Ilija VUJAČIĆ*

DEALING WITH UNCERTAINTIES
(Popper's Conception of Social Engineering and its Inconsistencies)

Abstract: The paper critically examines Popper's conception of social engineering, or piecemeal engineering, in the light of his theory of open society. It is argued that Popper has built an original epistemological and methodological viewpoint of critical rationalism. But his implementation of critical rationalism (arguably valuable for the field of science) on the problem of social change bears a trace of constructivism: imposing some normative restrictions to individual preferences, restricting individual choice and freedom, and putting into question Popper's liberal defense of individual freedom. Popper thinks that it is possible to implement critical scientific thinking through conjectures and refutations in the field of social change and to reach rational consensus about the size and range of social change.

Popper believes that social engineering is taking place in social institutions through free critical thinking, assuming that free critical thinking has the same function in social processes as in the science. So, Popper rationalizes the world too much. Speaking about social science, he holds that there is some kind of analogy between scientific and political problems.

All this make some inconsistencies between his critical rationalism and mild constructivism of piecemeal engineering.

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Karl R. Popper, a well known philosopher of science, logician and methodologist, is often seen as the one who has systematized or at least reformulated liberal creed for the 20th century. Anthony Quinton put him even shoulder to shoulder with Locke and Mill as one of the main systematizers of liberal thought.[1] I think that it is an exaggeration, and that Karl Popper does not have any comprehensive social or political theory of his own. But he has developed a very influential and ar-

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gumentative anti-historicist attitude as well as valuable contributions to critical rationalism, thus creating a common heuristic stand for systematization of his occasional statements about crucial principles of liberal democracy and urgent problems of contemporary society. Thus he has provided "a unifying principle, helping to organize disparate pieces of social diagnosis and therapy into something like a political theory".[2] In other words, there is no systematized social or political theory, but only more or less well organized synthesis of various isolated social and political attitudes about crucial social and political problems of contemporary world, representing rational core of liberalism adapted to contemporary social and political circumstances.

But on the other hand, Karl Popper is very influential, particularly in post-socialist transitional countries of Eastern Europe. If we judge by the number of editions and frequency in citation indexes, *Open Society and Its Enemies* is one of the most influential anti-totalitarian books, particularly in Eastern Europe in the last twenty years. Already in the beginning of post-communist transition Christian Fleck has discovered that of the six most published and cited critics of totalitarianism (Arendt, Hayek, von Mises, Druker, Schumpeter, Lederer), and the *Open Society* was at the second position, after Schumpeter's.[3] But if we bear in mind that the data that Flack uses were for the period from 1980 to 1992, and that since that period there have been numerous Russian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Czech, Slovak, Moldavian, and other translations to Eastern-European languages, it is for sure that today Popper's book is on the first place. Namely, owing to his friend George Soros and the impact of the Soros Foundation in Eastern Europe, Popper and his writings in social and political theory had become the most popular among those searching for the new post-communist path.

Popper has developed his original approach of critical rationalism. Making epistemological and methodological problems his main preoccupation from this stand of critical rationalism, he has evaluated main epistemological doctrines, scientific theories and methodological positions, and so has rightly earned the title of one of the most influential philosophers of science in the 20th century. But from this standpoint Popper has proceeded to evaluate also basic social and political institutions and to build overall defense of liberal political philosophy and social and political order of democratic liberalism. So he himself has admitted that his two basic works *The Poverty of Historicism* and *The Open Society and His Enemies* "grew out of the theory of knowledge" developed in the *Logic of Scientific Discovery* and out of his "conviction that our often unconscious views on the theory of knowledge and

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[2] Anthony de Jasay, *Against Politics – On Government, Anarchy, and Order*, Routledge, London and New York, 1997, p. 109.

