

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE  
THOUGHT OF KARL POPPER AND ITS PHILOSOPHICAL  
IMPLICATIONS TO CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES

BY  
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Musasia Reuben

(August, 1998)

***DEDICATION***

This thesis is dedicated to my deceased mother, Rachel Chavalangi Musasia.

## *ABSTRACT*

This study has attempted to examine the problems associated with change in the society. These problems revolve around the change strategies of how change has to be initiated, instituted and managed in the society. It is the aim of this study to establish or not whether the pursuit of change under certain guidelines can guarantee progress in the stages of societal development.

This work was necessitated by the apparent lack of a clear-cut approach in the pursuit of social change. Change is not a new phenomenon but as it is at now, no method has been recommended as best suited in this pursuit. This fact was seen as creating the need of re-assessing of the whole issue with the anticipation of resolving this problem.

To facilitate this research, textual analysis was undertaken. Despite lack of adequate relevant philosophical works, the researcher employed the tools conceptual and dialectical analysis coupled with implicational analysis to arrive at among other conclusions the following:-

1. Society is a man-made entity, open to modifications in the event of its members deeming it necessary.
2. Individuals in the society must play a prior role in as far as the initiation, institution and management of change is concerned.
3. Social change is the anticipated fate of all societies that profess to be open.
4. Social change must assume the "piecemeal social engineering approach" as opposed to the "utopian social engineering approach" as the best methodology of pursuing change.

5. Social change pursued on the basis of rational discussions is a manifestation of progress in the stages of societal development.

It is hoped that this work shall provoke a deep sense of reflection on the existing social change strategies. This will serve well as a lasting contribution to scholarship especially if the recommendations made at the end of this work are upheld and perpetuated.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Any debate bordering on the concept of change in general and that of social change in particular is of crucial significance in the contemporary world order. This is envisaged in the much talked about "wind of change" which is looming everywhere and whose pace seems to be getting faster as days elapse. This study analyses the philosophical social thought of Karl Popper and then attempts to establish the philosophical implications it might bear to contemporary societies.

Karl Popper contends that society is a man-made entity, subject to modifications in the event of its members deeming it necessary. As such change in the society is inevitable, but what is crucial is that, it has to be brought under the control of its members. Further, Popper contends that the pursuit of social change is a manifestation of progress in the stages of societal development. This position contradicts the view that, change in the society threatens it with both political and moral degeneration and hence, the need of arresting all change.

This study takes a lot of trouble to establish the strong philosophical foundations upon which Popper based his conclusions about social change. Further, it attempts to establish whether Popper is offering a new dimension upon which social change may assume, or he is just amplifying the thoughts of his antecedent philosophers.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The pursuit of change in the society may suggest either a generative or a degenerative trend. Generative change pre-supposes progress in the stages of societal development, whereas degenerative change entails regress in all societal institutions. Popper strongly contends and advocates for the pursuit of change that manifests progress in the stages of societal development.

This view contradicts the position that the pursuit of change does not necessarily guarantee progress in the society.

Popper views society in mechanistic terms, i.e. a man made entity, that is subject to modifications by its members. This view contradicts the organic theory of the society which holds that society is a natural growth of which individuals have no control over its growth.

Further, Popper rates highly the "piecemeal social engineering approach" as opposed to the "utopian social engineering approach" as the best suited methodology of initiating, instituting and managing change in the society.

These views contained in the philosophical social thought Popper are controversial and that they posit a great philosophical tussle. It is for this reason that, this study attempts to give them a further philosophical insight. It is thus hoped that this study will attempt to resolve these controversies by critically examining Popper's contentions and then gauging their tenability before endorsing them.

### ***HYPOTHESIS***

In our study we were guided by the presupposition that social change inspite of its inescapable setbacks manifests a progressive trend in the stages of development of the society. We thus in our research wished to establish whether this position inferred from popper's contention about social change is or is not the case.

### ***RESEARCH OBJECTIVES***

This research project was aimed at realizing the following objectives:-

1. To define the concept of social change and then examine the philosophical implications it might bear to our contemporary societies.
2. To demonstrate that Popper's social theory is a logical consequence of his epistemology.
3. To attempt a clear and concise nature of social change while pointing out the major lessons

we may learn from Popper's cognisance of the same.

4. To discuss the concept of progress in the light of Popper's conception of social change.

### ***JUSTIFICATION AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY***

One characteristic feature that emerges when we talk about social change is that, it is not a new phenomenon. It is an important concept that borders on the every day living of man in the society.

This being the case, there is need of placing the concept in its rightful position. This can be done by encouraging the vast majority of individual members in the society to develop interest in its enhancement. This is by developing their critical attitude to the prevailing circumstances in the society through rational discussions. When this is done satisfactorily, an enabling environment will be created that will go a long way in shaping the destiny of the society.

This study takes alot of trouble to create such an environment with the aim of making our societies a better place to live in. The changing nature of things in universe and the ever-escalating demands of man, require that we adjust ourselves accordingly, if we do not want to remain victims of the prevailing circumstances.

The researcher has thus attempted to show the role that a theoretical study (philosophy) can play in reflecting upon how the pursuit of change may assume. This is, in itself, a lasting contribution to scholarship and the growth of knowledge in general.

### ***OPERATIONAL TERMS***

This section attempts the operational definitions of the key terms used in this study. This is important in the sense that it will enable the reader to understand the context in which this terms are employed. This section attempts the operational definition of social change, closed society open society, democracy, piecemeal social engineering approach, utopian social engineering approach,

## Historicism and epistemology.

### (a) *Social change*

The phrase social change is used here to designate a step-by step process through which society is gradually transformed from a closed state to an open one. The process takes a rational path that renders the entrance into the open society possible. As such the phrase is used to indicate a progressive trend that the society undergoes in our social change pursuit endeavors.

### (b) *Closed Society*

The term closed society is used here to depict a society in which social institutions are not recognized as being man made, but held as the inviolable supernatural parts of the order of the universe. Members of this society are not allowed to develop their critical powers in the sense that, this kind of society is synonymous with a dogmatic society where members are compelled to accept what is said to be true without questioning.

The closed society is thus identified with a primitive society that exists in charmed circle of unchanging taboos. It is a conservative society that ensures that, all that is done is aimed at maintaining the status quo. This renders the closed attitude to social life possible given that, avenues of free discussions are completely dissuaded. It is a society that adhere to the rules that endure, which bar members from pursuing certain modes of life as being divine and they should not be questioned, whatsoever.

### (c) *Open Society*

This phrase is used here to define a society in which individuals are confronted with personal decisions and nothing stops them, if they choose, to develop their abilities to the fullest extent. In this society, institutions are so ordered and recognized as being man

made. This means that in an open society, institutions can be modified on the basis of logical evidence in so far as it is in the interest of its members. This society encourages an open way of thinking and that the scientific attitude is recognized. It is a society that creates an atmosphere which allows for the freedom and brotherhood of all men in uplifting their living standards.

This society should not be identified with a democracy but as a society which combines the desirable elements from either democratic and totalitarian system of governments.

(d) ***Democracy***

This term is used here to designate a system of government that is committed to the preservation of free institutions and that, it can without self-contradiction defend them against attacks, either from any direction, whether from the minorities or majorities.

(e) ***Piecemeal Social Engineering***

This is an approach to social change that considers the planning and construction of institutions with an aim of controlling or quickening the impending social evils. This approach starts by examining institutions as they are, in what ways they work badly and then introduce reforms to make them work better. It is, therefore, used as a recipe of distinguishing what is considered to be the admissible from the inadmissible plans of social reforms. The approach suggests that social change must be piecemeal or partial and that it should advance through trial and error and it becomes more effective and successful as practical experience accumulates. Popper is a proponent of this.

(f) ***Utopian Social Engineering***

This is an approach to social change that suggest that there is no need of tinkering with this or that institution, but what has to be done is to reconstruct the entire fabric of the society. It is holistic in orientation in the sense that, it is concerned with the society as a whole and

not any particular institution of the society. Plato is a proponent of this.

(g) ***Historicism***

This is the approach given to the social science which assumes that historical predication is their principle aim, and which assumes that this aim is attainable by discovering the rhythms or the patterns, the laws or the trends that underlie the evolution of history. Marx is a proponent of this.

(h) ***Epistemology***

It is the branch of philosophy that studies knowledge. It is derived from two Greek words "episteme" and "logos", which means the science or the theory of knowledge. In this work epistemology is understood to suggest that, we should always attempt to objectify our knowledge by replacing our old positions with new ones so long as it is justifiable.

### ***RESEARCH METHODOLOGY***

This study was largely a thorough going library research. Despite lack of adequate relevant philosophical books, the study analyzed works of Popper himself, works on Popper in the form of criticisms and commentaries and other relevant works such as newspapers, journals and unpublished manuscripts to extract useful information.

Given that this study was theoretical, the researcher employed the tools of analytical philosophy, coupled with implication analysis to assess, evaluate and update the findings of this study.

### ***SCOPE OF THE STUDY***

The nature and scope of the concept of social change is wide. For the purpose of our current study, we have restricted ourselves to Popper's image of social change, with reference to his political programme in the society. In doing this, we have considered Popper's contention of how

the principles of justice, liberty and sovereignty are celebrated in a society that is changing.

### ***LITERATURE REVIEW***

Popper's social philosophy emerges as a logical consequence of his epistemological thought. Popper advanced an evolutionary approach to the problem of knowledge. In his *conjectures and Refutations*, (1963), Popper argues that scientific knowledge proceed from conjectures (guesses) which are restricted by a continuous attempt to refute them. Further, in his *Objective Knowledge*, (1972), Popper views the quest for knowledge as a dynamic endless process which develops thorough perpetual attempts at refutations. From the foregoing therefore, we can argue that Popper views the pursuit of knowledge as an open ended on going process where new theories replace old ones as a way of attempting objectivity in knowledge. Popper's epistemology is reflected in his social philosophy, especially when he underscores the pursuit of social change to top the position of the society in general and that of its members in particular on the basis of rational evidence.

In *The Open society and It's Enemies*, (1975), Popper distinguishes the open society from the closed society as follows:

..... In what follows magical or tribal or collectivist society will also be called a closed society, and the society in which individuals are confronted with personal decision as the open society 1

Just on the same distinction, Maurice Cornforth in his book, *The Open Philosophy and The Open society*, (1970) conceives of an open society as:

... a society where there is nothing to stop individuals, if they choose, from developing their abilities to the fullest extent, and when institutions are so ordered that they can be changed and developed by decisions of the society, in any way that will assist individuals to live freely and fully. 2

He also understands a closed society as:

A society where the members of society are bound by rules and regulations, conventions and prejudices, strictly enforced which restrict their choices and impose on them a pattern of life rigidly limited by institutions which may not be changed.<sup>3</sup>

From this distinction, Popper's conception advocates for an open society. An open society encourages an open way of thinking to its members. On the contrary, a closed society is characterized by a system of dogmas leading to a corresponding closed attitude of social life. The closed society according to Popper, impose rules, regulations and tyranny of custom, enforced by political severity, which effectively close for individuals and society as a whole, all avenues of free discussions that can lead to remarkable progress in the society. Further, Popper observes that a closed society fails to develop the critical attitude of its members on certain traditional taboos and custom that are dogmatic, hence, the closed society closes all doors to all change.

Heraclitus in his theory of universal flux seems to have supported the idea of change especially when he argued that "everything is flux and that" you cannot step twice in the same river for fresh waters are always flowing upon you. "4. Parmenides, on the other hand seem to have denied change as he held that "everything is permanent". These two great pre-socratic thinkers had a diametrically opposing philosophy about change, but they are relevant to our study by virtue of initiating a critical debate about change. They did not, in their philosophy qualify whether, or not change entails progress. The debate was taken up by their successors, who applied it in different dimensions, and for our case here in the social circles.

Plato in *The Republic* does not deny that change do actually occur, but he conceived of change in the society as marking a general degenerative trend that threatened not only political regression, but also moral decadence. According to him, change was not for the better, hence his attempt to arrest all change in society. Plato postulated an "Ideal state" as a measure of arresting change. To constitute his conception of justice, Plato advocated for a highly regimental class

society where its members were to respect their station in life; for instance, rulers to rule, soldiers to defend and workers to work. Plato's position contrasts that of Popper in as far as social change and progress related. This might partly be the reason as to why Popper was hostile to the views of Plato.

Aristotle in the "Metaphysics" seems to have conceptualized change as indicating the achievement of higher status by the thing that has changed. He argued that "whatever is, is in the process of becoming", changing from its potentiality to its actuality, and in turn the actuality becomes a potentiality and the process goes on ceaselessly towards its perfection. From this we can deduce that although Aristotle conceived change in metaphysical terms, his conception is relevant to our current study since it manifests change as marking a progressive process towards the attainment of a higher stage by the thing that has changed. This position is significant to our study especially if we equate the closed society to be a potentiality of the open society of which in this sense is an actuality.

As noted earlier, Popper's social thought is grounded in his epistemology and that he advocates for a society which opens the doors for its members to critically analyze and only administer changes on the basis of rationality. Because of this we feel that Paulin Hountondji's article "Philosophy and its revolutions" in the book *African Philosophy: Myth and reality, (1983)* History cannot be stopped, more than that it cannot be neutralized and its surprises cannot be reduced.<sup>5</sup>

This can be interpreted to mean that society should not be seen as being a system, since a system is always closed ended of which society is not. The existence of a society relies on a to and from conception of free discussions from one generation to another. This position alludes to Popper's contention that change in the society is inevitable especially if its members, on the basis of rationality, consider it to be worthwhile.

Karl Marx offered a materialistic explanation of how society progresses from one mode of production to another. His dialectical materialism insinuate that:

The world is not be comprehended as a complex of ready made things, but a complex of processes in which things apparently stable, no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts go through an interrupted change of coming into being and passing away, in which inspite of all seeming accidents and all temporal regressions, a progressive development asserts itself in the end.<sup>6</sup>

His compatriot Engels developed this further by arguing that:

What is true of nature, which is hereby recognized also as a historical process of development, is also true of the history of society in all its branches and the totality of all sciences which occupy themselves with things human.<sup>7</sup>

Marx recognized five stages through which the society progresses; communalism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism and socialism as a transitory stage to communism. Although Popper impute Marx, just like Plato and Hegel, of being Historicists, the thoughts of Marx are significant to our study, since they demonstrate that societies do actually change. A change from one stage to another entails a progressive trend towards a much higher state of the Society. Popper identifies social change with progress as Marx does, but they differ in the sense that Marx approaches it from a materialistic angle whereas Popper on the basis of Rationality.

Bennis in the introduction of the book The planning of change (1969) argues that:

.....this world of ours is a new world in which the unity of knowledge, the nature of human communities, the order of ideas and the very notion of society and culture have changed drastically and will not return to what they have been in the past.<sup>8</sup>

Bennis seems to recognize that any change is just a modification of what has already been there because what is new is a matter of a change in the quality of the thing that has undergone change. Bennis further argues that:

In one generation our knowledge of the natural world engulfs, upsets and complements all the knowledge of the natural world before.<sup>9</sup>

Bennis might be right because the techniques we live with multiply and escalate so that the world is bound together by communication. This combined with the growth in human understanding, his skills and his sweeping powers, change in our societies are inescapable. For our research purposes, the changes we are advocating for is that which is supported and justified by rational evidence.

