

CIVIL SOCIETY IN ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

This article critically examines the meaning of the concept of civil society with reference to Zimbabwe. This is done against the background of renewed scholarly interest in the impact of state-society relations on the process of democratization in the Third World. Looking at civil society and the state as intertwining parts of the same social reality, the article argues that civil society in Zimbabwe, especially in the Black community, is in a state of chronic underdevelopment as a result of historical factors related to pre- and post-Independence politics. These factors include the value premises of colonial institutions, African tradition and the liberation war, all of which have had decisive influences in shaping and constraining the development of civil society in Zimbabwe.

THE SPECTRE OF democracy currently haunting social and political orders throughout the world has revived scholarly debate on the concept of civil society and its policy implications for a democratic political order.¹ This revival has also been influenced by the change in world politics, a change characterized by the turbulence of empirical socialism which culminated in the dramatic collapse of Stalinist regimes in eastern and central Europe in 1989, the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1991, and the end of the cold war. Less dramatic but equally significant have been developments taking place throughout Africa, where one-party-state regimes with various ideological orientations are, one by one, disintegrating into various precarious multi-party systems. The re-emergence of social struggles based on ethnic identities in countries such as the former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia and in Somalia has also renewed scholarly interest in the concept of civil society. Whether the direction of these political struggles is towards sustainable democracies will remain a matter of intellectual debate and conjecture for a long time to come. However, to a great, and perhaps even a decisive, extent the possibility of sustainable democracy in countries emerging from authoritarian rule or ethnic conflict, will depend on whether civil society will reassert its political role. But what is civil society?

¹ A representative example is contained in J. Keane (ed.), *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives* (London, Verso, 1988).

THE DEFINITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is a highly contentious concept with a variety of connotations. Historically, the notion has been used to designate a plurality of social enclaves which exist in contradistinction to the dominance of a particular monopolistic social system within the same social realm or territorial unity.² Typically, the various social systems which have been targeted for opposition by civil society in political history have included savagery, anarchy, the Church, the monarchy, the party, the state and the market economy. More recently in liberal industrialized societies, opposition has tended to generate tension between civil society on the one hand, and, on the other, the over-arching imperatives of the market economy as a ubiquitous social agency for allocating and distributing resources.³ This has been in contrast to the situation in countries going through some kind of transition to democracy, such as in the former socialist countries in eastern and central Europe and in Africa where the tension has been between civil society and the party-controlled state.⁴

In the latter case, assuming that all state apparatuses are distinguishable from the wider societies in which they are to be found, scholars have tended to view civil society as that part of society which is outside the control of the state apparatuses or the part outside the state sphere. There is thus a presumed basic duality between the state and civil society as separate social entities. This duality is generally seen as something good in industrialized liberal countries which purport to be pluralist, whereas in developing countries the tendency of the ruling authorities is to seek to eliminate this duality in favour of the party-controlled state. This is achieved by expanding the scope of the state by fusing the political, ideological and productive hierarchies into one single unified organizational structure as an affirmation of the supposed virtues of democratic centralism.⁵

Within the context of such a single organizational structure, open and avowed segmentation is prohibited so as to allow the ruling authorities to parade the declared unity of the state under one party and one leader while stifling differences among social groups, and between them and the state, by marginalizing social conflict and treating it as if it does not exist. As a result, at least in the early stages of such state formation, civil society tends to be oriented toward patron-client networks in the political and

² E. Gellner, 'Civil society in historical context', *International Social Science Journal* (1991), CXXIX, 495-510.

³ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (London, Gollancz, 1945).

⁴ A. Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence: Volume Two: A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Univ. of California Press, 1987), 61-82.

⁵ Gellner, 'Civil society in historical context', 495.

economic spheres. This tendency in turn gives the appearance, however temporary, of legitimacy to the state's claim of national unity while depriving civil society of the necessary public-spiritedness and the capacity to act decisively and autonomously in policy matters.