[3] Christian Fleck, "Sieg der ‚Offenen Gesellschaft'?", in: *Heinrich Gomperz, Karl Popper und die Österreichische Philosophie,* Hrsg. von Martin Seiler und Friedrich Stadler, Rodopi, Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA, 1994, S. 203–206.

its central problems (What can we know?", and "How certain is our knowledge?") are decisive for our attitude towards ourselves and towards politics"[4]

His epistemological position, developed by rejection of logical positivism on one side and essentialist metaphysical doctrines on the other, represents one of the most important epistemological and methodological positions in the 20th century. But not only that he has carried out a destructive critique of the two dominant epistemological positions of the first half of the 20th century, but his critique has widened to the critique of main social and political theories. [5] So, in difference to other critics of totalitarianism who has analyzed totalitarianism from the viewpoint of political philosophy, social and economic theory, Popper began from epistemology and analyzed philosophy of history which lays in the basis of accomplishing an overall critique of historicist doctrines and in that way hitting the essential and basic, epistemological roots of totalitarianism. In the same way his defense of liberal democracy is also indirect as evolutionary, particularistic and critical reformism. But here also Popper begins and moves foremost on methodological field, adding philosophical and moral arguments in favor of liberal democracy.

So, developing methodological and epistemological conception of critical and "open" science, he transfers it to the field of social and political theory, forming an idea of "open society", which would in social field represent some kind of application of rational critical criterion developed in the field of "open critical" science. With his concept of "open society" Karl Popper became one of unavoidable names, and the idea of "open society" the trade mark of liberal ideas and widely accepted metaphor for liberal society. But the term "open society" has become as affirmative auto-stereotype for that kind of western capitalist social-democratic society which Popper himself praised as "the best and most equitable society that has ever existed in the whole course of human history."[6] It has become one of the most influential metaphors in the processes of social changes of former communist societies, gaining dominant and even monopolist position among concurrent analytical and normative concepts (like "modernization", "civil society", and "spontaneous order") as the dominating reformist concept and guiding principle of reforming leaders in those societies.

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[4] Karl Popper, *Unended Quest. An Intellectual Autobiography,* Routledge, London, 1992 (1974), p. 115

[5] Among such analysts and critics of totalitarianism are Hanah Arendt, Friedrich von Hayek, Raymond Aron, Carl J. Friedrich, R. J. Talmon and Ludwig von Mises.

[6] That it is not Poppers fallacy in time of sharp confrontation of the Western world with communism, nor about optimism with prosperous development of welfare state in the sixties, when he had for the first time exposed his satisfaction with that type of society (cf. *Conjectures and Refutations. The Growth of Scientific Knowledge,* Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 370–371 and 375), it is confirmed with this repeated statement in the addition to the last edition of his intellectual autobiography, written after disappearance of bipolarity in the world. (Cf. Karl Poper, "Postscript", in: Karl Popper, *Unended Quest,* p. 198)

This connection between science and society (respectively politics), which characterizes Popper's thought, is most obvious in his critical rationalism – as the basic epistemological and heuristic attitude and unique procedure, which have to be our guideline in knowing as well as in political acting – and the method of *conjectures and refutations*, or *trial and error*. Namely, in all fields of human acting, for Popper, there is no difference between science and politics: man learns on personal errors, so such proceeding, from basic methodological rule, becomes also the central principle of political acting. This postulate, as basic approach in science and philosophy and basic principle of political acting, is at best expressed in his idea of "*piecemeal social engineering*". So in the center of his understanding of the connection between science and society – in critical rationalism, as well as in his social theory – is the problem of social change.

Rejecting utopian projection of total reshaping of society, based on historicist presumptions about some general law of historical development and on belief in possibility of prediction of future developments, from the assumption of limitation and fallibility of human knowledge,[7] Popper has developed the conclusion that social change which is only realistic and which would not bring catastrophic consequences, is the one which is guided by the conscience about human erroneousness and which lays on the system of trial and error. It is, in one word, mild reformism from case-to-case or step-by-step engineering. Namely, Popper holds that every attempt of overall (comprehensive) "utopian engineering" would be so destructive and involve such extreme measures that the result of such attempt would not be as intended: what would be realized with a comprehensive project of social reconstruction – under which the final aim, in the form of the completely developed plan of a perfect social order directing every intended change – would not be the intended utopia. In fact, with the realized aim the result would even be worse than the fact was before approaching utopian social engineering. Besides this methodological argument Popper introduces moral argument as well: utopian reshaping not only that always requires plenty of time, becoming less attractive with passage of time, but it is unjust that all burdens of change fall on the back of ones, and all the benefits are enjoyed by those who will experience its fulfillment.[8] Because of that the only possible and justified social changes are those which endeavor to eliminate "concrete miseries" from this world and thus justify a gradual and partial, evolutionary idea of liberal society. Rejecting utopian reconstruction and arguing for change "by piece", Popper concludes that it would rather be possible to reach consent about desirability of elimination of particular immediate miseries and "the most intolerable evils", then about some completely distant ideal, which