In the analysis of the foregoing literature review, we have only pointed out what we consider to be relevant aspects to our study that, social change inspite of its unavoidable setbacks manifests a reformative trend in the society. We have based our research on the above outlined positions to draw the philosophical implications that Popper's conception of social change can point towards our contemporary understanding. It is on this foundation that we have evaluated Popper's contention of the concept of social change by counter checking it with the positions held by his antecedent philosophers about the same. We finally intend to establish whether Popper is offering us a new dimension of pursuing social change or he is just amplifying what had already been said about the same by his front runners.

#### NOTES

1. See for Example Popper, K.R., *The Open Society And Its Enemies*, VOL 1, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London (1966) P. 173.
2. See Fore Word, Maurice Cornforth, *The open philosophy and The open society*, p.6. especially when he attempts to distinguish an open from a closed society.
3. *Ibid*, P.6.
4. Quoted in *A Treasury of world Philosophy* by Dagobert Runes P. 495.
5. *African Philosophy Myth and Reality*, "Philosophy and Its Manifestations", Hutchinson University Library For Africa, London, 1983, P. 74.
6. Ludwig Feuerbach and the outcome of classical Germany philosophy, Cambridge

University press, London 1966, P. 159.

7. Ibid; P. 159.

The Planning of Change, Colt Reinehart and Winston, NewYork, 1969, P.1.

8 Ibid; P.1.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *2.1 SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND*

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part highlights the social and intellectual background of Karl Raimund popper. This is aimed at introducing to us who popper was and at the same time enable us understand why he developed his thought in the way it is presented in this work. The second part discusses the fundamental ideas that characterized his philosophical thought, especially his epistemological thought. This is aimed at attesting to our second objective that Popper's social thought is a logical consequence of his epistemology.

Popper was born on the 28th July 1902 at Himmelhof in the Ober St. Veit district of Vienna in Austria. He grew up in a properly enhanced family of a scholarly and thriving father and a mother who was a talented composer.

His father Dr. Simon Siegmund Carl Popper was a doctor of law at the University of Vienna. His scholarly attitude had a strong pointer towards Popper's intellectual development. It made him develop an immense concern to the social problems and the social needs of his people of Austria. He was craving for the day that could see Austria liberated from the ever increasing German Chauvinism. This point is crucial in the sense that although Popper was reacting to what his contemporary society was suffering from, his contention is of great philosophical implications if we can grasp and make it pertinent to our contemporary conditions as we shall attempt in the subsequent chapters.

Popper was only twelve years when the First World war broke up in 1914. This had a direct influence to his intellectual development, necessitating him to develop a critical attitude towards accepted opinions, especially political opinions. This in itself marked an important chapter in his phases of career advancement; a career of critically analysing what was otherwise considered

to be the case, on the basis of logic in order to justify their foundations and at the same time validate what they profess to accomplish in the society.

For nearly ten years after the First world War, Popper was a student at the University of Vienna where he read mathematics and physics, psychology and philosophy. In 1928 he received a doctorate degree and in the ensuing year he qualified as a secondary school teacher where he taught physics and mathematics.

Popper was involved in left wing politics as he continued to earn his living as a school teacher. His chief absorption continued to be social work, music and philosophy. By this time he was at variance with the fashion prevailing of the logical positivism or the vienna circle. In fact, Otto Neurath, a member of the circle nicknamed him "the official opposition" and this made him to be an odd one out. He found it impossible to get his early books published in the form he wrote them. His first seminal published work Logik Der Forschung published in 1934 was a savagely cut version of a book twice as long. This was because it contained what have since become the generally accepted arguments against logical positivism.

The reality behind Popper's thought was of a historical nature. There were agonized debates about the political strategy and morality in which they were a seed bed of much of his later political writings. He came to fore see, with much depressing accuracy, the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany. This was followed by a European War in which his native land was on the wrong side. Popper left Austria before this happened. His stay, especially in New-zealand and later in Britain acquainted him with societies that he describes in his major political work; The Open society and Its enemies (1966) as the open society. Popper was convinced that he had no right of sitting in the judgement of anybody else apart from himself. He set to himself the task of attempting the problem of what to put in and what to leave out in as far as the pursuit of knowledge is concerned, as he confesses in the Unended quest(1974) that:

...it was my master who taught me not only how very little I knew, but also that any wisdom to which I might aspire could consist only in realizing the infinity of my ignorance. 1

Popper is here inferring this from the socratic teachings and influence that it is self defeating to contend that you know everything when in actual sense you do not know who you are, hence the Dionysian doctrine of "Know thyself". It is also an indication of Popper's devotion to the doctrine of fallibility, not only in the quest of objectivity in knowledge but also in all spheres of life, as we shall later have a chance of reeling it as we discuss his conception of social change and its philosophical implications to the political programme in a changing social setting. At the end of it all, the message that is to be conveyed in this Popperian confession and of which we undoubtedly contend with, is that, if we are to arrive at knowledge that is characteristically objective in orientation, we need not hold anything to be infallible.

In 1934, he published *Logic Der Forschung* which had a decisive influence to his intellectual development of launching this career as a philosopher. In 1936, he proffered a lectureship at the Canterbury College, Christchurch in New-Zealand that he undoubtedly accepted. He left Vienna together with his wife in 1937 for his new appointment and stayed there for the duration of the second World war. He returned to England after he had been appointed to a readership in the London School of economics and Political Science. He stayed at the school for twenty three years as a professor in Logic and Scientific method. During his stay, he had a memorable impact on the whole generation of students who in his lectures and seminars were invited to share in his inextinguishable fascinations with the open universe and the unlocking of its secrets. He was knighted Sir Karl Popper in 1967. Popper retired in 1969, greatly honoured and continued to endure a modest and unassuming life, hard working as ever at Fellowfied, his home in Buckinghamshire.

Looking at life in general, Popper was perplexed by the problem of infinity of things in the universe. Questions such as what is the genesis of life and what is its destiny pre-occupied his thought process to an extent that he felt the need of addressing himself to them from an intellectual angle. This is partly the reason why he took issues with the problem of essentialism as best characterized in the thoughts of his antecedent philosophers; those of the logical positivism tradition in general and of Ludwig Wittgenstein with his linguistic analysis in particular. Essentialism is the position that attaches a lot of importance to words and their meanings in order to qualify them to be either meaningless or meaningful. The problem of essentialism as understood by Popper; the position of never to argue about words and their meanings appears to be his first philosophical failure and indeed it is this position that separates him from his contemporaries. On the contrary, Popper appears to be advancing a view that is instrumental if at all we can agree that we so far know where we came from by virtue of the fact that it is an already lived life, but we do not actually know where we are heading to. This is grounded on the fact that if we hold to the view that definitions are universal and, hence, necessary is tantamount to arguments that are specious and insignificant and allude to Popper's anti-essentialistic exhortation of:

Never let yourself be goaded into taking seriously about words and their meanings. What should be taken seriously are questions of fact, theories and hypothesis, the problems they solve and the problems they raise.<sup>2</sup>

This position is very crucial in that it plays a pivotal role in our understanding of how Popper conceptualizes social change, and the message he wishes to pass to us regarding the political programme of a society that is changing. One thing that is important to mention at this point and of which we shall revisit later in chapter three is that, Popper's conception of social change is virtually an amplification of what had been said by his front runners, but he succeeds in developing and perpetuating its knowledge so much so that, an understanding of society in our present generation will be incomplete without borrowing the rich ideas found in his thought.

In his early studies, Popper made an attempt of drawing a line of discontinuity between dogmatic thinking and critical thinking. After a careful study of the state of knowledge that was successfully adopted in time, Popper became convinced that what makes any knowledge to be valued as true knowledge is its ability to offer to its practitioners practical consequences. That knowledge should also have the power to rule out or exclude the occurrence of some events that can be detrimental to its practitioners, hence his maxim that "the more the theory forbids, the more it tells us". It is this conviction that made Popper to contend that dogmatic thinking pre-supposes a pre-scientific stage in the development of knowledge.

This pre-scientific stage as it is always the case with anything prior is necessary if critical thinking is to be possible, for critical thinking must have before it something at least to criticize.

The significance of the distinction between dogmatic and critical thinking will be made clear as well shall be discussing the difference between the closed society and the open society. His contention and of which it is a recurring theme throughout this thesis is that dogmatic thinking should forthwith be discouraged from the circles of intellectual development, but before he passes this verdict, Popper gives dogmatic thinking a very strong philosophical basis before dismissing it. This is a clever way of criticizing something not necessarily from its weakest point but from its strong point instead. This is characteristic of all his criticisms whether of concepts such as democracy and historicism or of personalities such a Plato and Marx.

Popper advocated for learning without ordination with an intention of dismantling the cynicism of David Hume. what Popper means by this is that the best way to learn is that which proceeds from trial and error. This is not a matter of random trials but that of trials in the trial and error procedure. As he argues:

The trials as a rule are not determined, or not completely determined by the problem, nor can they anticipate its (unknown) solutions otherwise, then by a fortunate accident.<sup>3</sup>

Although Popper advocates for a trial and error procedure in our learning process, these trials can as well be said to be blind to the solution of the problem. For the purpose of clarity and for this reason, therefore, he calls for the need of introducing the application of a critical method, which is a method of error elimination after our pursuit of trials with the need of objectifying our knowledge. This method is equal to a creative or inventive thinking which is a combination of intense interest in some problem and thus in readiness to try it over again with highly critical thinking, and even with readiness to attack presuppositions which for less critical thoughts determined, limit the range from which our conjectures can be selected.

This is an indication that gives us an initiative of imaginative freedom that allow us to see far unsuspected sources of error and possible prejudices in the need of critical thinking and examination. This in itself is a revolutionary way that Popper introduces in our thinking process; that of placing logic over psychology, if in any case we would wish to attain knowledge that tends towards objectivity.

From the fore-going paragraphs concerning Popper's early life, early influences and intellectual development, the view that the method of critical thinking be given priority in all our pursuits has been greatly underscored. It is through the same that we shall tie Popper's contention of how social change is to be pursued in the society so that at the end of it all remarkable progress is to be achieved. Popper advocates for change that puts at its heart the canons of rational scientific inquiry as the vehicle of ensuring that the change recommended and the change pursued is systematic and progressivism in vogue. What Popper is exactly saying of which we allude to, is that, more often than not, change instituted on the basis of rationality is an evidence of a critical process of error elimination in the society. A society that pursues this type of change is what he calls "the open society", whereas that which pursues the contrary he calls it "the closed society".

In concluding this sub-chapter we want to point out that if anybody can take note of how different theories have been advanced throughout the history of philosophy one can undeniably allude to Popper's contention. One crucial thing that emerges is that most of the theories which are among the supreme achievements of human mind in the evolution of society are the offsprings of earlier dogmas plus critical criticism. As for this, therefore, Popper contends that our greatest instrument of progress in the society should be rational criticisms of already established opinions. This provides us with an intellectual tool that can enable us pursue change; change based on critical discussions.

## **2.2 POPPER'S EPISTEMOLOGY**

Popper qualifies to be an all round philosopher by virtue of bordering on the he subject matter of all the major branches of philosophy, for instance epistemology, logic metaphysics, ethics, philosophy of science and social philosophy. His works started to appear after the period that succeeded the first world war. The prevailing conditions in his contemporary Austrian society, the state of knowledge at that time, coupled with his intellectual development strongly influenced his philosophical way of looking at everything in the universe in their entirety.

The Logic of Scientific discovery was published in 1957. It first appeared as Logic der Forschung in 1934, but it took long before it was translated into English. This is a piece of work that discusses the methodological principles of falsification as a criterion of drawing a line of discontinuity between science and pseudo-science. On this thesis, Popper suggests that we can realistically hope for approaching truth gradually along a chain of better approximations. This in a nutshell suggests that the quest for truth whether in the he sciences, or in the social sciences is not a factor of any specified duration, but a continual process whose end is not easily attainable. It is out of this work that Popper succeeded in coming up with his subsequent works.

The *Objective knowledge* was published in 1972. It is an epistemological piece of work that Popper wrote after studying human knowledge so closely. This work depicts Popper as being both a fallibilist and realist in relation to the quest of knowledge that can be regarded as having an objective outlook. In this work, the major theme is that, any knowledge whether scientific or theoretical is exposed to objective criticisms. It is on the basis of such criticisms that knowledge systematically grows.

The approach indicated in this work is that which is evolutionary and it underscores pragmatic preference more than anything else in the search for objectivity in our knowledge. The work appears as a reaction to the growth of the futile attempts of David Hume to destroy empiricism by introducing the skeptical approach to the problem of knowledge. Further the work shows that we should not rely on any theory in order to categorically assert that it is only from it that we can realize practical action. Popper's contention is that no theory has so far been shown to permanently hold true:

The fundamental problem of the theory of knowledge is the clarification and investigation of this process by which it is here claimed, our theories may grow or progress.<sup>4</sup>

This position suggests that, we should always be open minded men, always eager to learn and take a bold interest in the growth of knowledge. This argument bears a lot of weight especially when we look at Popper's social philosophy as having been a logical consequence of his epistemological thought.

In 1963 he published *Conjectures And Refutations* as basically a philosophy of science piece of work, though treated in an epistemological procedure. The theme contained in this work is that, scientific knowledge proceed from conjectures or guesses and are restricted by a continuous attempt at their refutations. It holds that, any knowledge at any given time should only be held provisionally, since the quest of knowledge is an open ended on going process, where new theories

replace old ones as a way of attempting its objectivity. The major lesson in the work is that, we should not be goaded into believing that any knowledge, especially scientific knowledge is free from criticisms and improvements. Any theory is only held with esteem at that moment when it serves the desired ends of its users, but when it fails to deliver the goods, it ceases to be worthwhile, hence the need of replacing it with another superior theory which might in itself be not completely new, but a modification of the previous one.

In *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1971), Popper wrote this work in two volumes. In the first volume Popper takes Plato as one of a supreme example of a philosopher of a political genius whose political theory embodies a wish to return to the past and he calls it "The spell of Plato". The second volume contains a corresponding critique of Marx as the supreme philosopher whose theory projects into the future and he calls it "The High Tide of Prophecy". This work is Popper's defence of freedom against authoritarianism and authoritarian ideas. It emerges also as a warning against the dangers of Historicist tendency as best exemplified in the critique of Marxism.

Both volumes grew out of the theory of knowledge as expressed in the *Logic of Scientific Discovery* and out of Popper's conviction that our often unconscious views on the theory of knowledge and its central problems (what can we know or certain is our knowledge) are decisive for our attitudes about ourselves and towards politics.

Popper suggests in this work that, the open society is attained by developing the critical attitude of its people. Reason is the vehicle through which the closed society is slowly changed into an open one. Because of this, therefore, Popper argues that, for the society to be open, every suggestion put forth should be left open for its members to evaluate it. The propounders of such suggestions should be ready to be criticized and also be in a position to criticize themselves. Generally this work is strongly advocating for the extension of the critical attitude of reasonableness as far as possible, hence the initiation of critical rationalism in the society as we clamor for changes.

In the *Poverty of Historicism* (1957) Popper describes the historicism as the approach that has long been given to social science and which assumes that historical predication is their principal aim. In this work, the argument that this aim of social science is attainable by discovering rhythms or laws or models or propensity that underlie the evolution of history is discussed at length. From this, Popper derives his conclusion that the historicist approach is responsible for the unsatisfactory state of the social science compared to the progressive and the satisfactory state found in the pursuit of physical sciences. Before passing his verdict Popper develops historicism as a well knitted philosophy before advancing his criticisms.