Despite these problems civil society in traditional states does not die nor does it disappear into permanent irrelevance. It usually remains, its power latent but ever ready to be either freed or endowed with political authority and constitutional legitimacy.⁶ That is to say, even though civil society may suffer serious damage in developing countries, it does not have to be re-invented or re-created from scratch as an act of momentous social engineering. It simply needs to be regenerated by restoring a public spirit in national politics beyond the state sphere. But, of course, in contemporary traditional states such as those which are in transition either from the brutality of Stalinist socialism or from the vagaries of one-party rule to tenuous versions of democracy, the predicament of civil society is radically different from that in industrialized liberal societies where the major concern is about the rights and prerogatives of citizens in the policy process. In the former cases, the problem is not one of liberating and giving legitimacy and vigour to something already in existence but, rather, one of creating social preconditions for something wholly new in political terms. Zimbabwe falls in this category not least because of its colonial history.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE STATE

As already pointed out, it is common to find social science literature which describes civil society as something 'outside' the state. This, I believe, is wrong, as many other scholars have pointed out before.⁷ As will be argued in more detail later in this article, the state and civil society should be treated as intertwining parts of the same social reality. This view is premised on the notion that both the state and civil society belong to one public realm. The dichotomy between the state and civil society is based on a false dualism which negates the historical fact that 'civil society' means the same thing as 'political community'.⁸

With regard to the question of the state in Africa and its implications for civil society, a consensus has developed between liberal and radical scholars that the state in Africa has failed. While the conclusion is the same, the reasons are, of course, different. For liberals, the state, which was supposed to play a pivotal enabling role in promoting economic

⁶ Ibid., 497.

⁷ See contributions to Keane (ed.), *Civil Society and the State*.

⁸ See C. Taylor, 'Modes of civil society', *Public Culture* (1990), III, 95-107.

growth, has not lived up to the expectations of modernization. To the radical left, the state in Africa has not lived up to its expected revolutionary mission of altering and transforming the economic base in favour of the weakest classes in society. The association of the state in Africa with human-rights abuses over the first three or so decades of independence has made its universal condemnation even more forceful.

Thus, rather remarkably, we now witness a situation in which liberals and radicals, disappointed by the performance of the state in Africa, are united in proclaiming civil society as the most viable alternative to the failed state. In civil society, it is now claimed, lie not only the prospects of democracy but also the prospects of a regime that will respect human rights. The prognosis is that the state is bad while everything outside it is good. This new optimism is understandable but misplaced, not least because it is without sound scholarly justification.

Perhaps the optimism has been given impetus by the present proliferation of local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other voluntary associations in developing countries. But this proliferation does not necessarily spell good news for civil society. Far from it. Most of the mushrooming NGOs and voluntary associations are in fact a danger to the prospects of a viable society which enshrines democracy and human rights because they have shown a tendency towards a type of particularism, fundamentalism and ethno-nationalism based on an intolerance of other social groups.

The type of civil society that is currently being formed in developing countries such as Zimbabwe is characterized by parochial associations such as village communities, élite clubs in urban areas, political parties, burial societies, trade unions, industrial confederations, commercial organizations, student groups and fundamentalist religious cults, all of which do not encourage an interest in matters beyond their own immediate concerns. These associations typically equate their own narrow aims with those of the public realm and thus seek to manipulate the state for their own selfish purposes. In most cases, these associations are the mirror images of the state which they seek to confront. Such social groups, I contend, do not belong to civil society in the sense of a political community capable of accommodating a variety of social interests in a pluralist framework. Indeed, the whole notion of civil society as a group concept is seriously flawed. In so far as it is a political concept, civil society should be regarded as an individual's social space which shrinks or expands depending on the nature of state-society relations. Politics begins with the individual as the bearer of reason. A political community, that is, civil society, emerges when the individual begins to interact with other individuals.

The implication from the foregoing is that there is not necessarily a

connection between the expansion of voluntary associations, especially those which style themselves as interest groups, and the development of civil society in political terms. This is particularly so in this era of economic structural adjustment programmes during which the élite who control the state are likely to sponsor voluntary associations and other private sector groups in a cynical drive to placate those who define civil society as the development of anything outside the so-called state sphere.

How, then, are we to approach the concept of civil society from a definitional point of view? A useful starting point has been given by Charles Taylor. He suggests that there are at least three senses of the concept of civil society. These are:⁹

- (i) A minimal sense in which there are free associations which can be empirically shown to be free from the control of the state.
- (ii) A second and stronger sense in which civil society exists only and only where the political community as a whole is able to organize itself and co-ordinate its activities without the control of the state.
- (iii) A third and strongest sense in which civil society exists where only and only when the political community is composed of an ensemble of free associations which have the political and organizational capacity not only to co-ordinate their own activities but also to significantly determine or inflect the sequence and development of state policy.