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[7] This basic attitude about limitations of human knowledge and its NEDOSTAJE REC and erroneousness lay in the basis of his methodological rule about the growth of human knowledge through the process of laying conjectures and its refutation, exposed in various domains of knowledge in articles collected in his: *Conjectures and Refutations. The Growth of Scientific Knowledge,* Routledge, London, 19965.

[8] Karl Popper, "Utopia and Violence", u: *Conjectures and Refutations*, p. 362.

would have strong opposition, making it reachable only with authoritarian means, in which case violence is unavoidable.[9]

That is why he rejects every "social engineering" based on "holistic" and "essentialist" conception of history and replaces it with partial and gradual social engineering, which is not guided by any final end, or with former overall design, but assumes a reform aimed to eliminate the most obvious immediate evils. The basic argument which justifies and supports this idea of social change is just that about limitation of our knowledge on functioning of society, which does not allow for any comprising "engineering", but can ensure restricted – and so testable – partial and gradual changes. Utopist planning is not possible, writes Popper, because we can learn only by system of trial and error and making mistakes and improvements which can be tested by experience, but we have not an experience of such grand-scale social reconstruction nor we have any knowledge of it and we are not in position to acquire that experience and knowledge.[10] Society has to proceed to function in time of any reconstruction and it is one of the main reasons for Popper why we have to change our institutions piece by piece and "plan from case to case" in order to eliminate "the greatest and most urgent evils".[11] Namely, as the basic task of social sciences is the revealing of unintended consequences of human actions,[12] among which the majority is undesired – so, it should rather be feared of their bad consequences, then hope for a happy chance – rational action must always take in consideration the imperfections of our knowledge. From that reason, all the programs of change should proceed by little steps so that these undesired bad consequences could be corrected immediately as they appear and before they produce enormous harm.[13]

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[9] Ibid, pp. 361. Cf. also, Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies,* Routledge, London, 1996, vol. I, p. 161.

[10] Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies,* Routledge, London, 1996, vol. I, p. 162.

[11] That is why he describes the principles of liberalism as "principles of assessing, and if necessary of modifying or changing, existing institutions, rather than of replacing existing institutions" (*Conjectures and Refutation*, p. 351)

[12] *The Open Society and its Enemies,* vol. 1, p. 22; Cf. also: *Conjectures and Refutations,* p. 342; and Ch. 14 of the second vol. of *The Open* Society, pp. 93–94

[13] Popper clearly notices that although traditions and institutions are the work of human acts and decisions, it does not means that they are consciously designed, but that they are an unintended result of vast majority of human actions ("only a minority of social institutions are consciously designed, while the vast majority have just 'grown', as the undersigned results of human actions" (*The Poverty of Historicism*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London and the Beacon Press, Boston, Mass. 1960 2nd ed., p. 65). This is in accordance with Hayek's believing in "spontaneous order", but the difference is that Hayek emphasizes that it is the matter of individual actions which give "collective" results, following Scottish moral philosophers, particularly Hume and Smith, while Popper insists on "unwanted byproducts of such actions". Popper even does not point out the important difference between "wanted" and "unwanted" consequences. He speaks also about possibility of predicting bad re-

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There are plenty of problems which are imposed in this Popper's conception of change.[14] However, here I will stop only on those Popper's attitudes which bear a certain *schmeck* of constructivism, and which in that way put in the question Popperian defense of individual freedom, for it imposes some normative restrictions to individual preferences. The main reason for dealing with Popper's conception of social change is that it represents the central idea his reformulation of liberal doctrine is laying on. As I will try to show, it is not consistent, nor is it in accordance with his conception and defense of the open society.