Further, Popper characteristically discusses among other things; historical laws, historical prophesy, piecemeal social engineering versus utopian social engineering and the methodology through which the institution of change in the society should follow.

The Unended Quest is basically his autobiographical work that highlights his early life, his early influences, his intellectual development and generally his philosophy.

Popper launches an onslaught on the conventional epistemology which has studied knowledge in a prejudiced sense as he says preface to the Objective Knowledge (1976):

The essays in this book break with a tradition that can be traced back to Aristotle - the tradition of common sense theory of knowledge. I am a great admirer of common sense which, I assert, is essentially self critical. But while I am prepared to hold to the last essential truth of common sense realism, I regard common sense theory of knowledge as a subjectivist blunder. This blunder has dominated western philosophy. I have made an attempt to eradicate it, and to replace it by an objective theory of essentially conjectural knowledge. This may be a bold claim but I do not apologize for it.<sup>5</sup>

Popper has characterized the underlying pattern of continuous development of knowledge by propounding a tetradic schema:

**P1 -> TT -> EE = P2**

where **P1** is the initial problem, **TT** the tentative theory or trial solutions provided, **EE** as the

process of error elimination applied to the solution and **P2** as the resulting solutions with new problems. this schema is essentially a feedback process and not cyclic, for **P2** is always different from **P1**. A complete failure to solve the problem teaches us something new about where its difficulties lie, and in any case offer us with what minimum conditions are which any solution for it must meet. This eventually alter the entire problem situation.

This formula is not dialectical in any Hegelian or Marxist sense by virtue of the fact that it regards contradiction as distinct from criticisms and as something that cannot be accommodated on any level, and still less appreciated. This schema incorporates the most fundamental ideas of Popper. He placed a strong saddle on it and rode it into many different fields of human inquiry, and where he did not, his followers have often attempted to do so. Popper conceded that this, formula cannot be applied to mathematics and logic. Music to a great deal in connection with his early studies in History of Music shaped his idea about problem solving.

Virtually all processes of organic development whether literal or metaphorical and all learning process can be looked at in this way, even the process by which human beings get to know each other. A psychiatrist Anthony Store arrived at the conclusion that:

When we enter a new situation in life and are confronted by new person; we bring with us the prejudices of the past and our previous experiences of people. These prejudices we project upon the new person. Indeed getting to know a person is largely a matter of withdrawing projections; or dispelling the smoke screen of what we imagine he is like and replacing it with the reality of what he is actually like.<sup>6</sup>

What is crucial about this methodology is that, it focuses interests on problems, not only for oneself but in ones appreciation of the effort of others. A task does not begin with the attempt to solve a problem. It begins with the problem itself and with the reasons for it being a problem. This means that one has first to learn to work hard and long at the formulation of problems, before switching his attention to the search of possible solutions. This is because one's degree of success

in the search of possible solutions is often determined by his degree of success in the formulation of problems. For instance, if a sovereign's principles are studied, the most crucial question to ask is what does his principles profess to solve? This may sound an obvious question but rarely do people address themselves to it. They instead tend to ask what does he mean by his principles?. This has some weaknesses because at the end of the day we only think that we understand what he is saying without actually seeing the point of saying it.

Another consequence is the realization that complex structures (intellectual, social or administrative) are only to be created and changed by stage, through a crucial feedback process of successive adjustments. From this the notion that an ideal society can be created from a blueprint is an illusion which can never be actualized. Among other things, this evolutionary view leads one inevitably to a concern with developments over time. For instance, the history of science, or of philosophy, is seen not as a record of past errors, but as running arguments, a chain of linked problems and their tentative solutions with us in the present walking forward, if we are lucky, holding one end. This approach renders the sense of personal involvement in the history of ideas possible. (This qualifies Popper to have been a philosopher of a passionate scholarship).

Further a consequence of always proceeding from problems which are rarely problems can be drawn. The idea is the commitment to ones work so that it can have what existentialists call "authenticity" which is both an intellectual and emotional involvement. The problem here is the work of not necessarily identifying oneself with the conventional distinction between subjects, in so far as attempts of trying to solve it is manifested.

This conception has a deep intellectual implication in that, if learning and growth and development proceed through the submission of expectations to the test of experience and the acknowledgement of areas of conflict on purely an intellectual level, then we cannot, in our process, be able to make an absolutely fresh start. For instance, if it were possible for a man to start from

the beginning, he would get, by the time he died no further than the Neanderthal man. These are facts which people of radical mind are intensely reluctant to face. Before we, as individuals, are even conscious of our existence we have been profoundly influenced for a considerable time by our relationship with other people who have complicated histories, and are members of a society which has an infinitely more complicated longer history than they have. By the time we are able to make conscious choices, we are already making use of categories in language which has reached a particular degree of development through the lives of countless generations of human beings before us. In Popper's thought he does not at once say, but we can infer, that our being itself is the direct consequence of a social act realized by two other human beings whom we are feeble to choose or thwart, and whose genetic legacy is built into our body and personality. We are social creatures to the inner most centre of our being and that the notion that one can begin anything at all from the scratch, free from the past, or indebted to others is conceivably more wrong.

This truth extends to intellectual and artistic activities of every kind. The very possibility of making marks on the surface, or producing noises, in order to express or communicate was only reached after countless evolutionary ages. As such any body who imagines that he is going back to the beginning is mistaken. This is because in everything we do, we inherit the whole past, and however much one might want to make ourselves independent of it, there is no way in which we possibly can. This gives tradition an inescapable importance as where we have to start from if only by reacting to it. Usually the way we make advances is by criticizing it and effecting changes; we use tradition, we ride forward on its back. This means that we have to learn to study what people are discussing in order to establish where the difficulties arise by taking interests in disagreements. It is important to study the problems situation of the day before picking up and trying to continue a line of inquiry which has the whole background of the earlier development behind it. This follows logically from what Popper says:

In the academic field an individual becomes concerned with what is happening when he comes on the scene. His criticism or proposal or solution put forward has to be formulated in language before it can be tested or even discussed. When it is put in language it becomes an objective proposal since it can be argued about, attacked, defended or used without reference to the man who put it forward. This underlines one very important appeal of the need of objectifying our ideas in language. This is because while they are only in our heads, they are barely criticizable.<sup>7</sup>

This is to mean that the public formulation of theories usually leads to progress, since any argument about them is again an objective matter. This is because unless a theory put forward has been rigorously tested it cannot be adopted as forming a true basis of knowledge.

In this private individual sense, most human knowledge is not known by anybody. It exists only on paper. For example, the desk on which a researcher writes on is surrounded by shelves of reference books. These books constitute knowledge of a prodigiously useful kind which is in active use everyday. At the end of it all, that individual scholar who dedicates his life to creating his own works or scholarship makes notes usually copious from all sorts of documents, books, works of reference and so on, and writes his work from these notes. In actual sense he does not know everything in his book. This is because he cannot spool off all the statistical tables, dates, pages, endorsements and so on: he cannot quote all excerpts word for word; and, indeed the whole points that he cannot recount his own book. They are only on paper and not in his head. This is why Popper places his objective knowledge in world III which is comprised of libraries and record systems and filling cabinets which is nevertheless knowledge of a more or less valuable and useful kind. It is objective in the sense that its status as knowledge and its value and usefulness are independent of whether there is anyone who knows it in the subjective sense. Hence, knowledge in the objective sense is knowledge without a knowing subject.

Popper's epistemology is best represented by his principle of falsifiability which is in contrast with the principle of verifiability, that was to the very heart of the logical positivism the

criterion of demarcating science from pseudo-science or meaningful from meaningless statements as he says:

I thus felt that if a theory is found to be non scientific or metaphysical is not thereby found to be unimportant or meaningless or non sensical. But it cannot claim to be backed with empirical evidence in the scientific sense although it may easily be in genetic sense the result of observation.<sup>8</sup>

Here Popper is trying to change the traditional view of developing our knowledge based on; observation and experiments, inductive generalizations, hypothesis, attempted verification and proof or disproof with his own based on problem, problem solution, for instance, a new theory, deduction of testable propositions from the new theory, tests, for instance observations and experiments and the preferences established between competing theories to give a new model of scientific research. Popper also relegates the method of induction, for instance, the method of basing general statements from accumulated observation of a specific instance.

For Popper the growth of scientific knowledge consist in the endless process of adding new qualities to the existing body of knowledge. His major dissension is that empirical generalizations though not corroborated as may be done in metaphysics, ethics and theology are falsifiable. For him scientific law should be tested in such a way that they are systematically refuted, for instance, although a number of observational statements reporting observations of white swans allow us logically to derive the universal statement: "All swans are white", one single observational statement reporting one single observation of a black swan, allow us logically to derive the statement: " Not all swans are white". In this important logical sense empirical generalizations though not verifiable, are falsifiable. This means that scientific law are testable inspite of being unprovable. They can be tested by systematic attempt to refute them.

This makes it possible for us to attempt the distinction between the logic of the above situation and the implied methodology. The logic is, if a single swan which is black in colour has

been observed, then it cannot be the case that, all swans are white. In logic we look at the relation between statements, a scientific law is certainly falsifiable although it is not conclusively verifiable. Methodologically however, this is different, for, in practice, it is possible to doubt a statement because there may have been some error in the reported observation. In the example above, the bird in question, might have been wrongly identified, or we decide, because it is black, not to categorize it as a swan but call it something else. So it is possible for us to refuse without self contradiction, to accept the validity of an observational statement. As such, we can as well reject all falsifying experiences whatsoever, but since conclusive falsification is impossible at the methodological level it is a mistake to ask for it.

Popper proposes as an article of method, that we do not systematically evade refutation, whether by introducing ad-hoc hypotheses, or ad-hoc definitions. This is also the case when we always refuse to accept the reliability of bothersome results or any tool that we use in formulating theories that are puzzling. When theories are of this kind, they are exposed clearly to possible refutations. Although, this is the case we should not abandon our theories so lightly for this will involve a too uncritical attitude towards tests. It is better to defend our theories to the furthest point possible so that whatever emerges at the end of it all will be a rigorously tested result. This makes Popper to be rated as highly critical falsificationist at the technique of methodology and this is why much misunderstanding of his philosophy has been a factor that sprung out of the failure of his critics to appreciate the distinctions between Logic and Method.

Popper's methodology is that which leaves knowledge as an open-ended pursuit. From each successive formulation of our theories, results that are derived go beyond the existing ones. For him, a theory or hypothesis, whether true or false, would tell more about the world than we yet knew. This can be tested by devising confrontations between its consequences and new observable experiences. This means that even if we discover that what the things it told us were not the case,

this would be a new discovery since it would append to our knowledge and it would start all over again the search for a better theory.

This, in a nutshell, is the way Popper views the advance of knowledge. If we are to verify any advanced theory by accumulating confirming instances of it, we shall come to find out that there are so many. But this will not prove the truth of that theory nor increase the probability of its being true. Worst of all our accumulation of confirming instances would itself never give us reason to doubt, let alone replace, our original theories. Although this is the case, our knowledge would have not grown as it has, unless in our search of confirming instances which in themselves hit upon counter-instances. Such an accident is the only best thing that we can hope for when we always attempt to offer a suggestion to a situation at hand. This is crucial in the sense that all we now hold on as being the basis of our knowledge, have been a factor of accidental derivations.

The only reason that we can give for all this is that the growth of our knowledge is a factor attributed to the process of identifying the problems of the day coupled with our attempts to solve them. This process entails the formulation of theories which, if they are to provide possible solution at all, they go beyond our existing knowledge. This implies that the bolder our theories are, the more they go into offering solutions to our existing problems. Boldness of theories has a great deal of the daring act of imagination of its practitioners. This is why most changes (suggesting progress) we currently have in the world are a factor deeply entrenched in the creative imagination and the depth of insight involved by their advocates. This, therefore, suggests the need of developing our independent minds and thought as we choose from competing confirming instances of our theories if we hope to solve the problems of the day.

This is exactly why we allude to Popper's view that what we call knowledge is of its nature provisional, since it has only the tendency of solving our immediate needs. At the other instance, that knowledge might not hold enough water to offer solutions, and therefore, the need of updating

it by modifications. At no stage are we able to prove with required certainty that what we "know" is true, since it is always possible to prove that it will turn out to be false. Indeed, it is an elementary fact about the history of mankind that most of what has been "known" at one time or another has eventually turned to be not the case. As a remedy to this, what we can do, however, and this is important is to justify our preference of our theory over another. This will shown that, at each stage of theory formulation and reformulation, we shall be able to show that, it is preferable to the preceding theory. This is because nothing in the world of reality is permanently established or nothing is unaltered since every thing is changing all the time.

The rationale behind this is that we normally base our decisions and expectation on the "best of our knowledge" and this presupposes that, the truth of that knowledge is for practical purposes. This is because by adapting the use of that knowledge, we should never lose sight of the fact that at any time, experiences may show it to be wrong, thus the need to revise it.

On this view, the truth of our statements according to Popper means its correlation to the fact. His notion of truth proceeds as follows:

Our concern in the pursuit of knowledge is to get closer and closer to the truth, and we may even know that we have made an advance, but we can know if we have reached our goal. We cannot identify science, but we can know if we have reached our goal. We cannot identify science with truth, for we think that both Newton and Enstein's theories belong to science, but they cannot be both true, and they may well be false.<sup>9</sup>

From this, we can argue that no theory can be relied on to offer to us the final truth. The most we can ever say is that, it is supported by every observation so far, and yields more and more precisely than known alternatives. As such, we should always aim at improving on our understanding by formulating alternative theories on the already existing ones. This is a factor attributed to the fact that our quest for knowledge remains an open ended process whose end is not easily attainable. This evolutionary approach to the quest of knowledge is crucial if we, in any case would wish o understand what Popper means by social change. This also goes a long way in

propagating our understanding of what is meant by an "open society". The distinction between "The Open society" and "The Closed Society" is explicitly made in the next chapter.

#### *NOTES*

1. See Unended Quest, Williams Collins sons and Co. Glasgow, 1974, P.1.
2. Ibid. P.7.
3. Ibid. P. 46.
4. Ibid. P. 78.
5. Objective Knowledge, O.U.P. Elly House, London, 1976 (preface).
6. The "observer", Magazine, 12th July, 1970.
7. Conjectures and Reputations, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1965, P. 129.
8. Realities of Social Studies, New Haven Conn; Yale University Press, 1956, P. 430.
9. Modern British Philosophy, Oxford University Press, London, 1966, P. 78.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.1: ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

This chapter attempts to analyse the concept of social change in an epistemological manner. It is aimed at enabling us realise our first objective of showing what we understand by social change.

In the analysis of social change with regard to Popper's political programme in the society, it is imperative to give the general problem of change an epistemological approach. With this we mean giving the problem a historical survey of how it has been conceptualized through the major phases in the history of philosophy; for instance, from the Ancient classical time down to the contemporary period. But before this is done, a discernment of what Popper means by social change has to be highlighted.