These conceptual definitions of civil society provide three heuristic scenarios which can be usefully employed to construct empirical tests of whether and how civil society exists as a political community in a particular country. Given the three possible scenarios and their pluralistic implications for democratic governance, it is my contention that civil society in Zimbabwe has a long way to go. It is struggling to define itself within the confines of the minimalist sense of the concept: that is, it is still to establish free associations which are not under the tutelage of state power. The reasons for this circumstance are outlined below.

THE MANIFESTATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN ZIMBABWE

By and large civil society in Zimbabwe, especially in the Black community, is in a state of chronic underdevelopment which sometimes approximates social paralysis. There are two different but related historical factors which explain this circumstance but do not justify it. One relates to the

⁹ Ibid., 98.

pre-Independence period and the other to political developments in Zimbabwe since Independence.

The pre-Independence factor

The essence of British colonial policies after 1890 and of Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front government after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965 was to criminalize politics in the Black community. Without political activity, the prospects of civil society are diminished. For Blacks in Rhodesia, political activity became a clandestine affair as they were forced to organize and co-ordinate their affairs behind closed doors and usually under life-threatening conditions. Attempts to monopolize politics, first by the British and later by the Rhodesians, resulted in an underdeveloped civil society in Zimbabwe.¹⁰ It is a well-known fact that, during the colonial period, social movements such as trade unions, student groups, community organizations and political parties in the Black community were trampled upon in an attempt to relegate them to permanent political irrelevance.

More generally, the colonial authorities frustrated the development of civil society in Zimbabwe by seeking to remove Blacks from mainstream politics by confining them to the realm of tribal existence where they would, as 'natives', define themselves in terms of ethnic as opposed to national identities. In 1901, for example, a Chief Native Commissioner in Matabeleland boasted about the success of his 'politic' efforts to keep Blacks outside politics when he observed to his superiors that

At present there is absolutely no cohesion among the natives, each little tribe is, as it were, opposed to the other, a certain amount of jealousy has naturally arisen amongst the Indunas, this jealousy has been fostered by me as it is the most politic form of governing the Natives.¹¹

This sentiment, which formed the essence of the colonial belief that the native was better governed as a tribal entity, dominated much of government thinking during the colonial and UDI periods with the consequence that the possibilities of the development civil society in the Black community were undermined.

The post-Independence factor

Zimbabweans expected colonial and UDI attitudes towards politics in the Black community to change with Independence in 1980. But, sadly, that

¹⁰ This has been well documented by countless sources elsewhere. For example, see D. N. Beach, *War and Politics in Zimbabwe: 1840-1900* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1986) for politics during the colonial period, and J. Todd, *The Right to Say No: Rhodesia 1972* (Harare, Longman, 1987) for Rhodesian sentiments towards politics in the Black community.

¹¹ Quoted by T. Ranger in his *The Invention of Tribalism in Zimbabwe* (Harare, Mambo Press, 1985), 6.

did not happen. Instead the ruling party, ZANU(PF), took maximum advantage of an under-developed civil society by claiming that ZANU(PF) was the sole legitimate representative of the people. Under the guise of this claim, the party declared itself to be the umbrella organization of all social movements and went about destroying civil society associations in the name of 'the revolution'. All 'legitimate' organizations were challenged by ZANU(PF) to join the ruling party as a way of proving their revolutionary and patriotic commitment.

ZANU(PF) declared 1981 as 'the year of the consolidation of the people's power' which, according to the President of ZANU(PF), Robert Mugabe, impelled the ruling party to 'adopt a more comprehensive and a more generous view of Government embracing all these [pre-Independence revolutionary] forces'.¹² The need for such a comprehensive view of government was interpreted by the ZANU(PF) leadership and supporters to mean the establishment of a one-party state. Mugabe believed that the various impediments to a one-party state, especially those entrenched in the Lancaster House Constitution, could be overcome with the establishment of a government of national unity. Thus he told the nation in his New Year's Eve address: 'As Zimbabweans, our new nation now demanded of us either as individuals, or as groups or communities, a single loyalty that is a proper and logical manifestation of our national unity and spirit of reconciliation.'¹³

By 'a single loyalty' Mugabe meant loyalty not to the nation but to his ruling party. In effect, his plea was for a legislated one-party state because, in his words, 'we [Zimbabweans] are one state with one society and one nation, that is the political concept we cherish'.¹⁴

Those social groups which tried to resist ZANU(PF)'s tactic of exclusion by inclusion under the guise of 'one state, one society, one nation, one leader', were branded as sell-outs bent on working for 'the enemy' as the ruling party publicly touted its commitment to a legislated one-party state, especially between 1980 and 1990. As a result, and strictly speaking, political independence in Zimbabwe liberated only one part of the state: the government bureaucracy and political leadership which became Black, actually ZANU(PF), almost overnight in 1980.