As it is exposed in his view on social change, Popper in social engineering sees the way for the realization of the improvement of existing institutions and because of that the basic problem of social change is the problem of improvement of: institutions, gains of people and civilization.[15] But what is improvement and how we can speak about the criterion by which we will evaluate does something is really an improvement of institutions? By what means we decide that something is improved? Before we examine this question, which is of decisive significance for evaluation of Popper's view on social change, we will consider the two serious internal difficulties of this standpoint.

The first difficulty is comprised in the fact that he thinks that critical-scientific approach to social problems from the position of critical rationalism can lead to rational consensus about the range and reach of change, in the same way as the problems are solved in science. In this way he completely neglects the impact of ideas and social conflicts. For Popper, namely, the real social problems are not conflicts, because they are not basic, but problems of improvement. Speaking about social engineering he does not mention that it solves conflicts, possibly because he is conscious that such a thing is impossible. The aim of social engineering is to "improve things" and not to solve conflicts, and this improvement of civilization assumes some common social end, like some traditional "common good". Moreover, as it is obvious in his last works, Popper is inclined to a specific rationalistic utopian-

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sults and makes difference between "open" and "closed" society on the basis of that. Moreover, Popper allows even the possibility that one day people would become conscious creators of open society! (*Open Society,* II, p. 94)

  [14]   One of the first and the most basic critiques of Popper's "social engineering" was given only two years after publication of *The Open* Society by Witgensteinian Rush Rhees in the article "Social Engineering", published in the *Mind,* vol. LVI, 1947. This article was latter reprinted in: R. Rhees, *Without Answers,* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1969, and again together with the ninth chapter from *The Open Society* in: *The Philosophy of Society,* edited by Rodger Beehler and Alan R. Drengson, Methuen, London, 1978, pp. 235–249. Similar objections to Popper's concept, comparing it with Hayekian concept of "spontaneous order" were done by John N. Gray in the article: "F. A. Hayek on Liberty and Tradition", in: *The Journal of Libertarian Studies*, Vo. IV, No 2 (Spring 1980), p. 125–126.

  [15]   Rush Rhees, "Social Engeneering", in: *The Philosophy of Society,* pp 247–248

ism, believing that all social problems lose sharpness of ideological conflict and become general social problems, so that compromise is more or less easy realizable.[16]

Second, decisive attitude in explication of step-by-step engineering – since this method allows experimenting and continual reshaping – is that it means "introducing of scientific method in politics ", since the very secret of scientific method is the readiness to learn on errors. But Popper in the same time argues in favor of his method that it assumes "step-by-step compromise", that "systematic struggle" against suffering, injustice and war will be supported with consent and agreement of "considerable number of people." So, he presupposes that social engineering takes place in social institutions through free critique, as free critique has the same function in social processes which it has in science. Popper, namely, rationalizes the world too much. So, when he speaks about scientificness of the humanities he thinks of politics, holding that there is some kind of analogy between scientific and political problems and some kind of methodological parallelism in solving them. Here is also the source of his constructivist conclusion that we can in great measure control the development of social institutions. Here he transfers his finding from the field of science – that science as institution controls its own development and assures its own progress (what is also questionable) – to the field of society and politics.[17] But this parallelism between science and politics is completely erroneous, for free discussion and criticism in social affairs does not have the same function as in science, so neither learning on errors, experimenting and testing of solutions is the same. Social problems are pretty much different from scientific ones, in the same manner as political discussion differs from scientific one, for scientists agree about the nature of argument, but political solutions are being criticized on different grounds and in various manners and evaluated by different standards.[18]

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[16] Karl Popper /interviewed by Giancarlo Bosetti/, *The Lesson of this Century,* Routledge, London and New York, 1997, p. 34.

[17] So, he thinks if we introduce scientific method in other institutions too, particularly political, it would assure their development. With the aid of scientific approach (rational public criticism, rational argument, free discussion, and refutation of misconceptions and wrong conjectures) we will secure their development and be in a position to control our own destiny, scientifically controlling institutions by the aid of social engineering. Popper, however does not give us a proof about validity of this analogy between science and politics. Cf. about it Rhees's article.