According to Popper, social change is a step-by-step process through which society is transformed from a closed state to an open one. This does not essentially mean that there are societies that are in actual sense open, whereas others are closed, but an inclination that suggests that, no matter how much we can figure out a society to be open or closed, there is even a greater crave of intensifying the opening up process so that, in the final analysis, members of the society can live a notably elaborate and explicit life. Popper views society as a man made entity, subject to modifications by its members when they consider it necessary on the basis of logic. This mechanistic view of society pits social change as the anticipated fate of all societies that profess to be open. In instituting the desirable changes in the society, Popper places the cannons of rational scientific procedure at the fore-front as the best methodology through which such ends can be realised. This suggests that, in instituting any change in the society members should at length discuss critically the proposals advanced to gauge their desirability and tenability before endorsing them.

As such social change in this context should be understood as a rational way through which the open society is entered into. Popper observes that, the process has a long history that was started by the Greeks with the breakdown of Aristocracy, but as matter of concern, it appears as if very little progress has so far been made several thousand years later. What Popper expects us to grasp from this comprehension of social change is that, the transition from a closed society to an open one is the deepest upheaval that men of rational being must pursue. As he says:

The transition takes place when social institutions are first consciously recognized as man made, and when their conscious alterations discussed in terms of their suitability for the achievement of human aims or purposes. Or, putting the matter in a less abstract way, the closed society breaks down when the super natural awe with which the social order is considered gives way to active interference, and to the conscious pursuit of personal or group interests.<sup>1</sup>

What Popper means by this is that, in the closed society, institutions are not recognized as man made, but are held as fixed and inviolable parts of the order of the universe. If this is the case, therefore, they can not be impeded with, leave alone discussing how they can be altered. On the basis of this, the reason why most societies remain closed in an ever-changing world order may be grounded on the fact that the recognition of societal institutions as being man made has not entered into men's head consciously. This can partly be attributed to the level of literacy in the society, but this is one observation that we will clarify later that, if our that, if our societies are to be made open on the guidelines advanced in Popper's conception of social change, then it is the duty of every society to ensure that its members are knowledgeable enough to facilitate the pursuit of critical rationalism. Other factors that stand as hinderance to the same should as a matter of necessity be done away with. As Popper argues:

The chief thing that has continued to obstruct our going forward with conscious and rational alteration of institutions "for the achievement of human aims of purposes" has been the dead weight of pre-historic beliefs left over from tribalism and elaborated by enemies of the open society as doctrines treating institutions as other than man-made.<sup>2</sup>

In a nutshell, Popper's image of social change is based on his mechanistic view of society. Further, he recapitulates social change with progress inspite of some inescapable setbacks that might crop up in the transformation strategy. Social change, therefore, manifests progress in the levels of societal maturation.

The treatment of the general problem of change by the Pre-socratic thinkers is very instrumental of all we expect to give the concept of social change a logical analysis change can be understood in three different versions; for instance generative degenerative, and cyclical change. Our major concern is mainly the generative change although we cannot disregard the other two versions. Generative change is the type of change that when it is pursued a progressive trend is registered by the thing that has changed. On the contrary, degenerative change is that which symbolizes that the change process a thing is involved into threatens it with a regressive trend. Cyclical change, as mostly held by historians, is the view that any change pursued does not yield anything new, but only a recurrence of what had already happened or what is it to be repeated intime.

The great Pre-Socratic thinkers; Heraclitus and Parmenides attempted the problem of change each from a different angle, but on the basis of logical analysis. The two in actual sense made the problem to be a logical one compared to their fore-runners who included among others Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras Xenophanes, Pythagoras, and Democritus. The two, Heraclitus and Parmenides had a diametrically opposed philosophy about change, but out of the same they provided for a strong foundation upon which their successors based in their analysis of change in different dimensions.

Heraclitus in his thoughts seem to have patronage the idea that change is a reality which in

as far as the world of cognition goes, it is inescapable whatsoever. This can deductively be inferred from his theory of universal flux. According to this theory, Heraclitus observed that there is no stability in the world since everything was in a state of flux. He even supported this further by saying that you cannot step twice in the same river for fresh water will always flow upon you. From this position, change according to Heraclitus, is a phenomena that we cannot escape no matter how much we would wish to avoid it. What he meant by everything is in flux is that, only do things find rest in change although as it is always the case some changes dodge our aptitude to notice them and yet they do actually occur. If this is true then everything in the universe, must of necessity undergo change, and this might account for why Popper maintained that society being a segment of the universe should follow suit, if in any case it has to satisfy the escalating demands of man.

Parmenides on the other hand developed his theory of change on the basis of what he developed from the teachings of Xenophanes who held that, the real world is one and that it always remained in the same place, never moving. To Parmenides, this meant that the world was one, undivided, homogeneous and motionless. The implication here is that there is no change and that any world of change is an illusion. As such Parmenides did not support the idea of change and just as his name might suggest, he held that "everything is permanent". This means that, what is not, is not and that what is not does not exist. This position made the problem of change to be even more complex especially if the three puzzles of Zeno can be evaluated.

The problem of change proceeds as follows; How can a thing change without loosing its individuality? If it remains the same it does not change, yet if it changes it loses its individuality, then it is not that thing that has changed. This reformulated problem of change sounds to be fascinating story but in actual sense it has a strong hint towards what we mean by social change. If institutions in the society are man-made then they have to undergo modifications, and when they

are modified, do they remain as the same institutions or they become something else? If we may illustrate this we can say that cold water changes to be warm after boiling it, but we do not say that cold water changes when it is substituted for it by warm water. As such as we talk about social change, we do not mean substituting the existing social institutions with others, but only ameliorate on the already existing ones. This is because any change is a change of something, or change presupposes something that changes and for our case here, it should also presuppose that while institutions are changed, they must remain the same institutions but with additional qualities.

If this is the case therefore, change must be seen as an actuality, and since an actuality is the realization of a potentiality, then change anticipates a progressive trend of that thing that has changed and this is manifested in its developmental stages. This can be supported by the conjectural argument advanced by Heraclitus that:

It is not in the nature of man to possess true knowledge, though it is in the divine nature. He who does not expect the unexpected will not detect it; for him it will remain undetectable and unapproachable.<sup>3</sup>

This calls for they need of all men of rational inclinations to be in a position of expecting what they do not otherwise expect. The positive side of this is that, in case it is occasioned, they cannot be taken by surprise. This calls for the need of confidence as we offer suggestions for the appropriate changes to be pursued. This means that whatever we do or say, is subject to scrutiny and criticism from others. What is crucial and can be learnt from the same is that of having intense interest of practicing internal criticisms if we expect whatever we come up with to withstand the "hostile environment" that is characterized by "harsh criticisms". This logically follows from what Democritus meant when he said that, "nothing do we know from having seen it, for the truth is hidden in the deep". This is an indication to show how hard it is to instantly arrive at the truth of anything and hold on to it as enduring the test of time. It is on the basis of endless attempts that we

can come closer to what we can otherwise call the truth. It is from this understanding that Popper saw the need of practicing critical rationalism as a way of realizing progress in our attempt to know the world and in improving our social settings had consideration in the thought of Popper as he is quoted to say:

We do not know, we only guess. If you ask me, how do you know?, I only propose a guess. If you are interested in my problem I shall be most happy, if you criticize my guess, and if you offer counter proposals, I in turn will try to criticize them.<sup>4</sup>

It is upon this understanding that Popper developed his evolutionary approach to the problem of knowledge. subsequently, it is from his theory of knowledge that he built his social and political thought.

From this early Greek tradition there are a number of conclusions that we can make which will go a long way into elaborating the concept of social change according to the thoughts of Popper. There is an indication for the tolerance of criticisms, and the insight of criticizing dogmatic assertions is greatly earmarked. Another feature is that which put to a break the dogmatic tradition which permits one doctrine and in its place the introduction of that which permits the pursuit of a plurality of doctrines. This approach attempts truth by encouraging critical discussions.

### ***3.2 SOCIAL CHANGE AS A WAY INTO THE OPEN SOCIETY***

From the fore-going, the contention of popper is that of finding our way into the open society. This is a noble undertaking for it enables us to remain human beings and not beasts. Social change based on justified rational grounds renders the opening up process of our societies to be a progressive involvement that guarantees a meaningful living to its members. He is opposed to the closed state of the society as he characterizes it as:

A primitive tribal society, which lives in charmed circle of unchanging taboos, of laws and customs which are felt to be inevitable as the rising of

the sun or the cycle of seasons, or similar obvious regularities of nature.<sup>5</sup>

In such a society the scientific attitude is highly dissuaded in that its members are conditioned to think that the rules that endure and which bar them from pursuing certain modes of life are seen as divine and so they should not be questioned whatsoever. In such a circumstance no attempts are made to change anything and if anyone chooses to question, then he is punished for his audacity. A closed society ensures that the lives of its members are regulated to an extent that the picture that characteristically emerges is that of the replacement of personal responsibility with the collectivist responsibility. This means that, an individual is reduced to the capacity of a spectator in the process that he is actually supposed to be a participant. To ensure that this is not violated, such rules are strictly enforced, so that individuals do not savour the freedom of exercising personal judgement to what is right and what is wrong. This leads to a dogmatic attitude which renders a closed social life possible. What this means is that, men in a closed society are not free to develop their critical powers and this is exactly why Popper rates such society inconsiderate to human virtues. To curb this, he strongly advocates for the need of giving up the enchanted way of life in order to let-free the pursuit of rational outlook to speed up the opening up process.

The need of having our societies open is advantageous in the sense that every member will be free to deliberate on situations of public interest. The issue of deliberating on the insinuated proposals makes the outcome to be more refined although that does not mean that, that is the end of refining it even further. Although few people originate a strategy, we are all able to adjudicate it, and this is feasible only in a societies that endure for the same.

What Popper means by an open society is that which allows for its members to be confronted by personal decisions. This gives room for the new faith in reason which was highly admonished by the scholastic thinkers of the medieval period. It also devises an atmosphere which

allows for the freedom and brotherhood of all men to uplift the standards of their society, so that it can fulfil their demands. A society is open when individual members of society are constrained by no externally imposed custom in forming judgements, and when not only is each individual responsible for their own actions, but exercises his independent judgement in approving or disapproving public policies. To make such a society work, reliance is not placed on the inviolable law of custom or on the dictates of traditional or any other authority, but on faith in reason, freedom and the brotherhood of all men.

On the basis of this, the faith in reason that Popper strongly underscores in the pursuit of social change suggests that we should always be ready to advance into the uncelebrated realm of knowledge even if that realm is insecure, or uncertain, so long as we have good reasoning to enable us venture into what has not been so far discovered, and thus perpetuating our intention of ensuring that, we do not remain slaves of the prevailing circumstances, but their master instead. If we can agree with popper, whom I undoubtedly think that he is right, then, the position that society is an open-ended entity that individuals have to play a prior role, then this enable us to objectify our societies.

Popper can rightly be described as a philosopher who had a strong faith in the open society, and a strong admittance for the love of individual freedom. His doctrine that society progresses from stage to stage by inexorable necessity teaches us that, personal decisions count alot, for this is always associated with the responsibility of what happens. This makes it possible the pursuit of critical judgement of reason in order to change the world and make it a better place to live. This alludes to the teaching of Karl Marx that, the work of philosophy should be to change the world so that at the end of it all, remarkable progress should be realised in a multi-dimensional manner With this in mind therefore, the struggle for the open society remains a live issue that all, men everywhere should undertake to render it successful.

This notion of social change investigates the conditions of enhancing individual freedom and security, so as to enable us shape the social, political and economic destiny of our societies. It calls for proper planning of our social strategies, so that when they are put into practice, members of the society cherish their living standards, a part from also being mindful of those who are yet to be born. In doing this, they way mapped out should be in such a way that it does not allow for the return to the conditions that characterize the closed society. We consider this view to be worth of serious consideration because it tries to use such map to yield what we can otherwise describe as the desirable ends in the day-to-day living of man in the society.

His two volumes of *The Open Society and Its enemies* Popper advances information about how to further social change in order to get rid of some shortcomings that threatens the well being of the society. For social change to bear progressive results as Popper puts it, the consciousness of institutions as man-made is very crucial. The implication that follow from this is that, what man has made, he can improve on it for the sake of human breakthrough and human happiness. This is to be achieved systematically and the process should value the activity of every individual part of the society at large. If this is to be the case, therefore, we should remain contended that any society that has institutions and ideologies that oppress individuals and yet it professes to be open should be relegated as bottom hangovers from the beasthood that drag making backward to the "State of Nature" in the Hobbesian terms.

Social change as the struggle for the open society is identified with a rational attempt to alter institutions to suit the demands of man by suppressing collective demands. The idea is that individuals should not be subordinated or intimidated into the questioning institutions of the society which appear to be failing in delivering what is expected of them. If this is allowed then social change stands as a crucial pursuit of overcoming enduring factors that threaten societal return to the closed state. This yields to the essential feature of the open society where individuals should

bear responsibility and make personal decisions.

### 3.3: *THE APPROACH TO SOCIAL CHANGE*

According to Popper, the rational alternative to the revolutionary usurp of the entire "institutional and traditional framework of society" is the piecemeal social engineering. By social engineering Popper means:

The planning and construction of institutions with the aim, perhaps of arresting or controlling or quickening impending social development.<sup>6</sup>

Social Engineering must be piecemeal. That is to say, it starts with institutions as they are, examines in what ways they work badly, either by causing preventable human inconveniences or suffering or failing to alleviate it, and then introduce reforms to make them work better. Blue prints for social engineering are comparatively modest because as he says:

They are blueprints for single institutions, for health and employment insurance, for instance, or arbitration of courts or anti-depression budgeting, or educational reforms... if they go wrong the damage is not very good and re-adjustment not very difficult.<sup>7</sup>

This sort of social engineering advances by trial and error, it becomes ever more effective and successful as practical experience accumulates, and in this way it can bid fair to be supported by the approval and agreement of a great number of people, rather than causing people to fall out with one another, as is likely to result from more ambitious and far reaching projects of social reconstruction. It goes hand in hand with the development in the social institutions and social science. Popper argues:

The social sciences have developed very largely through the criticism of proposals for social improvements or more precisely, through attempts to find out whether or not some particular economic or political action is likely to produce an expected, or desired, result.<sup>8</sup>

Popper characteristically states the Principle of the social engineer: work for the elimination

of concrete evil rather than for the realization of abstract goods. He emphasizes the need of aiming at the establishment of happiness by political means rather than aim at the elimination of miseries. In more practical terms, the stress here is to fight for the elimination of poverty by direct means, For example, by making sure everybody has a minimum remuneration. This will go a long way to fight other evils such as the fight against epidemics by erecting hospitals and schools of medicine, the fight of illiteracy coupled with the fight against criminality. The emergent theme that has to recur in all this undertakings is the factor of doing all by the use of direct means. By direct means we mean the choosing of what we consider to be the most urgent evil of the society we live in, and try patiently to convince others that we can satisfactorily get rid of it rationally. The message that is contained in this is that Popper rates high the piecemeal social engineering approach to social change as a simple formula or recipe for distinguishing between what we consider to be admissible plans for social reform and inadmissible utopian blueprints.