Civil society groups, such as trade unions and student movements, which had operated underground during the days of settler government and which had hoped to attain legitimacy after Independence were left bleeding by the ruling party's tactics, and some organizations bled to death because they failed to find any political space for independent policy action arising from self-management and self-organization without

¹² *The Herald*, 1 Jan. 1981.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5 Aug. 1982.

state tutelage. Other social groups which survived sooner or later found themselves forced to toe the ZANU(PF) party line. This is why, up to now, there is no representation for workers and peasants in the ZANU(PF) central committee and politburo — despite the fact that these groups make up the majority in the country. The precarious political position of workers and peasants in the ruling party was illustrated in an editorial on 5 December 1989 in *The Herald*, the supposedly 'progressive', government-controlled daily newspaper, which pontificated that:

there must be no encouragement of distinctions between the workers and the party [read 'leaders'], or the peasants and the party [again, read 'leaders']. There should be no separate electorates but only a recognition and sensitivity [presumably on the part of the leadership] to the unique interests and problems of the peasants and workers which must be addressed by the party as a whole. That is, the workers and peasants must be part and parcel of the masses. They are the masses.¹⁵

This paternalistic view of the masses is patently hostile to the idea of workers and peasants commanding real political power, not only in the ruling party but also in national affairs. The effect of this view has been to silence the Black community and, *ipso facto*, to weaken civil society as defined in the second and third senses of Charles Taylor's definition.

Parenthetically, the situation is different in the White community, where the private sector, despised as it was by ZANU(PF) throughout the first decade of Independence, has retained and even increased its political power and policy influence over the ruling party, especially in economic affairs. This is true of White-dominated groups such as the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI), the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce (ZNCC), the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) and the Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe (EMCOZ), all which have, in the minimalist sense of the concept of civil society defined above, emerged as the most powerful interest groups in the politically volatile days of the World Bank-sponsored Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP).

It is a noteworthy and rather unfortunate feature of present-day Zimbabwean politics that there is no Black social group which is as well organized or which enjoys as much policy influence as any of these White-controlled groups. One group, the Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African People's Union PF-ZAPU, which had all the appearance of a promising and well-organized political party, disappointed many of its supporters when, under the cover of national unity, it dissolved itself into ZANU(PF) in December 1989. Many PF-ZAPU supporters believed this was an act of desperation by some individuals in the PF-ZAPU leadership who were

¹⁵ *The Herald*, 5 Dec. 1989.

eager to share the spoils of national power but whose party had failed to win a majority at the polls after the ruling party's bitter military campaign against them.

Apart from formal political parties, students at the University of Zimbabwe have failed to articulate a political agenda beyond mere hooliganism. In 1990, for example, their activities turned back the clock of academic freedom in Zimbabwe as their irresponsible conduct gave the government a pretext to promulgate the controversial University of Zimbabwe Amendment Act (No. 21 of 1990) which severely curtails University autonomy and has far-reaching implications for the development of civil society in Zimbabwe. The workers have not fared any better. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), which was created by ZANU(PF) shortly after Independence, is only now trying to find its niche. Things will get worse before they get better for the beleaguered labour movement, only 20 per cent of whose membership comes from the formal-sector labour force and which lacks the organizational capacity and technical and legal skills necessary to make a policy difference in civil society.

If organizations like the CFU, the CZI, the ZNCC and EMCOZ were Black-dominated, Zimbabwe would have the makings of an effective civil society. But these White-dominated organizations, with the possible exception of the CFU, prefer doing business with the ZANU(PF) government behind closed doors, claiming that they are apolitical organizations and that it is better to co-operate with the government in private than to challenge it in public. The overall impression is that since 1980 politics in Zimbabwe has become the preserve of Blacks while commerce and industry have remained areas of White domination — permitted by the ruling party as part of their policy of reconciliation. Zimbabwean civil society has, therefore, been unable to pursue political objectives beyond spontaneous demonstrations by University of Zimbabwe students or wild-cat strikes by teachers and nurses.