[18] Popper seems not to see that the very support of certain political projects and attitudes comes rather from other then rational arguments. It is rather possible to argue the opposite, that rational arguments come only as mere "rationalization" of some different reasons: fears and prejudices, for example, rather then of rational interests, and that people hold some views regardless rational arguments. Since he did not observed solving social problems through the prism of solving social conflicts, Popper could hardly come to the conclusion that for solving social problems, as solving conflicts of ideas, plans and projects, any "rational arguments" could deliver sufficient grounds. For complete critique of this Popperian analogies cf. Rhees, op. cit., pp. 244–247, and Fleck, op. cit., S. 216.

Eventually, even for gradual improvement of society some "plans" are needed, "plans for individual institutions" and individual improvements, as he says, "for protection of the weak", calling that kind of humanism "protectionism". By this we came to the critical point because Popper is not cautious concerning this scope-limited planning, which by itself includes whatever partial, but still constructivist intervention in spontaneous order of actions of individuals with their personal aims, being this planning wider or narrower – and by consequence it means restriction of the freedom of individuals. It poses the question of basic value of "open society", free and responsible individual, for putting in question the responsibility of individual challenges to the very openness of society. That it is so is confirmed when we ask ourselves whose job is reforming social institutions as *scientific* change of society – that is the job of social engineers. Regardless of the fact that step-by-step engineering is eventually step-by-step compromise, something for what we gain "consent and approval of considerable number of people", social engineers, as critical intellectuals who mastermind social change, nevertheless, with their function negate the responsibility of individuals. It is also true that Popper indeed carried the criticism of experts. Namely, thinking about correlation, or even analogy, between science and society, Popper emphasizes the element of fallibility. Scientific knowledge is inherently contained in conjectures and refutations of misconceptions. But still there are people who have solution for certain problem and they can have good ideas on why some "solutions" can work and other not; no one whose words could be authoritative and final can be considered an expert. Hence it is best to show a lot of courage by suggesting new theories and their testing, but being very restrained and cautious in its application – we have to avoid revolutionary changes and use step-by-step improvements instead, because their consequences are easier to escape and they cannot be so destructive in the case when applied theories are erroneous.[19] It is why he wrote that "an open society (that is, a society based on the idea of not merely tolerating dissenting opinions but respecting them) and a democracy (that is, a form of government devoted to the protection of an open society) cannot flourish if science becomes the exclusive possession of a closed set of specialists."[20] However, this is in some discrepancy with the idea that the "job" of social *engineer* (so yet an expert) is to introduce change through rational scientific criticism and to "reform" social institutions, because it implies the existence of professional critics of social institutions. Popper's humanism, or better "protectionism" since it implies protection of "weaker", pretends to universality by posturing itself as politics which is acceptable for all. Although he argues that

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[19] In that case he makes difference between revolutionary method and reformist science: "my *social* theory (which favors gradual and piecemeal reform, reform controlled by a critical comparison between expected and achieved results) contrasts with my *theory of* method, which happens to be a theory of scientific and intellectual revolution. (Karl R. Popper, *The Myth of the Framework. In Defense of Science and Rationality,* (ed. by M. A. Notturno), Routledge, London and New York, 1994, p. 68)

[20] *Ibid*., p. 110.

this humanism is not politics for "society as a whole", defending it probably from every possible connection with abstract utopian humanism, Popper with this care for "the weak" and their "share" practically shows negligence of different ways of life and preferences of individuals. Namely, Popper makes here the difference between those who decide and those who are protected because they are too weak to decide, and in that way he introduces a kind of paternalism. It is clear that decision-making cannot be equal, but if somebody negates whatever decided by the weak, and he does it, than he negates the basic liberal postulate of responsible individual. It is not the society which "controls its own development" (after all something like that is impossible, at least in the manner as Popper imagines it, and if it is possible, it opens the question of the price which freedom of individual has to pay for such control), it is the domination over society by a certain group.

