why? If de Jouvenel would have thought over the possible answer to this question, he could have come to the solution as it is convincingly pointed out by H. Prosch when he interpreted Polanyi's message in this respect: "a free democratic political republic cannot exist unless there are some basic ideals, principles held in common by all the members of political community" (Prosch, 1986, p. 279).

Recently Richard Allen made an assumption similar to that of de Jouvenel. In his book on Polanyi, after having given a correct interpretation of Polanyi's views on the republic of science, he makes the objection: "...one may wonder, can actual society arise and be maintained by belief in and dedication to only formal and general principles? The republic of science exists within a wider society, or across several societies, and participation in it is voluntary and does not occupy the whole of one's life. And so it may not be quite so apt a model for that wider society" (Allen, 1990, p. 75). In consequence, Allen goes on arguing, the wider society must cohere around "a more specific set of beliefs", and it is, thereby, more like a religious body with its core of dogmas, rites and practices,

We cannot agree with this view. We have to point to the fact that modern societies are built up on norms which get more and more formal as opposed to those of religious bodies. The members of churches really have to abide by fairly strict norms, sometimes by dogmas. However, modern men belong at the same time to several groups which require sometimes different, sometimes contrasting behaviour (this is "conflict of roles in sociology), but this does not alter their conformity to more general norms (law, ethical norms, moral standards, all their "mores" as Polanyi names them in *Personal Knowledge*). It follows from this that the wider society provides people a larger "place for free play" than religious bodies do, but it does not mean that people cannot obey both kind of norms. If modern societies were regulated not by general but by specific norms, as Allen claims, they would fall back into the "static" state of society preceding the modern one.

The other distinction made by Allen, namely, that participation in science is voluntary and does not occupy the whole of one's life, does not alter essentially the main goal of both science and society. It is their members' obligation to maintain these standards, no matter what their personal motives are for being members.

In a paper presented on the Polanyi centennial conference held in Budapest, R. Allen repeated his views about the difference between voluntary associations and the wider society: "A state or body politic is not like a voluntary society within it, for it is constituted on the basis of historic or prescriptive right and obligation and not by contract. Our obligations to it and rights within it are inherited and not contracted" (Allen, 1992, p. 97). It seems that R. Allen overstates the difference between the two kinds of social aggregates, and his conception of tradition runs counter to Polanyi's teaching about the very nature of tradition. In Polanyi's thought tradition is not as rigid as that of R. Allen. For example, in *Science, Faith and Society* Polanyi uncovers that though scientists should assent to the premises of science the great discoverers slightly modified them. "There is in fact no aspect of science, including even mathematics, in which the fundamental presuppositions, the methods of investigation, and the criteria used for verification have not undergone a series of marked changes since the inception of modern science 300 years ago" (Polanyi, 1964, p. 89). The same holds for Common Law (see Polanyi, 1962, p. 54) and, according to Polanyi, to other fields of "social lore".

Already Tom Paine switched our attention to the fact, as against the far-fetched traditionalism of E. Burke, that all tradition began once upon a time. And Polanyi did not say that Tom Paine should have replaced E. Burke, but rejected "Paine's demand for the absolute self-determination of each generation, but does so for the sake of its own ideal of unlimited human and social improvement for his position "accepts Burke's thesis that freedom must be rooted in tradition, but transposes it into a system cultivating radical progress" (Polanyi, 1969, p. 71; see also Polanyi, 1967, p. 63). Richard Allen is, of course, right in saying that even voluntary societies themselves depend upon traditions, but he disproves, just by this assumption, his other tenet which posits an unbridgeable gap between state, body politic and civil society, viz. voluntary societies. Both of them can be maintained by a creative relying upon the tradition. The latter is elucidated by Drusilla Scott in very illuminating

examples in her book (see Scott, 1985, pp. 89-94). These examples clearly show that "the same sort of lively tension between tradition and innovation can operate in these two fields as in the scientific field" (Scott, 1985, p. 88). For tradition should simultaneously be kept and renewed as Jesus puts it: "every teacher of the Law who becomes a disciple in the Kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a home who takes new and old things out of his storeroom" (Matt. 14: 52).

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