PROSPECTS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN ZIMBABWE

In view of the foregoing, prospects for civil society in Zimbabwe do not appear promising. The possibility of a vibrant civil society in Zimbabwe, at least in the near future, is further diminished by three sets of deep-seated attitudes held by the country's populace. These are: the continued existence of the institutional and legislative prejudices of colonialism which have served as institutional precedents;¹⁶ the persistent norms and

¹⁶ The impact of some of these values and norms has been identified but not critically examined by M. Sithole in his chapter, 'Zimbabwe: In Search of a Stable Democracy', in L. Diamond, J. J. Linz, and S. M. Lipset (eds.), *Democracy in Developing Countries: Volume II: Africa* (Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 1988), 217–57. For an analytical treatment of the impact of

beliefs of traditional society; and the lingering socio-psychology and culture of the liberation war.

Colonial prejudices

The value assumptions of colonial rule did not receive critical attention during the struggle for national independence. Despite the radical rhetoric of nationalism and socialism, the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe degenerated into a fight to remove Whites from power and replace them with Blacks. As such, the only visible political change at and after independence was in the racial composition of the political élite and the civil service. Consequently, and seemingly without any qualms, African nationalists readily adopted the political institutions, legal rules and the bureaucracy of colonialism as if no struggle for independence had ever occurred. Since then Black nationalists have been using their political power to maintain, and in some cases to expand, the oppressive legislation used by the colonial regimes to suppress the political activities of Black Africans. A case in point is Parliament's abuse of the 1971 Privileges, Immunities and Powers Act (*Chapter 10*) to silence the press.

The ruling nationalists have failed, whether by design or by default, to realize that the logic of colonialism was specifically contrived to limit and ultimately to eliminate the political participation of Blacks: that is, to kill civil society. During the colonial period, public institutions were notoriously not accountable to the general public, there was no due process of law and the law was against the majority of the people. Eventually public order could not be maintained because colonial institutions lost their legitimacy and plunged the colonial state into a credibility crisis.

The continued existence of colonial institutions and rules of conduct after independence has cast a shadow of doubt over the meaning of independence and, once again, resurrected problems of the legitimacy and credibility of the political system. This means the door has shut on the possibility and opportunity for civil society to grow on its own in Zimbabwe.

African traditional values

Nationalist claims about the need to uphold African traditional values have played a crucial and clearly defined role in the shaping of politics in Zimbabwe. On the surface there appears to be no problem in upholding African traditional values as part of promoting African identities, whether ethnic or otherwise. The problem, however, emerges when presumed

colonial institutions, see R. Weitzer's 'In search of regime security: Zimbabwe since independence', *Journal of Modern African Studies* (1984), XXII, 529-57, and his *Transforming Settler States: Communal Conflict and Internal Security in Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Univ. of California Press, 1990), 134-89.

African values are used, as they have been by ZANU(PF), to restrict the political space of the individual by giving cultural legitimacy to monopoly politics under the cover of 'national unity'. One belief, however mistaken, that runs deep in the consciousness of African nationalists is that African traditional values demand a system of governance which has one chief and one clan bound together by consensus politics. Disagreement is to be avoided by all means. In this now classical scenario in the politics of nationalist folklore, there is no room for multi-party politics political differences and aspirations are supposed to be argued and ultimately settled under the one political umbrella. The former President of Tanzania, whose thinking on this matter has been followed by many African leaders, argued that 'despite all the variations and some exceptions where the institutions of domestic slavery existed, African family life was everywhere based on certain practices and attitudes which together mean basic equality, freedom and unity'.¹⁷

This deep-seated belief has, somewhat surprisingly, also been embraced by the supposedly revolutionary-minded, militant, would-be Marxist-Leninist politicians such as Robert Mugabe, who, during the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence, unsuccessfully defended the notion of a one-party state in Zimbabwe as a democratic political arrangement true to African tradition.¹⁸ For example, during the 1989 joint congress which united the formerly warring leadership of PF-ZAPU and the ruling ZANU(PF), the top four posts of president, two co-vice-presidents and national chairman were allocated to Robert Mugabe, Joshua Nkomo, Simon Muzenda and Joseph Msika, respectively. To forestall the question of accountability, no election for these posts was allowed. Any challenger would have been denounced and ostracized as being impolite to elders in the party and, therefore, a disgrace to African tradition. The same logic was used in the selection of ZANU(PF) candidates for the 1990 Zimbabwe general and presidential elections. An order was given to aspiring candidates to refrain from running against the top leadership of ZANU(PF) — notwithstanding the fact that the party's constitution explicitly entitles its membership to freely seek election to any party position.