III

Ultimately when we connect this gradual reconstruction of society as a basic type of social change with Popper's critical rationalism, we meet several inconsistencies. For the sake of our argument we will here consider only the two basic ones. Critical rationalism, as an epistemological-methodological position and "gradual construction of society" as the principle of social philosophy (as application of critical rationalism in society and politics), presupposes full openness of the concept of open society. What is, however, the relation between critical rationalism and social engineering? How much of control of social development is involved in Poppers concept of "improvement" of social institutions? It seems that Popper is not ready to accept consequently evolutionist attitude in social development because of possible "unintended consequences" and results. After all, in research of these non-intended consequences he saw the very task of social science.

Basic feature of critical rationalism is anti-constructivism, which negate philosophical privilege and political preference of any normative ideal and does not allow the possibility of outside control of spontaneous order of action, nor imposition to individuals whatever collective purposes, and therefore restriction of their freedom. On the other side, "social engineering", as application of critical-rationalist method to society, involves a certain measure of constructivism. So Popper here speaks about social technology, where technological approach to social changes would suppose solving practical problems in order to improve the existing institutions, without determination of any final aims. In difference to utopian engineering, which recommends reconstruction of society as a whole under some in advance tailored global blueprint, piecemeal engineering represents "blueprints from case to case" or "blueprints for single institutions".[21] Here it is obvious that for Popper the main problem is still *the scope* of change. In his opinion, we introduce little changes here and there in hope to improve our institutions and make them function more in accordance with our aims. Just as we gradually improve our tech-

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[21] *Open Society,* I, p. 159.

niques and materials moving up the functioning of a machine, in the similar manner we have to improve our institutions. What it is, however, what says us whether we have improved our society by some change? The decisive question here is whether piecemeal engineering and reforming of our institutions presupposes some normative ideal in advance, on the basis of which we realize the wanted change and make judgment whether it was realized, whether we have been improved the institution? Does the improvement of institutions – in order to be more in accordance with our "purposes" – implies that there is some normative framework, in purposes which we are to achieve, which is imposed to individual acting? Is it possible at all to speak about reform and improvement, and not to have any assessment criteria, not to accept any ideal of society as a whole? Popper is right in rejecting any ideal plan of perfect society. However, does not he himself hold such a kind of ideal, which could be rationally imposed to individuals?. Namely, in avoiding constructivist assumptions which every overall planning bears with itself, and in that way impose some privileged image of society as a whole, Popper proposes short-term and gradual improvement of institutions, assuming that such planning does not bear any constructivist charge. But, when you look at his list of actual problems ("the most intolerable evils … poverty, unemployment, national oppression, war, and disease"),[22] it is obvious that this in scope limited planning presupposes some social ideal, some normative ideal which has a priority over individual preferences and individual choice (and that is social-democrat ideal of welfare state)[23]. It seems that Popper does not escape the main difficulty of utopian constructivism, although diminishing its totalitarian consequences. Namely, concreteness, partiality, brevity and vigilance of little steps[24] and "political drug" which he proposes for creation of institutions for protection of economically weak,[25] clearly indicate that there is a certain normative ideal of society as a whole standing behind them.[26] It represents a constructivist attitude, for solving these problems in the way Popper proposes is not possible without intruding preferences of individuals. Such assumption about correction of bad consequences as soon as they arise is okay, but Popper's considerations of immediate evils indicate to a certain comprehensive and extensive care, which orders caution when applying the solutions in order to prevent unwanted aftermath *in advance* and bears requirement for prior idea of what

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[22] *Conjectures and Refutations,* pp. 361–361; 370.

[23] About Popper's defence of welfare state cf. Karl Popper /interviewed by Giancarlo Bosetti/, *The Lesson of this Century,* op. cit., pp. 33, 36–37, 75–76.

[24] *Conjectures and Refutations,* op. cit., pp. 361–362, 370–371, and 375.