In opposition to piecemeal approach, Popper strongly castigates what he calls the "utopian social engineering". According to this, it is of no use "thinkering" with this or that institutions; what has been done to reconstruct the entire fabric of society. The utopians hold that, first:

We must determine our ultimate political aim, or the ideal state,... only then can we begin to consider the best ways and means for it's realization and can draw up a plan for practical action.<sup>9</sup>

On the basis of the piecemeal social engineering approach, Popper criticizes projects for utopian social engineering on several grounds. First to reconstruct society as a whole there must need be a dictatorship which would have to be imposed on society by violence and would create a state of affairs much worse than any it was proposed to remedy. Secondly, it is not true that only by a complete reconstruction of society could social evils be remedied, for experience shows that much can be achieved piecemeal, by tackling them little by little and one by one. Thirdly, in his

enthusiasm for abstract goods the utopian actually disregards concrete evils which are under his very nose. As Popper says:

Do not let your dreams of a beautiful world lure you away from the claims of men who suffer here and now-our fellow men have a claim to our help.<sup>10</sup>

To help them effectively, we must tackle the immediate evils they are suffering, whereas the utopian condemns this as mere experiment, believing that what is needed is nothing less than complete reconstruction of the whole society.

The chief error of the utopian according to Popper's understanding is grounded on the belief that nothing short of a complete eradication of the offending social system will do. Up to this level, we distinguish two approaches to social change, though Popper places at his very heart the piecemeal approach. On the one hand we may choose to postulate that nothing short of the unabridged eradication of the present social system will benefit humanity, and that therefore it is of no use working out rational plans for improving our institutions because the only practical thing to do is to speed up the fateful day when they will all be smashed up. On the other hand, we may reject any idea of a radical change in the social system and choose to keep on tinkering with single institutions, so as to satisfy bit by bit, so far as the present system allows, the various claims of our fellowmen.

The approach recommended by Popper in a way suggests to us the need of choosing between on the one hand the utopian aim of an Ideal Society, to realize which requires the violent suppression of the rational practice of piecemeal social engineering; experimenting with the existing order so as to alleviate miseries by trying to meet the claims of everyone concerned in them or choosing the contrary. The question is one of whether on the one hand, to examine what is wrong with it, what can be done to remove it, and what issues to tackle and what constructive proposals

to make, step by step in order to do so, or on the other hand to accept the existing social order.

Popper strongly imputes the utopian or holistic approach to social change as he argues:

Do not aim at establishing happiness by political means...it is my thesis that human misery is the most urgent problem of a rational public policy and that happiness is not such a problem. The attainment of happiness should be left to our private endeavors.<sup>11</sup>

This suggests that it is possible by "political means" to remove the causes of poverty and war, and to provide everyone with material means for useful work, education, leisure, comfort and the protection of health. This is because to establish happiness will depend on how individuals treat each other and how every individual in the society behave in their private personal life. A politics which really tackles the problems of human misery is necessary for it fosters the pursuit of happiness for its practitioners, since it goes further towards establishing it, than one which contents simply to leave it to our private endeavors.

Revolutionary change of social system, is the alternative, not to reform, but to the policy of allowing only such reforms as can be accomplished without jeopardizing the gains of its practitioners. For Popper, he feels that it is not very difficult to strike an agreement by discussion on what is the most urgent social reforms. This is the one of its greatest virtues. For in this way Popper says:

We can get some where by organizing...we can profit here from the attitude of reason-ablensess. We can learn by listening to concrete claims by considering ways of melting them without creating worse evils. <sup>12</sup>

Popper sees social engineering as a democratic approach of conducting human affairs, in opposition to violence as he says:

There are only two kinds of government institutions, those which provide for a change of government without bloodshed and those which do not. <sup>13</sup>

The former he calls democratic, and the latter undemocratic. If undemocratic type of institutions prevail, then, obviously violence is the only means available for righting the wrongs. The use of violence is justified only under a tyranny which makes reforms without violence impossible, and he argues...it should only be one aim, that is, to bring about a state of affairs which makes reforms without violence possible.

It is on the basis of this understanding that Popper attacked the views of Karl Marx. Marx denounced the faith in rational planning of social institutions as altogether unrealistic, since society according to him grew according to the law of history, of which our rational plans to it are non-consequential. For Marx, the laws of history are those of the development of class struggles. Consequently Marxism teaches us to think in terms not of institutions, but of classes. This marks the difference in approach to social change as put forward by Marx and Popper.

Human progress according to Popper depends on the design and working of institutions, like for example levers are needed if we want to achieve anything that goes beyond the power of the human muscle. Like machines, institutions multiply our powers for good and evil. Like machines, they need intelligent supervision by some one who understands their way of functioning and most of all, their purpose. This is why a social engineer must remain aware of the human element in institutions. He cannot construct foolproof institutions, that is to say, institutions whose functioning does not very largely depend on persons: institutions, at best can reduce the uncertainty of the personal element, by assisting those who work for the aims for which the institutions are designed, and on whose personal initiative and knowledge success largely depends.

Further, democratic institutions in their proper functioning are not only the means we can use for engineering social achievements, they also provide checks and balance on what would otherwise be the irresponsible power of certain individuals or groups of individuals. This understanding is crucial, for it leads us to come into grips with the new approach that popper gives

to politics. As we shall be discussing later, this approach leads us to replace a question like; who should rule? by the new question; how can we so organize our social institutions that bad and incompetent rulers can be prevented from doing too much damage.

This approach to social change enables the one who undertakes the job of reforming society to recognize that the minority of the social institutions are consciously designed, while the vast majority have just grown as the result of unintended consequences of human action. Popper undoubtedly speaks of a revolutionary approach to social change as one of the very worst things that could possibly happen to any society. Revolutions involve, as it is always the case, prolonged use of violence, which may lead in the end to the loss of freedom, since they are liable to bring about not the dispassionate rule of reason, but the rule of the strong man. This in itself destroys not only the institutional and traditional framework of the society, but also the disappearance of civilization that threaten the return to beasthood or the "State of Nature" as expressed by Thomas Hobbes. In the more dispassionate vein of the same, Popper argues that:

It is not reasonable to assume that a complete reconstruction of our social world would lead at once to a workable system. Rather we should expect that, owing to lack of experience, many mistakes would be made. 14

This is an indication to show that revolutionary change does not only increase unnecessary suffering and lead to more and more violence, but the humanitarian aims which revolutionaries pursue can be achieved without any revolution. Those who believe in smashing everything up would have to undertake gradual reconstruction afterwards. So it would be far more sensible to get on with gradual construction in the first place and forget about smash ups.

This is an indication to show that a revolution is a sort of unnecessary catastrophe, brought about as an interruption in orderly progress by some explosion of passion or conspiracy of bloody-minded agitators, which could have been avoided had the ruler been wiser. After the destructive

anarchy of a revolution, order has eventually to be restored again and affairs brought back to normal and such progress as may then be achieved could have been achieved just as well and probably better, without a revolution. this is well supported by the argument that:

Only by planning, step by step, for institutions to safeguard freedom, especially freedom from exploitation, can we hope to achieve a better world.15

**NOTES:**

1. The Open society and Its Enemies, Vol. 1. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1966, P. 294.
2. A pocket Popper, Fontana Paper backs university press, Oxford, 1983, P. 32.
3. Ibid. P. 296.
4. Ibid. P. 30.
5. The Open society and Its Enemies, Vol 1; P. 193.
6. Poverty of Historicism, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1957, P. 45.
7. The Open society and Its Enemies Vol 1, P. 159.
8. Poverty of Historicism, P. 58.
9. The Open Society and Its Enemies, Vol 1. P. 157.
10. Conjectures and Refutations, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1965, P. 361.
11. Ibid. P. 163.
12. Ibid. P. 62.
13. Ibid; P. 344.
14. The Open society and Its Enemies, Vol 1. P. 167.
15. The Open society and Its enemies Vol 2, P. 143.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### ***SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE POLITICAL PROGRAMME***

The chapter discusses the relationship of social change and the political programme of a changing social setting. In doing this it facilitates the realization of our third objective of attempting a clear and concise understanding of the nature of social change. This is done by discussing how the principles of Justice, Liberty and Sovereignty are to be celebrated in a changing social setting.

From Plato to Marx most prominent thinkers have had their fervor in agreement views of not only social and historical improvement, but of logic and science and ultimately of epistemology. Anybody who studies Popper shrewdly will establish that he is not an exception of the same. Because Popper regards living as first and foremost a process of problem-solving, he champions for societies which are conducive to allow for the need of problem-solving. Given that problem solving calls for the bold formulation of trial solution which are then subjected to criticisms and error elimination, he wants societies which permit the untrammelled assertion of constructing proposals, followed by criticisms, followed by genuine potentiality of change in the light of criticisms. Regardless of any moral attention of which it is of great significance to grasp this, he believes that a society categorized on such lines will be more effectual at solving its problems, and therefore more successful in consummating the aims of its members, than if were organized on other lines.

The common notion that the most efficient form of society, in assumption at least, would be some form of dictatorship, is on this view utterly mistaken. The view that most of the countries of the world that have the highest living standards are all liberal democracies is not because democracy is a luxury which their wealth enables them to afford. On the contrary, the mass of their people were living in poverty when the first achieved universal suffrage. The causal link is the other way

round, for instance democracy has played a vital role to engender about and sustaining high living standards. If, as is usually the case, those who likewise forbid critical examination of the practical entreaty of their policies condemn themselves to pressing on with mistakes for some time after this have begun to exhibit injurious unintended consequences. The entire approach is characteristic of highly authoritarian structures and anti-rational. As a result, the more rigid perish with their false theories, or at best, if they are lucky and ruthless addity, and the less rigid make a progress which is bruised, costly and unnecessarily slow.

It is not enough for anyone with power whether in government or some lesser organization to have policies in the sense of aims and goals, however clearly formulated. There must also be the means for achieving them. If the means do not exist, they must be created otherwise the goals, however very good, will not be reached. In one respect, therefore, reorganization and institutions of every kind have to be looked on as machines for implementing policies. And it is as difficult to design an organization so that its output is what we want as a physical machine, for instance, if an engineer designs a new machine but his design is not right for the purpose; or if he is adapting an already existing machine, but has not changed it in all necessary ways; then what will come out of it can not possibly be what he wants; it can be only what the machine can not possibly be what he wants; it can be only what the machine can produce, which will not only be something other than what he wants, may be seriously defective by any standards, and even dangerous. And precisely, this is true of a great deal to the organizational machinery. It is incapable of doing what the people operating it require of it, regardless of their cleverness, good intentions or well formulated goals. There is need, therefore, for a political or administrative science one that embodies a permanently but constructively critical attitude to organizational means in the light of changing goals.

The implementation of every policy needs to be tested. This is to be done not by looking for evidence that ones trouble are having the desired effects, but by looking for evidence that they

are not. Testing in this sense is usually cheap and easy in practice, if only because minute accuracy is seldom necessary. The results of this are both simple and of great potential usefulness, for huge sums and efforts should be commonly expended on mistaken policies without provision for the tiny sums of efforts required at the same time to see if undesired results are emerging.

People in the organizations tend on the contrary, to turn a blind eye to the evidence that what they want is not what is happening, in spite of the fact that such is precisely what they ought to be looking for. In this, of course, the perpetual search for and admission of error at even the organizational level is hardest of all in authoritarian structures. Thereby does their irrationality extend into the very instruments they use. Popper's moral sentiments about political matters is expressed with a great depth of passion, though not appreciated by others. His writings at this level is deeply moving and what is distinct about it is his wealth and power of argumentation with which he has shown that the heart has reason on its side. For as it is widely believed in the present century more than any other, that rationality, logic and scientific approach, call for a society which is centrally organised, and a planned and ordered as a whole. Popper has shown that this beside being authoritarian, rests on a mistaken and superseded conception of science. Rationality, logic and scientific approach all point to a society which is "open" and pluralistic within which incompatible views are expressed and conflicting aims pursued; a society in which everyone is free to investigate problem-situation and to propose solution; a society in which everyone is free to criticize the proposed solutions of others, most importantly those of the government, whether in prospect or in application, and above all a society in which the government's policies are changed in the light of criticism.

Since policies are normally advocated and their implementation supervised, by people who are in some way or another committed to them, changes of more than a certain magnitude involve changes in personnel. So if the open society is to be a reality, the most fundamental requirement is

that those in power should be removable, at reasonable intervals and without violence, and replaceable by others with different policies. And for this to be a genuine option, people with policies different from those of the government must be free to constitute themselves as an alternative government, ready to take over. This is to say they must be able to organize, speak, write, publish, broadcast and teach in criticism of the people in power, and must have constitutionally guaranteed access to a means of replacing them, for example, by regularly held free elections.

Such a society is what Popper means by "democracy", though, as always, he would set no special store by the word. The point that needs to be emphasized is that he sees democracy in terms of the preservation of certain kinds of institutions. This is rather acceptable in the sense that what used to be called before the American cold war as propaganda brought the term democracy into dispute-(free institutions), for instance, especially those which enable the ruled effectively to criticize their rulers and to change them without bloodshed. Popper does not see democracy as just the election of the governments by a majority of the governed, for that view leads to what he calls "the paradox of democracy". what if the majority votes for a party, such as Fascist Party which does not believe in free institutions, and nearly always destroys them when it gets into power?. The man committed to choice of government by majority vote is here in insoluble dilemma. Any attempt to stop the fascist party taking over is acting against his principles. Detecting mistakes and inherent dangers by critical examination and discussion beforehand is an altogether more rational procedure, and one as a rule less wasteful of resources, people and time, than waiting until they reveal themselves in practice.

Furthermore, it is often only by critical examination of the political results, as distinct from the policies themselves, that some of the mistakes are to be identified. For in this connection, it is essential to face the fact that any action we take is likely to have unintended consequences. This

simple point is one whose implications are highly charged for politics, administration and in any form of planning, and this can be illustrated easily. Things are all the time happening which nobody planned or wants, and this is inescapable fact that should be allowed for both in decision making and in the creation of organizational structures. If a contrary view about this is offered, then the entire organizational structures will be marred with permanent source of distortion. This again reinforces the need for critical vigilance in the administration of policies and the allowance for their correction by error elimination. So not only do authorities which forbid prior critical examination of their policies condemn themselves to making many of their mistakes in a more expensive form, and discovering them later than they need.

The other paradoxes which the approach of Popper avoids is the paradox of tolerance. If a society extends unlimited tolerance it is likely to be destroyed, together with its tolerance. So, a tolerant society must be prepared in some over means acting contrary to his principles, yet if they do take over they will put an end of democracy. Furthermore he has no moral basis of reactive resistance to, say a Fascist regime if a majority has voted for it. Popper's approach to democracy is free of such paradox. For him, a man committed to the preservation of free institutions can without self-contradiction defend them against attacks from any direction, whether from minorities or majorities. And if there is an attempt to overthrow free institutions by armed violence, he can without self-contradiction defend them by armed violence, for if in a society whose governments can be changed without force, a group nevertheless resorts to it because it cannot get its way otherwise, then whatever it may think or intend it is setting up by violence; in other words a tyranny. Indeed, force may be morally justified against an existing regime which sustains itself by force, if one's aim is to establish free institutions and one has a serious chance of succeeding. For then one's object is to replace the rule of violence by a rule of reason and tolerance.