The result of this conduct has been that respect for the high value of individual freedom of choice in the political sphere has been sacrificed. Now not only are those who govern free of accountability and responsibility to those they govern but the space for political action by the individual has been shrunk — resulting in the loss of civil society. Indeed, as has become a truism among Weberian students, traditional behaviour is hardly

¹⁷ Julius Nyerere, quoted in W. O. Oyugi *et al.* (eds.), *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa* (London, Currey, 1988), 49.

¹⁸ *Globe and Mail* [Ottawa], 23 Mar. 1984.

compatible with the processes of a modern democratic state. This is because tradition is, by its very nature, authoritarian.

Values of the liberation war

There can be hardly any doubt that the armed struggle in Zimbabwe was an effective means of defeating oppressive and intransigent elements of colonialism and racism. However, as is often the case with protracted social processes in a conflict situation, the armed struggle in Zimbabwe had a deep socio-psychological impact on its targets and its perpetrators. Although some work on this issue is now beginning to emerge,¹⁹ more rigorous research on the socio-psychological impact of the liberation war on its perpetrators (some of whom are now in power) is yet to be produced. At present, it appears that the armed struggle produced a violent culture of intimidation and fear within the ranks of the liberation movements themselves and among their social base of peasant supporters who found themselves caught in the middle, not only between the guerrillas and the Rhodesian security forces but also between local and domestic conflicts of a non-political nature.

Life in the training camps and during military operations was obviously very difficult, even sometimes unbearable for the majority of young people who took up arms. For example, inside the military training camps discipline was arbitrarily and autocratically enforced by politicians-cum-military commanders who had little or no military professionalism. There was also much internal conflict concerning factors such as ethnicity and personal desire for political power.

Ideological education in the training camps was crudely based on fostering a common hatred. Death was demystified to enable recruits to learn how to kill. The detention and torture of dissidents in makeshift military and refugee camps in the bush was a common feature of the liberation war. Young men and women, many of whom are still unaccounted for, lost their lives in the guerrilla camps under the most appalling of circumstances.

For the most part, the armed struggle in this country lacked a guiding moral ethic and was thus amenable to manipulation by unscrupulous nationalist politicians and military commanders who personalized the liberation war for their own selfish ends. This created an environment of death, terror and fear in the camps and the war zones and later in the guerrilla-controlled 'liberated areas' — to the utter misery of the peasants who also had to contend with equally brutal colonial forces. This resulted in a culture of fear in which violence was perpetrated in the name of nationalism and socialism.

¹⁹ See, for example, N. J. Kriger's *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices* (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992).

Guerrilla psychology opposed the basic tenets of tolerance of individual values and identities in the military training camps and in the operational areas, especially in the 'liberated zones'; in other words, it opposed the formation of civil society. This psychology continued after Independence with the same consequence. This is why peasants are conspicuously afraid of ZANU(PF), particularly during elections: the campaign tactics of the ruling party are based on intimidation and death-threats. Democracy cannot exist in an environment where violence and fear dominate the political process. Something needs to be done with Zimbabwe's political culture.

CONCLUSION

All these facts, together with ZANU(PF)'s drive for a legislated one-party state between 1980 and 1990 which diminished the space for opposition parties, make the prospects of civil society in Zimbabwe appear rather gloomy. The few opposition parties which have managed to exist so far are basically cliques centered on an individual and have no capacity for collective political action. What is needed for civil society to grow in Zimbabwe is the formation of an issue-oriented mass movement which will consider the leadership question as less important than the issues to be addressed. Judging from what is actually happening, it appears that such a movement is already forming at the grassroots level, consisting of underpaid factory workers, exploited farm labourers (some of whom are losing their jobs because of the severe drought), retrenched civil servants, job seekers of all kinds, parents who cannot afford school fees and uniforms for their children, young people who do not believe absurd stories about the alleged achievements of individual nationalist politicians during the liberation war, homeless people, frustrated industrialists, disappointed businessmen, fallen politicians, chiefs dispossessed of their traditional authority and, above all, the ordinary person who is no longer able to make ends meet.

This movement, which is likely to be ignited into political action by the deadly combination of the effects of Zimbabwe's Economic Structural Adjustment Programme and general bureaucratic incompetence, does not need a leader with liberation war credentials. When the time is right, and that does not appear to be far off, the grassroots movement will produce its own leader with post-Independence credentials from among those who have paid the heavy price of independence exacted by nationalist politicians claiming to have achieved great things during the struggle. But all this only points to the beginnings of civil society in the minimalist sense as defined earlier in this article. It is pointless to speculate on the prospects of civil society in Zimbabwe in the other two, stronger, senses at the moment.