[25] *The Open Society,* II, p. 125

[26] Moreover, Popper speaks with emphasized sympathy about actual economic system as "economic interventionism", as economic match to "political protectionism", which is "economically complement", in difference to "uncontrolled capitalism" of the 19th century. (*The Open Society,* II, fn 22, p. 330). The very connection between this two is much more questionable than it follows from his analyzis. Moreover, it presupposes an absolute priority of political over economic decisions.

is unwanted in order to avoid possible irrational preferences of individuals in constructivist way. Such previous setting of limits to individual preferences in form of some normative ideal means its privileging and as such external intervention in spontaneous order of action, which negates individual freedom. Purposive plans, collective aims and intended political actions, as a part of privileged normative picture of welfare state (which are doubtless in the basis of his "social engineering") are a part of constructivism and represent the very essence of constructivist attitude. The very idea of state intervention is of this nature, for it gives to state the powers which transcend the rule of general rules or "legal framework" which he otherwise accepts as the limit of intervention. Instead of spontaneous actions and freedom of action which is the basis of the concept of open society and hence its anti-constructivist roots, Popper introduces mild constructivism.

As it has been shown, it seems that Popper is not ready to accept that liberal change of open society presupposes spontaneous order of action. Social change for which he stands would not be any spontaneous, evolving course. For "social engineering", principal unpredictability and uncontrollability of spontaneous action is unacceptable. The reason is in the fact that for Popper spontaneous development according to preferences of individuals threatens with possible "harmful" consequences, it means with irrational decisions. Moreover, his idea of social engineering does not allow some partial, corrective supplement or polishing of spontaneous development by some constructivist actions liberally defensible, for engineering of little steps, as he represented it with a certain normative ideal in mind, in principle rejects the idea of spontaneous development. Hence his idea of social change represents a rationalist controlled order of action.[27]

So his concept of open society shows itself at the end as a controlled open society, being somewhere at the border between closed society he criticized and spontaneous order which is supposed with open society. Comparison between Popper's concept of open society and Hayek's concept of spontaneous order clearly shows mild constructivism of Karl Popper.

Therefore, aware of the dangers of overall constructivism, Popper stands for solving problems from case to case, but social engineering is hardly defensible from the point of view of spontaneous order, as consequently individualistic and liberal, which defends freedom of individual action. Freedom of individual in Popper's scheme is under the net of "situational logic", social management and rational normative decisions, and so in certain measure cramped and restricted. Namely, Popper bases his *pledoier* for social engineering on "situational logic",[28] which repre-

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[27] Comparison of the concept of "open society" with Hayekian concept of "spontaneous order" is a good way for pointing out to Popper's mild constructivism.

[28] In short, the logic of situation (for which Popper uses concepts: "situational analyses of social situation", "logic of social situation", and "situational logic") could be defined as a structure of action composed of non-intended and non-predicted consequences of our actions, and analysis of situation or its reconstruction enables its explanation. As the way of social analysis, particularly appropriate for historical researches, situational analysis is un-

sents an assurance from "irrational" (what means, uncontrolled) actions of individuals who act according to their personal (not only rational, but also "irrational", both legitimate) preferences. Situational logic appears there as a network that lets only 'rational' behaviors, based on rational structure of propensities. For, priority that Popper gives to situational logic over preferences of individuals, cannot be explained other then as imposing of some normative rational pattern of behavior to individuals out of fear that their free choice according to individual preferences would not always be "rational". Popper did start from the knowledge that basic social institutions are not an intended result of human actions planned in advance, but, on the contrary, non-intended and unplanned consequences of spontaneous order of individual actions. Nevertheless, introducing a social engineer, who approaches rationally to social institutions as means for achieving certain (collective) goals and judges them from the standpoint of suitability, Popper places a possibility of conscious planning and control, which, whatever limited scope might be, represents narrowing of individual choice, because it presupposes imposition of a certain order to individuals, ignoring the fact whether they want it or conceive it as right. This could not be liberally defended! Moral justification which Popper introduces here (as "care for the weak") allows some kind of imposition, which controls and reduces spontaneous – according their inclinations and individual life plans guided – conducting of individuals and represents a normative projection which has a priority over real preferences of individuals in question. Social engineer from the position of rational scientist seems here as the one who knows better than individuals in question what their original inclination is. Thus it repeals every spontaneity of individual's actions according to their personal preferences in the name of rationally acting social engineer who knows what is good for society as a whole.