Materially as any other ways, a society is practically and to be more successful if it has free institutions than if it does not have. All government policies, indeed all executive and administrative decisions involve empirical predictions. As we know, such predictions infrequently turn out to be wrong since every one makes mistakes and it is normal for them to be modified as their application proceeds. A policy is a hypothesis which has to be tested against reality and corrected in the light of experience circumstances to suppress the enemies of tolerance. It should of course do so unless they constitute a genuine danger. Quite apart from anything else this leads to witch hunting, and it should try all in its power to meet such people first on the level of rational arguments. If they begin by denouncing all arguments, they may forbid their followers to listen to rational arguments because it is deceptive, and teach them to answer arguments by the use of their first. A tolerant society can only survive if it is prepared in the last analysis to restrain such people by force. As Popper argues:

we should...consider incitement to intolerance and persecution as criminals in the same way we should consider incitement to murder, or to kidnapping, or to the revival of slave trade as criminal.<sup>1</sup>

Another, more familiar paradox, first implicitly formulated by Plato is the paradox of freedom. Unqualified freedom, like unqualified tolerance, is not only self destructive but bound to produce its opposite. If all restraints were removed there would be nothing whatever to stop the strong from enslaving the weak or the meek. The implication here is that complete freedom would bring about the end of freedom, and therefore proponents of complete freedom are in actuality, whatever their intentions are, enemies of freedom. Take for example political freedom which makes possible the intimidation of the weak by the stronger and results in a complete loss of political freedom by the poor. For it to be acceptable, then there must be a political remedy similar to the one we use against physical violence.

This stresses the need of constructing social institutions, enforced by the power of the society so as to ensure that the so branded "politically weak" are protected from the "politically

strong". This of course means that the principle of non-interventionism of unrestrained political system has to be given up if we wish freedom to be safeguarded. This can realistically be the case if at all unlimited political freedom is replaced by planned political freedom of the society.

From the foregoing, one conclusion which is inevitable is that which pits the proponents of society interventionism in the question of political freedom as being guilty of self-inconsistency. In any case which freedom should the society protect?. Any one who understands Popper's contention will always answer that it is the freedom which goes all the way into paving the way for the poor to unite. This leaves the political responsibility of the society to its members whether or not this responsibility is consciously accepted. Then if this is said, then it has to be put into practice.

If it does not fulfil this rather noble obligation, semi-political organisations may interfere hence reducing the freedom that it sort to cherish in its political strategies. Without careful political strategies the political scenario ceases to serve any rational purpose; the purpose of meeting with the needs of its members by attending to the arising evils. As for this therefore, any society that plans for political freedom and does not in practice deliver the goods to its members is no better than a totalitarian regime.

What we should realise up to this point is that in all these cases the maximum possible tolerance or freedom is an optimum, not an absolute, for it has to be restricted if it has to exist at all. The society intervention which alone can guarantee it as a dangerous weapon and without it, or with too little, freedom dies, but with too much of it also, freedom dies.

This brings us back to the inescapability of control which must mean, if it is to be effective, removability of government by the governed as the "sine qua non" of democracy. This might not necessarily be sufficient since it does not guarantee the preservation of freedom for the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. This equals to Popper's remark that institutions are like fortresses in that although to be effective they can be properly constructed, and this alone cannot make them

work, for they also have to be properly manned.

By the large and this is evident in the history of philosophy that the political philosophers have over and over again considered the question of who should rule? to be the most important one. Their diverse philosophies have sought to justify different responses to the very one question. This is so because others have contemplated that a single man should rule, others think it is a responsibility of the well born or the rich or the wise or the strong, the majority or the good among many others. These various answers hint that the question itself is not well formulated, for it allows for the diverse answers.

Although this is the case, Popper argues that it leads to yet another paradox that his approach avoids, the "paradox of sovereignty". If power is put in the hands of the wisest man, he may from the depth of his wisdom adjudicate that it is not him but the one who is morally upright should be given the responsibility of ruling. If the morally upright has power, he may be inclined to say that it is wrong for him to impose his willpower on others and so the majority should rule. Further the majority may as well say that they need a strong man to impose order and to tell them what to do. subsequently the question of who should rule raises another question of where should sovereignty lie? This question is also a puzzle in the sense that it eliminates before it is raised the possibility of the control over leaders. And in fact, in some societies power is widely diffused whereas in others there is to a great extent conflicting power centers. This paradox will be strongly championed in the next chapter as well shall be evaluating the philosophical implications of social change to contemporary societies. The point that Popper raises as regards this paradox is that of replacing the question of who should rule?, by a vital one of how can we minimize misrule?

The arguments in the above paragraphs hold to the view that the best society we can hope for, from a practical point of view as well as the moral point of view, is the one that extends the possible maximum freedom to its members. The maximum freedom is a qualified one and that it

can be created and sustained at optimum level only by institutions as designed for this purpose, and backed by the power of the society. What this means is that the society should involve large scale political, economic and social life intervention. This follows from the earlier conclusion made that too little intervention is likely to result in unnecessary encroachment on freedom, and that the best way to minimize the dangers in both ways is to preserve, as the most important institutions, of all, constitutional means whereby the governed can remove the wielders of societal power and put in their position other men with different policies. Any attempt to render such institutions ineffective is an attempt to introduce authoritarianism and should be taken offense at, if need be by force. This is because the use of force against tyranny may be justified even when the tyranny has majority support, but that the only untyrannical aims the use of force can have are the defence of free institutions where they exist and their establishment where they do not.

Popper's social philosophy emerges as philosophy of social democracy. It is plainly anti-conservative on the one side and it is anti-totalitarian on the other. It is for this reason that the conclusion that philosophy has to change them is justified. More than this, to initiate this changes, Popper underscores the way of rational and humane approach rather than the violent smashing up of things by revolutions. A Philosophy that does not expose members of the society to violence is a philosophy of reasonableness, unlike that which does the contrary. The general guiding principle for public policy put forward in *The Open society and Its enemies* is; minimize avoidable suffering. This is significant i the sense that it makes doing something about it the first priority. The Popperian approach has this consequences across the board, for, instead of encouraging one to think about building utopia, it makes one to seek out and to try and remove the specific social evils under which human beings are suffering. In this way it is above all practical approach to social life, and, yet, one devoted to change. It starts from concern with human beings and involves a permanent, active and willingness to remold institutions. such an approach rightly claims to a

perpetual stream of demands for immediate action to remedy identifiable wrongs in the society. And such action is of a kind most like to secure widespread agreement and result in manifest improvement that Popper calls progress.

This shows a total devotion to the axioms avoidance of the utopianism for what is valuable is what we undergo here and now, and not some other imaginary categories of success that is only expressed in words and not in deeds. If the approach is applied, the society can go along way to rectifying abuses and anomalies within the existing pattern of distribution of power, possession and opportunity. We should make it a methodological rule always to apply it first and act on the consequences, but then whenever possible to look for a situation afresh, in terms of a second richer formulation which subsumes our first one. In more general terms, the formulation that maximize the freedom of individuals so as to live as they which can be logically drawn from Popper's social thought. This allows for the extension for the range of choice and freedom open to individuals of the society consciously.

Popper Plato as a supreme example of a philosopher and genius whose political theory embodies a wish o return to the past and incorporates an extensive and detailed critique of it in the first of the two volumes of *The Open society and Its enemies*. The second volume contains a corresponding critique of Marx as the supreme philosopher whose theory projects a perfect future. His way of tackling these heavyweight opponents, especially Marx, constitute in itself one of the most important lesson in the method to be gained from his writings. Throughout the history of philosophy; especially the history of advancement and debate, the catch even of polemicists of aptitude like Voltaire has been to seek out and charge the feeble points of an adversary's case. This might have a severe drawbacks in that in every case there are weaker as well as stronger parts, and its appeal lies, apparently, in the latter; so to attack the former may embarrass its adherents but not undermine the considerations on which its immensely rests. This is one of the reasons why people

so rarely change their views after losing an argument. More often such a reverse leads eventually to a strengthening of their positioning that it leads them to abandon or improve the weakest parts of their case. It often happens that the longer two intelligent people go on arguing, the better each sides case becomes, for each is being all the time improved by the others criticism.

The Popperian analysis of this is self evident since what he has demonstrably aimed to do in his philosophy, and he at his best does so, is to endeavor out and attack an opponent's case at its strongest. He equally does this in the analysis of concepts. Indeed before attacking it, he tries to strengthen it still further sees if any of its weaknesses can be removed and any of its formulations improved and any of its formulations improved upon gives it the benefit of every doubt of passing over any obvious loopholes. From this he gets into the best argued form he can, attack it at its most powerful and appalling. A case in point is his attack of Plato and Marx his attack of the historicism and his anti-essentialistic exhortation against the linguistic Philosophers. This method, the most intellectually serious possible, is thrilling and its result, when successfully realized, are devastating. For no perceptible version of the defeated case is reconstructible in the light of criticisms, every source of reserve of substance being already present in the demolished version (The comment of Isaiah Berlin in his biography of Karl Marx (third edition 1963) The Open society and Its enemies contains the most scrupulous and formidable criticisms of the philosophical and historical doctrines of Marxism by any living writer.

The academic world, the most controversial aspect of Popper's philosophy has been his attack on prominent philosophers, for instance Plato and Marx. Many of the scholars who have attacked Popper's criticism of Plato is that he takes a disparaging view of the latter. A case in point is Ronald B. Levinson sublime, massive and erudite book, In Defence of Plato to which Popper made a reply in a postscript to the fourth edition of Popper describes Plato unequivocally as "the greatest philosopher of all times"<sup>2</sup>. An uses, plain The Open Society and Its enemies (1961) and

without satire idiom like "with all the might of his unequalled intelligence"<sup>3</sup>. he does in fact subscribe to whitehead's maxim that the whole of western philosophy is footnotes to Plato. Criticism of Plato is not his primary purpose: Levinson states the position correctly when he writes:

Popper's attack upon Plato is the negative aspect of his own positive conviction, which motivates his entire book, that the greatest of all revolutions in the transition from a "closed society" to the "open society", an association of free individuals respecting each others rights within the framework of mutual protection supplied by the state, and achieving, through the making of responsible, rational decisions, a growing measure of humane and enlightened life.<sup>4</sup>

And far from completely rebutting Popper's judgement of Plato, Levinson concludes by acknowledging the most important part of it; First and foremost we have agreed that Plato was proposing, in Popper's terms to "close" his society, in so far as this denotes regimentation of the ordinary citizens...<sup>5</sup> Plato's ideal can be classified without distortion as a highly differentiated one among the many varieties of authoritarian governments denoted by our generalized version of Webster's definition of totalitarianism, it can also be, as we might agree that Plato concedes to Sabine's definition of totalitarian which carefully guarded as a sense of government which "obliterates the distinction between areas of private judgement and public control".<sup>6</sup>

Popper has a wide and detailed acquaintance with many fields of thought, and his qualified commitment to liberal and democratic ideals of which he defends in the entire work (The Open society and Its enemies). His conception of the way the society has to progress, coupled with his devastating attacks of his antecedent philosophers made Bertrand Russell to write that: His attack on Plato, while unorthodox, is in my opinion thoroughly justified. Further Gilbert Ryle himself a notable Plato scholar, wrote in his view of Popper's philosophy and especially his book Mind: His studies in Greek philosophy and Greek thought have obviously been profound and original. Platonic exegesis will never be the same again. What this symbolizes is that after reading Popper's work carefully, one factor that emerges is that Platonism ceases to be a live issue in the political and

social life of the modern world, though with exceptional cases. As for this deduction, therefore, Popper emerges as the most influential philosopher of the contemporary world, and that an understanding of the world in which we live today can be perpetuated if we can borrow some knowledge of his political and social thought.

Marx believed that the development of human societies was governed by scientific laws of which he was the discoverer. This conception advanced by Marx is highly reputable but it sounds unavoidably Pre-Einsteinian. Like every other well informed man of his time, he thought that Newton had discovered Natural laws which govern the motion of matter in space, so that given the relevant data about any physical system, one could predict all its future states. From this we could thus predict, sunrise and sunset, eclipses, the movement of the tides and so on. However one striking thing is that although natural laws enables us to foretell the future of our solar system they do not in fact enable us to control it: They work with "iron necessity" towards inevitable results which we can scientifically predict and describe but not other. This conception of Newton seems to have greatly influenced Marx when he pointed out in *Das capital* as having described the "natural law of capital production" where he warns that even when a society has got upon the right track for the discoverer of the Natural Laws, if its movement - and it is the ultimate if this work to bare that law of motion of modern society.

Up to this level, Popper agrees with Marx that we are powerless to shape the course of history, and on the other hand the utopian beliefs that it is in our power to make a perfect society. What Popper disputed was the contention that Marxism extended beyond any serious possibility of reconstructing it given that it contained elements which were falsifiable (His principle criterion).

Marx's view that history develops according to scientific laws is one example of what Popper calls "historicism". For Popper, historicism means:

An approach given to social sciences which assumes that historical prediction is their principle aim, and which assumes that this aim is attainable by discovering the

"rhythms" or the "patterns", the "laws" or the "trends" that underlie the evolution of history."

If historical inevitability is to be seriously argued, a limited number of explanations is possible. Either history is directed by someone outside intelligence (usually god) in accordance with its won purposes. Or history is driven forward by some intelligence (immanent spirit, or life force). These two alternatives sound metaphysical and hence "meaningless" according to the fall suffocation principle. Popper rejects all these views because he is an indeterminist who believes that change is the result of our attempts to solve our problems involving among other things, unpredictable, imagination, choice and luck. Of these we are responsible for our choices in so far as any process of direction is at work it is well in our interaction with each other, and with our physical environment (which we have created, but which individual inherits and can only do a little to chance) who moves history forward. This means that any purpose it embodies are our purposes and any meaning it has, it has meaning that we give it. What this indicates is that, no scientific predictor, whether human scientist, or a calculating machine, can possibly predict, with scientific methods, its own future results. It shows that the course of human history has been influenced by the growth of human knowledge, a fact which even people who regard all knowledge as the by product of material development can admit without contradict. The answer to this is definitely no in that if we could predict future knowledge or future discoveries, they would cease to be future predictions and become present discoveries, it is impossible to predict them scientifically, or even if it is determined independently of human wishes. In a nutshell if the future could be predicted, it could not, once discovered remain secret, since it could in principle be discoverable by anybody. This could as well give us the paradox of possibility/impossibility of taking evasive action. Hence, it is hard to have a theoretical history which corresponds to a theoretical physics due to differences in methodology.

This argument is very crucial especially when we whatever we can predict are totally planned society in future, this is because the issue of planing involves planners, but who plans the planner is a question which sounds "nonsensical" but quite instrumental. Take, for example, our actions in any case yield unintended consequences, in most cases when something bad happens in society, something undesirable, such as war, poverty or unemployment, it is always qualified to be as a result of bad intention or some sinister designs: somebody has done it on purpose, and of course, somebody reaps profit from it. This is what Popper calls conspiracy theory of society. This point is against the "scientific socialism" advanced by Marx. If Popper is right in his criticism of scientific socialism, then he emerges as a genuine scientific philosopher. Also, most importantly, the hostility he had for science and the revolt against reason, both of which are prominently present in today's world, are directed towards false conceptions of science and reason.

The utopian project proceed in the following sequence:

- (a) Any rational action must have a certain aim. It is rational in the same degree as it pursues its aim consciously and consistently and it determines its means according to this end.
- (b) To choose the end is therefore the first thing we have to do if we wish to act rationally, and we must be very careful to determine our real or ultimate ends from which we must distinguish clearly those immediate or partial ends which are only means, or steps on the way, to the ultimate end.
- (c) If we neglect this distinction, then we may also neglect to ask whether those partial ends are likely to promote the ultimate end, and accordingly we must fail to act rationally.

These principles, if applied to the realm of political activity demand that we must determine our ultimate political aim, or the "ideal society" before taking any practical action. Only when this ultimate aim is determined, in a rough outline at least (only when we are in possession of something like a blue print of the society at which we aim), only then can we begin to consider the best ways and means for its realization, and draw up a plan for practical action.

Popper is against an approach to politics which starts from a blue print and then sets to actualize it having to be faced by any idealist if he seriously wants to be an idealist without illusions. There is first the argument that when very you what to go you have no choice but to start from where you are. It is more possible to start from scratch in politics than it is in epistemology or science or the Arts. Utopians commonly assert that before this or that thing can be changed, society as a whole will have to be changed; but what this boils down to is the assertion that before you can change anything, you must change everything, which is self contradictory. Second, whatever action we take will have some unintended consequences which may easily be at odds without blue-print. And the more the wholesale the action, the more plentiful the unintended consequences. To claim rationality for sweeping plans to change society as whole is to claim a degree of detailed sociological knowledge which we simply do not possess. And to talk in the utopian way about means and ends is to use a metaphor misleadingly: what is actually in question is one set of events close on time, which are referred to as "the means" followed by another more distant set of events, which are called "the ends". But these will be followed in turn unless history just stops, by yet future successive events.

So the end is not an end in fact, and there can be serious defence for privileges claimed for what the second set of events in an endless series. What is more the first set of events, being closer in time, are more likely to materialize in the form envisaged than the second, more distant and uncertain. Rewards promised by the latter are less sure than the sacrifices made for them in the former. And if all individuals have equal moral claims, it is wrong to sacrifice one generation for the next.

As to the blue-print itself, it is an ascertainable fact that people differ about the kind of society they want. So whatever the nature of the group that gets into power with the aim of putting its blueprint into production it will have to render the opposition of others ineffective; if not

coerce them into serving an end they disagree with. Whereas a free society cannot impose common social purposes, a government with utopian aims has to, and is bound to become authoritarian. This is because the radical reconstruction of society is a huge undertaking which is bound to take a long time. It is even remotely likely that social objectives and ideas or ideals will not substantially change during that time, especially as it will be, by definition, a time of revolutionary upheaval.

Yet if they do change, it means that what appeared the most desirable form of society, even to the people who made the blueprint, will diverge further and further from it as they approach it. This will follow suit of anything desired by their successors who had little or nothing to do with making the blueprint in the first place. This view is related to yet another position that not only are the planners themselves part of the society they wish to sweep away, but their social experience, and therefore social assumptions and aims, no matter how critical they might be, are bound to have been deeply conditioned by it. This therefore, means that an attempt to sweep it away includes sweeping themselves and their plans away too. Social reconstruction which is radical and prolonged is bound to uproot and disorient very large number of people, thereby creating widespread psychological as well as mental adversity. Any rational man will expect some people to oppose measures that threatened them with these effects.

Such people will be seen by the power holders as trying to actualize the ideal society, as opposing the wholly good out of self interest, and in actual sense there is half truth in this. They will be relegated as being enemies of society, hence inevitably victims of what will follow. For ideal goals being unattainable, are a long time coming, and the period over which criticism and opposition have to be stifled is prolonged more and more; so intolerance and authoritarianism will intensify, albeit with the best intentions. Precisely because intention and goals are thought to be ideal, the persistent failure of the latter to materialize is bound to give rise to accusation that someone is rocking the boat; there must be sabotage, or foreign interference, or corrupt leadership

for all possible explanation that rule out criticism of the revolution involve malignity on somebody's past. It becomes necessary to identify culprits and root them out; and if there are culprits, culprits must be found. By the revolutionary regime will be up to the neat in the unforeseen consequences of its actions. This is because even the enemies of the revolution receive their deserts the revolutionary goals will obstinately go on not materializing. The ruling group will be driven more and more into grasping at immediate solutions to urgent problems. This Popper calls unplanned planning which is usually open of the things they most despised of their predecessor regimes. This opens the way to a wider disparity between their declared aims and what they are actually doing.

Popper's contention for the need of an "open society" is crucial to our understanding because as a matter of fact all of us require the most important aspects of the social order to continue functioning through any social change that is targeted at reconstruction. People must continue to be fed, clothed, housed, children, who in most cases are dubbed as future leaders, must continue to be cared for and educated if they are not to be intolerably victimized; transport, medical, police and fire services must continue to operate to better their lives. In modern societies, these things depend on large scale organization. To sweep it all away at once would literally abuse chaos and to believe that an ideal society will emerge out of such a pursuit borders on a dangerous assumption. this also applies to the belief that society better that he one in existence now is more likely to emerge from chaos. However if we are determined to, we could never, despite our dreams of perfection, sweep everything away only to begin once again.

Individuals in the society are like crews of a ship at sea, and they can choose to remodel any part of the ship they live in, and they can subsequently remodel it entirely section by section, but cannot do it all at once. This logically follows from he fact that change is never going to stop and this renders they very notion of a blueprint for a good society to be unrealistic. This is because even if society became like the blueprint it would depart the moment it is achieved; a belief that a

society can correspond to the blueprint at all suggests that society is stick and yet this is not true. In as far as the world of cognition goes, and also to the best of our knowledge the pace of social change seems to get faster with every day that elapses. This process has no end, so to have any hope at all of corresponding to the realities of a political approach must not concern itself with societies and states of affairs, but with change. This task is not the impossible one of establishing and preserving a particular form of society, but to maximize our control over the actual changes that occur in a process of change which is never ending. Further, the control we secure, must be controlled wisely on the basis of good justifiable evidence.

From the foregoing, one major conclusion that can be drawn is the fact that never in as so far as the world of reality, will societies be perfect. It is on the basis of this that Karl Popper took issues with questions raised by his predecessors. Popper strongly condemn "what is"? questions generally. For instance, what is life? what is gravity? what is democracy? what is justice and so on. This quasi-magical attempts to capture the essence of reality in a definition is what led Popper to brand such questions as essentialism. In politics the essentialist approach lead almost naturally to doctrinal conflicts. In their place Popper finds questions such as; what should we do in such circumstances to be helpful. This is because it asks for proposals upon which their answers can be fruitfully discussed and criticized and criticized. This implies that nothing that is not a proposal can ever be put into practice and so what matters in politics, just as it is in science, is not the analysis of concepts, but the critical discussion of theories and their subjection to the tests of experience.

The other conclusion that can be drawn from this is the need of applying the best method in solving problems. For Popper criticism in politics, just as in science should aim to establish and preserve certain state of society and certain knowledge respectively. In science we have the scientific method whereas in politics we have the political method. In both cases, Popper observes the need of introducing imagination and feelings in an unending feed back process in which bold

propounding of new ideas rests. This is invariably attended by their subjection to rigorous error elimination process in the light of experience. This is what he calls "critical rationalism in philosophy, in politics he calls it "piecemeal social engineering" where piecemeal is used pejoratively. Popper is making our approach to politics to be more passionate and humane than ever before and he supports his decision by the logical arguments discussed in this chapter.

#### NOTES

1. The Open Society and Its Enemies, Vol 1., Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1966, P. 265.
2. Ibid; P. 98.
3. Ibid; P. 107.
4. In Defence of Plato, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1976, P. 7.
5. Ibid; P. 571.
6. A History of Political Theory, Oxford and IBH Publishing Co., New Delhi, 1973, P. 573.
7. Poverty of Historicism, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1957, Paul, London, 1957, P. 3.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL CHANGE*

This chapter discusses the philosophical implications of social change. It is partly aimed at realizing our first objective, that is, the philosophical implications of social change to our contemporary societies, and partly our fourth objective of discussing the concept of progress in light of Popper's conception of social change.

Popper's social philosophy has an extra ordinary range of application in our every day life in the contemporary world order. It has a notable effect on people who are influenced by it in the sense that it changes the way they do their own work. This, and in other respects, changes their lives by virtue of the fact that it is a philosophy of action. Further, it influences those people who are in themselves in the first rate distinction in their fields. From the foregoing of this consideration therefore, it is difficult to say that Popper is neglected. This underlines all the more, though surprisingly he is not better known as it is the case with many lesser thinkers who are famous. We relegate this partly to change and partly to an aspect of his method which facilitates misapprehension of his philosophy by those who have not read him keenly.

The implications of Popper's social thought raises rigorous controversy during this present world order. This is the case especially if his contention is compared to the thoughts of the classical thinkers. His position appear to picture him as contrasting what had already been said as not well fitting at present, although this might not outrightly be the case. To take an example of Plato, many of us who have studied his politics can unmistakably equate his major work the Republic as having been the fore runner of the modern totalitarianism but at the same time seeds of what we regard as modern democracy are readily present in it. It is the lack of this clear-cut indication of what Plato categorically wanted to assert that prompted Popper to advance devastating attacks on him. Incidentally if both Popper and Plato are studied as regards this issue,

the reader is left to form his or her own judgement on whether or not what is contained in their thoughts is or is not the case.

What is interesting enough of Popper is that he intensifies the debate about the competition between totalitarian and democratic systems. He does this by offering a fog dispelling approach on how to reconcile the two versions so much so that at the end of it all, a synthesis of what is desirable in both systems is combined without necessarily destroying any of them. When a critical evaluation of popper's contention attempted, the likely conclusion that can be drawn is that, his entire work is aimed at attesting to the most important contemporary questions that call for the application of the critical method so as to answer them in a systematic and progressive manner. One thing that is evident in this approach is the ability to look at the social phenomena from a multi-disciplinary angle; for instance, from a physical science point of view to a social science one under umbrella of his theory of knowledge.

In saying this, it is not persuasive to explain this division by arguing that Popper's thoughts are simply ambiguous. He is in any case a many sided thinker and not in any sense ambiguous in the ordinary sense. Indeed many of his critics like Maurice Carnforth, there is no ambiguity because his interpretation of social change and the approach he gives for it follows logically his appraisal of the thoughts of his front-runners who happen to have talked about social change. Although that is the case, what we can be sure of whether of popper or any other thinker is that they all react to what we may call the physical attributes of democratic and totalitarian systems. But agreements on the desirable and undesirable characteristics of actual societies by no means demands agreements on the theoretical foundation for this characteristics.

Raising the question of theoretical foundation gets us to the heart of the matter. The interpretation of Popper's social thought do not dispute the respective virtues of democracy and totalitarian as we have already observed. Popper attempts to negate the view that our current

social debates are based on drawing relevance of ancient texts to suit our contemporary settings. The issue is whether or not he succeeds, and of which we realistically assert that he does. This follows from his initiative of succeeding in developing and perpetuating the knowledge of social change as laid down by his antecedent philosophers. Although this is the case we want to suggest that this does not in any respect warrant us to look down upon those adherents who initiated the talk about social change. What we are saying is that the debate about social change has been and it will continue to be an on-going process and that every stage that it has so far undergone and those that are yet to be realised should of necessity be given its due credentials as a manifestation of the unfolding reality about it.

What remains crucial is the argument about the theoretical foundation because it is out of it that we can get closer to the answer to the questions such as what do we mean by democracy?. Out of the same question some may answer it as the majority rule, others as the rule by the people and whereas to there as the rule of equality and individual freedom. This attempt only gives a reasonably adequate description of what, so to speak, a democracy means.

Popper's political programme can fairly be described as democratic and that it is certainly founded upon a realistic approach to life. Although that is the case, the programme sounds to be morally superior to the common expressions of democracy though it is fundamentally identical with it. We believe this is based on his dedication to viewing society as a man made entity where individuals play a commanding role in ensuring that the society in which they live in renders to them an atmosphere of leading a meaningful and elaborate life. This rates Popper to be a revolutionary thinker because he introduces a progressivist attitude to the individual members of the society. Out of this, we can argue that his contention yields practical consequences. He undoubtedly had an inclination that tallies with the changing nature of things in the universe. The drastic remarks that he had contained in them consideration of humanity, since they underscore the need of always

practicing the art of rationality in all that men do. As such, this qualifies him to be a liberal advocate though the forceful expression of his liberal sentiments might in some way picture him as being a reactionary.

His approach is humanitarian because it amplifies the egalitarian principle of which the proposal to eliminate some privileges to certain members of the society is underscored. It also has at its very heart the general principle of individualism though envisaged in the altruistic sense. This is grounded in his wish to set the individual at the forefront in as far as the initiation and institution of change in the society is concerned.

Further, his social thought is that which strongly understands the purpose of the society as that of projecting the freedom of its members. This allows for every member of the society to be treated equally, and this rates impartiality as the hallmark of the open society. According to this rule, the demand that birth, family connection, or wealth must not in any way influence those who act as the guardians of the law to indiscriminate others should be respected. In other words Popper does not wish to recognize any natural privileges, although certain privileges may be conferred by the members upon those they trust. This is a realization that our laws would afford equal justice to all men both in their public and private disputes. The regard for merit should not be ignored especially when a distinguished member excels in his/her public service.

Plato had a diametrically opposed principle that demanded natural privileges to the natural leader of which Popper strongly contests. Although this is the case, Plato seems to have had some evidence to support his assertion, and of course in our contemporary world situation, this demand seems to still hold strong.

Popper applies the method of scientific inquiry to the study of human society. His successes are based on the fact that his propositions can be tested and that he attempts to conclude the investigation that his front runners had set in motion. Popper views society as an open-ended

entity which is as a result of self conscious agents. He expresses a view that when men gain knowledge which is sufficient and also based on critical discussions, they gain a new power for changing and developing their societies and all their institutions. This makes Popper succeed in finding how to study society in a scientific manner. This is supported by his suggested approach of piecemeal social engineering in pursuing change in the society.

Popper asserts that any improvement in the society is a factor attributed to the construction of theories which can solve the problems involved. Any worth-while theory whether new or old raises new problems, and that if a new theory raises new problems as Popper observes then this is a long lasting contribution he initiates in the field of scientific inquiry. This means that any new theory advanced and which in turn becomes a problem of ever-increasing depth is of an ever-promising fertility in suggesting new problems. The new problems faced is an evidence of elaborateness and refinement that makes the open society inevitable.

Popper exclusively addresses himself to the problems arising from the uneasy relationship between an individual and the society. His message is that individuals should not be intimidated into submission and subservience. Although this is the case, Popper quickly resists the idea that individual members dismantle their society incase what they desire most is rejected. This point is rather crucial if at all we shall, in the first instance, agree that the society has the moral obligation of shield individuals from being bullied by the society itself. In indulging to this, the society is strengthened, not for it to intimidate its members, but to protect and safeguard their interests in recognition that its survival relies on them. In short, society exists in the interest of its members and it is definitely in their interest that it does exist.

Popper's conception of social change represents the direction of greater complexity and elaborateness. To denote this process in a more specific way he correlates social change with progress. The sequence of change undergone by the society in order to make it open is a factor

closely attributed to the introduction of the canons of rational scientific inquiry that creates a favorable atmosphere that allows for its members to fully develop and manifest their critical powers. From this the society develops towards greater complexity and to a greater role differentiation and specialisation. This makes possible the exercise of a higher degree of self control and also the habit of pursuing critical discussions that yield remarkable benefits first to the individual in particular and then to the society as a whole.

The change process, which we can regard as a civilizing mission, constitutes progress in the various institutions of the society, each taken separately. This involves elaborateness of norms governing inter-personal relationship which paves the way to a gradual but continuous change towards greater sensitivity and refinement of the society. The practice of self criticism acts as the spring-board towards direction of greater control of violence, as members clamor for progress in the society.