With such distrust in spontaneous order of action, despite his devotion to individual freedom, Popper does not show especially a high level of respect for individual inclinations and preferences, but requires some idealized rationality which is imposed to individuals in order to eschew potentially irrational inclinations and decisions. Thus he sets up additional political restrictions and in this way confirms his basic attitude on priority of political over economical reasons. Popper's deeply continental European social liberalism or even social democratism induces him to set up some kind of political ideal endeavoring to convince us that it is in accordance with the conception of open society. This stand is unavoidably constructivist, and deeply in contrast with his main heuristic approach of critical rationalism.

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doubtedly a useful methodological approach. Popper emphases that he had come to this concept under the influence of Hayek's notion of the "logic of choice". (Cf. *The Open Society,* I, p. 163, and particularly the essay "Models, instruments and truth" in: *The Myth of the Framework,* pp 154–184, particularly pp. 162–168). However, the meaning of the logic of situation outside of this methodological notion, as "having in mind" of "social framework" of individual conduct, shows itself as obstacle and limitation of individual freedom.

IV

The idea of methodological and cultural individualism in the meaning of relaying on individual and his life plans as a basis for freedom of individual and its responsibility for his own wellbeing is one of the main Popper's contribution to liberalism. His critique of historicist theories, as epistemic root of totalitarianism, there is no doubt, has contributed to liberation from some prejudices and pointed out to deep significance and responsibility of some epistemic, axiological, and anthropological abstract ideas for concrete manifestations of slavering and totalitarianism. In his writings, Popper has highly appreciated liberal values and principles of liberal democracy such are the rule of law, constitutionalism, separation of power, institutions for disenabling of tyranny, restriction of discretionary power and so on, which individually and as a whole create valuable ideas of the liberal concept Popper is standing for. Nevertheless, how this general liberal attitude relates to his idea of social engineering. From that isolated idea of improvement of society and his appreciation and explanation of liberal values and principles, we cannot conclude that he has any developed social or political theory. He is a philosopher of science, logician and methodologist, and not social or political thinker. In this field he has not given any systematized work. (Neither *Poverty* nor *Open Society* are after all works in this fields, but epistemological critiques of historicism.) Maybe it is the reason for numerous inconsistencies and wrong analogies between science and society. In that sense even *The Open Society* can be considered as indirect declaring about individual and separate issues of society and politics in the light of the critique of historicist doctrines. But there also, as in other latter texts, particularly in *Conjectures and Refutations,* his specific sensibility for social and political theory restricts to philosophical and epistemological argumentation. It, normally, does not mean that Popper is socially and politically incompetent, but his methodological and epistemic attitudes, and they only form the content of the *Poverty of Historicism*, does not yield any social theory, but only an epistemic and methodological standpoint.[29]

Popper's liberalism bears features of his main concern – critique of totalitarianism. His whole social attitudes are connected to his clash with totalitarianism, foremost in its basic epistemic, and then, axiological and anthropological presuppositions. From this reason, his non-systematic reinterpretation of liberal doctrine through critique of epistemic roots of totalitarianism, represents indirect derivation and defence of liberal values. Namely, criticizing right and left totalitarianism Popper has indirectly expressed his attitude about almost all elements of liberal doctrine. Such indirect defence and formulation of liberal doctrine will affect the very Popperian liberal idea, which has followed from the critique of totalitarianism as an antithetic comprehension of liberalism. Liberal-democratic doctrine, or better, democratic liberalism of Popper is therefore enabled by the critique of historicism and holism.

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[29] Christian Fleck, op. cit, S. 215.

Popper has founded his liberal doctrine on negative political values, reversing utilitarianism from the request for maximizing of good to negative request for elimination of evils. As philosopher of science, Popper defends democratic liberalism which he stands for on methodological grounds. Starting from such grounds, Popper concludes that absolute political principles of freedom, tolerance, democracy and sovereignty are logically defective. This modified utilitarian ethics produces rejection of absolute political values and enables him to create very influential social and political "diagnoses and therapy".

When however we proceed behind his occasional statements, Popper's social and political views show numerous inconsistencies, and his positive ideal of liberal-democratic society shows certain insufficiencies in form of "mild constructivism", inconsistent with his concept of "open society".

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