According to Popper's conception of social change, progress means the assumption of elaborateness of all institutions of the society on the basis of analytical deductions. Just as it might refer to specific institutions (piecemeal social engineering), it points at the entire society. One conclusion that emerges from this analysis is that progress in the society does not inherently mean that all parts of the society develop simultaneously or at the same rate or degree. This is because various parts of the society may possess different degrees of autonomy and therefore more open to change than others.

Furthermore, the implication that progress involves transformation in the dimension of complexity at whatever level of the social institutions can be drawn. A change from the closed state of the society to an open one serves well this point especially when the structures of the society are studied carefully. This is different from the change that allows greater degrees of complexity only to yield those which are less. A case in point can be drawn from the decline of the Roman

empire.

This understanding attempts to visualize the formation of societies that put at the forefront individual capabilities towards the realization of what can otherwise be described as the "desirable ends of the society". This gives rise the development of a wider spectrum of sharing ideas that enable men to exercise greater accountability in all that they do for the benefit of the entire society. This ramifies far more widely the necessity of having a society that is governed by smooth running and complex working procedures in the society. This goes to some of the ways in which the task of analysing the concept of social change is done. It is only the change that is validated by the use of rational canons of scientific inquiry that is here equated to progressive change.

The problem arising from the uneasy relationship between an individual and the society is what greatly entails the phenomena of social change. Popper systematically discusses this relationship and although he is unequivocally on the side of the individual in his ceaseless campaign to avoid intimidation into submission and subservience. Alongside with this Popper strongly resists the idea that individuals will benefit from he dismantling the society in a hope to secure their desirable ends. Infact the actuality of the human Society is of even profounder significance for we would not be human beings at all if the social orchestration of our lives were to be silenced. In any case, if we come into being through the medium of language, then the social origins of our individuality becomes quite plain by virtue of language itself being a social phenomena. So even if social institutions might be pumped from human life, social institutions assuredly could not be, but this must not be misinterpreted to mean that they are activated other than thought through the agency of individual human beings. It is we who run our institutions, regrettably this is often done unskillfully, and if we have any sense we will constantly be on the alert from unforeseen pitfalls. It is one of the under-used truisms of Popper's social thought that our plan virtually always do slip up somewhere, not because of any satanic interference, but because we seldom know enough or very

often even much about how things will work out.

As such the wish for an open society entails the initiation of a new critical attitude which champions a new freedom of thought. This freedom should be free from dogmatic thinking characterized in the closed society. Many contemporary societies seem to have done very little in setting free the critical powers of their members. The message here is that which encourages these societies to allow the practice of critical rationalism to prevail over everything else. This is a momentous strategy because it contests the dogmatic tradition which permits only one doctrine, and admits a plurality of doctrines which approaches the truth from a multi-dimensional angle. This means almost of necessity that, our attempt to arrive at what is good or the truth is not final, but open to improvements. This is grounded in the understanding that our knowledge is only conjectural or characterized by guesswork. In this undertaking, trial and error is the method used, a critical process of error elimination as they way the truth is controlled, and critical discussions as our means of getting close to what we desire.

Our societies should, therefore, be grounded on the rationalist tradition that allows for bold changes of doctrines. Innovative or creative thinking should be encouraged and regarded as the success or improvement in so far as it is justifiable. This leads to another realization that whatever is a notable accomplishment at any particular time may not be the same at another especially if it is put under the severe test by competing evidence. This means that we use rationality in our attempt to understand the world and also in our bid to improve our social setting. As such when we offer our suggestions, we should look at them as our guesses since k as far as the world of cognition goes, it is begging for one to say that he knows. This is supported by Popper especially when he argues:

We do not know, we only guess. If you ask me, How do you know? My reply would be, "I dont", I only propose a guess. If you are interested in my problem, I shall be most happy, If you criticize my guess, and if you offer counter-proposals, I in turn will try to criticize them.<sup>1</sup>

It is upon this conviction that Popper developed his epistemology, and it is out of this understanding that he developed his conception of social change.

The open society that is in the mind of Popper is that which extends the possible optimum freedom to its members this is a qualified type of freedom and the one which is created and sustained at optimum levels and only by institutions which are designed for that purpose. These institutions must be backed by the power of the society. any attempt to render these institutions ineffective is an attempt to introduce authoritarian rule of which it has to be prevented, if necessary by force. The implication here is that the use of force against tyranny may be justified even if the tyrant has majority support. the only untyrannical aims the use of force can have are the defence of free institutions where they exist and their establishment where they are not. this is an anti-conservative attitude that suggests that the way of instituting change is through bloodless attempts which is both rational and humane. An open society should not expose its members to violence and for its existence, it should always have a programme of resisting violence because more often than not, leaders fear responsibility for the actions taken. It should strive to minimize avoidable sufferings of the people by drawing immediate attention to their immediate problems.

Problem-solving being the primal activity of man in his evolutionary process, then he should continuously aim at shaping the destiny of his life by pursuing appropriate changes in the society. The solutions to problems exhibit themselves in the form of a new reaction, new expectations and new mode of behavior which if they persistently triumph over the trials to which they are subjected, they tend to modify peoples lives. This manifests how our developed sense of rationality represents the sophisticated attempts to adapt to our environment. Error elimination in our problem-solving proposals marks a developmental stage which assists us in suppressing inappropriate changes.

Popper argues in different parts of his The Poverty of Historicism that in the world

described by physics, nothing can happen that is truly and intrinsically new. This is because a new thing may be invented but we can always analyze it as a re-arrangement of elements that compose it. This means that novelty cannot be casually or rationally explained, but only intuitively grasped. As such the history of problem-solving and the development of language that conveys the message is of viable significance. All animals make noises with expressible and signalling function, but man has added the descriptive and argumentative functions. Language makes it possible, among so many other things the formulation of descriptions of the world, and thus making it possible the development of reason. Popper believes that it is language in the form of a structured form of contact, communication, description and argument through signs and symbols, that makes us human not only as species, but as individuals. From this understanding, we can conclude that for each one of us, the acquisition of a language makes full human consciousness, and the conscious of the self possible.

From the fore-going we can argue that at first, the description of the world seem to have been animistic, superstitious and magical, and that to question them or anything else that gave cohesion and identity to a tribe was a taboo and usually met with a death penalty. As such an individual came into the world dominated by abstractions of which were man-made but none-of-them made by him, and most of them not remarkable to alteration by him either or even open to questioning by him. This kind of life is what Popper calls a closed life. Further, against each man they stood as a kind of objective reality, shaping him from birth, making him human determining almost everything about his life, yet pseudo-autonomous. It is Popper's contention that most of such things were never planned or intended. Although we can argue that they were unintended, there was need of widening and improving on those things with time in order to make them useful in the changing life demands. We can as well argue that they were of no need before they came into existence. The aim structure of man is not "given" but it develops with the help of some kind

of feedback mechanism that is a result of earlier aims and out of results which were or were not aimed at. In this way, a whole universe of possibilities or potentialities may arise.

Popper's wish is that of bringing about a new cultural revolution by peaceful means. This revolution is far much radical than any change which could be achieved by the shedding of blood or by mere inter-change of power. It is a change of the entire human soul turning from the confused experience of the senses to the intelligible structure seen only by the eye of the mind, which might culminate in the establishment of a society ruled by reason. Such a revolution has not yet been achieved anywhere, but it is our contention that it can be of viable significance if all existing societies strive for it.

In order to come to grips with what an open society means, the modern admirer of the same has to develop a keen interest in its requirements. Popper is a sympathizer of the present social setting and a strong opponent of any form of dictatorial regimes. He has a strong interest in the process of civilization by being a supporter of modern democracy. What is meant by democracy should not be our major concern because this is a complex question, and any attempt to answer it throws us into an infallible dilemma.

The unfinished modern struggles against dictatorship and class tyranny contributes a great deal to the deep distrust of unchecked political power and any form of dogmatism. From this point, the abolition of hereditary political power and the right to remove public officials from office by free ballot, which is a characteristic of all present-day democracies and the separation of power in the constitution, are made possible. This is a realistic philosophy that seems to have gained roots in the ancient Greece, and has since been cultivated, refined and developed down to the present day. It works for the tradition which articulates the gradual evolution of the democratic concepts and practices. During the middle ages the democratic principles were merged with christianity, often in such a way as to be almost overwhelmed by it. This tradition has remained in force no matter what

a human majority may decide, and must be recognized by any rationally cornered society in which authentic human life is to be possible. This should as a matter of necessity offer protection to human individuals who alone possess the precious faculty of reason, against ruling opinion. This is how an open society should operate no matter what a majority may decide, these principles remain in force since the ruling opinion may be in error. Free discussions and criticisms must proceed and, hence, all genuinely open societies, the rights to access to information, of assembly and of free expression of opinions are recognized and protected.

For this reason, therefore, education must be recognized as a right. This will render a general understanding that adequate training of the cognitive powers possible which are required for the intelligent exercise of the democratic functions in the open society. This thus calls for the need of establishing public schools and universities to ensure that the art of rationality is adequately imparted to as many members of the society as possible. This recognition of the importance of reason as the only power naturally fitted for the guidance of human life, and of those individual rights which are for its exercise, is the peculiar contribution of Popper's realistic philosophy. It underscores the need of making our societies more open than ever before. Without this, we miss some of the effective checks against dogmatism and tyranny which have been discovered in modern times, and a robust faith in the capacities of the common man for the practical insight and sacrificial endeavors.

Popper is acutely aware of the dangers of tyranny. This is why as a protection against it, he suggests that education should be given a priority and also that a rigorous system of examination of the civil service in the public offices should be carried out. Popper believes that all men possess partly a rational nature in common. His open society through opposed to totalitarianism also values the desirable elements contained in it. As such he does not necessarily identify the open society with a democracy, but as a combination of desirable elements in any system of government without

destroying any of them. It is against class rule and slavery or rather monopoly coupled with strict censorship. From the foregoing, number of conclusions can be drawn.

- (1) Uncriticized opinion and prejudice are inimical to freedom. but unless freedom is identified with anarchy, it has nothing to fear either from critical knowledge which is able to defend itself by reference to evidence available to all, or from the untrammelled search for such knowledge in every field of human experience.
- (2) Popper's impatience with social corruption and his zeal for reform led him at times to make statements which seem to imply an approval of militant means to achieve what he conceived as worth ends. Such statements cannot be defended when separated from their contexts. The facts known about Popper which can be inferred from his writings provide no evidence that he in any way advocated from the use of violence to achieve our desired goals. As such our duty in the social change endeavors should be based on reason, built on reason and sustained only by those who as a matter of inevitability approach it from a rationalistic view point.
- (3) Society, viewed as a mechanistic entity, represents a realistic approach that tallies with what mankind pursues in day-to-day life in the society. The changing nature of things in the universe suggests that everything that compose it should follow suit, and which society is not an exception. As such it is the duty of man to change his society at his discretion so long as it is on the basis of justifiable evidence. Society should not be conceived of as a mere juxtaposition of atomic individuals, but as a group of individuals unified by a shared purpose capable of eliciting co-operative acts, and not as a physical or substantial unity, but a moral unity of purpose and aspirations. The attack of reason and the rational nature of man lead to social disintegration and the attack of society at its very roots.
- (4) The open society should at whatever cost shun away racist tendencies and chances of its

justification should be ruled out as being null and void. A practitioner of criticism of existing traditional cultures should not be viewed as an act of racial inferiority but a believe that the whole human race is one flock under one divine shepherd and that human nature is everywhere the same should be underscored.

- (5) The idea of an open society is no mere collection of theoretical assertions about society, but a serious project of practical reforms put forward with an intention of reforming the whole world. This consideration suggests that the destiny our societies can only be made viable if we take seriously the approach of piecemeal social engineering as the guiding formula of instituting changes in the society. when we recover from this finding, we may look a new and progressivist in our social stay. Well may even begin to feel a little sorry for our indulgence in social changes that we have for long been pursuing and yet they do not lead to our expectations. This is a deep involvement of a progressivist attitude that all contemporary societies should strive to embrace. It is not subjectivist or skeptical but straight forward and direct to the point.
- (6) A free society requires some confidence in the ability of men to reach tentative and tolerable adjustments between their competing interests and to arrive at some common notions of justice, liberty and sovereignty which in some way transcends the bounds of partial interests. Individuals must recognize this as necessary in the society as they strive to bring their thoughts and action under the guidance of rationalistic principles. This can logically be inferred from the premise that, just as the open society is rationally entered into, the open-minded individuals must choose to exercise their rationality in shaping the destiny of their society.
- (7) There is need of replacing the traditional method of studying society with the right methodology. This does not disregard the traditional view point wholesomely, but an

attempt to analyze social demands through the medium of modern science, or the reaction to modern natural science, and through a number of basic concepts inherited from the philosophic tradition, however despised or ignored. This understanding promises to bring order into the chaos of life from a point of view outside the social life; that is to say from a point of view of science that itself is not essentially an element of social life. This is to say, it follows carefully the articulation which is in here in, and natural to social life and its objectives. The implication here is that social life is characterized by conflicts between men asserting opposed claims. Our Present experience shows that those who raise claims usually believe that what they claim is good for them, and from this they conclude that it is good for the society at large. In almost all cases they say that what they claim, sometimes sincerely and sometimes insincerely, is the name of justice.

- (8) A sovereign bestowed with the responsibility of guiding the members of the society should not be a "radical" partisan who prefers victory in civil war to arbitration. He should as a matter of obligation make civil war to arbitration. He should as a matter of obligation make civil strife cease and try to create an atmosphere that allows for agreements between individuals to sort out such un-desirable happenings. In most cases a sovereign comes into the sight as a good member of the society who can perform this function to the members in the best way and on the highest level. In doing this, he has to raise questions that are rarely asked in the political arena, but in doing so he should not abandon his fundamental orientation, which is orientation inherent in political life. As such the question of the approach to political life is fundamental if at all the issue of sovereignty is to be sorted out intelligibly in a society that professes to be open. The issue of method provides us with various skills, and in particular that apparent skill which enables man to manage well the affairs of the political society as a whole. This is an art of prudence and practical wisdom

that is essential if at all the realization of good governance of the society is to be made possible.

- (9) In an open society, the principle of liberty should be understood in such a way that the protection of basic human rights of individual members, for instance, the natural right to survive as human beings, is fully observed. For this reason, therefore, no society in which these liberties are not, on that whole, respected, is free. This means that the society is free if it is based on laissez-faire principles and that the society has the obligation of restricting the individual's freedom when and only when necessary to protect another individual's basic rights. If individuals enjoy these legal rights, they are subject to corresponding duties; they are free, however, unless they are unfree in other regards and with respect to actors other than the society.

This goes a long way in suggesting that the open society, for it to be open at all, must make available for everybody the opportunities for the satisfaction of these basic needs. Society has to regulate individual freedom in the affairs concerning basic needs.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS*

This chapter attempts a brief summary of what is contained in this work, some notable conclusions observed and the recommendations made.

This thesis discusses the fundamental ideas of Popper's social philosophy in relation to his conceptualization of social change. As said in chapter two of this work, Popper is a contemporary philosopher whose thought addresses the social problems that confront man in his living in the society. He has at his very heart the wish of seeing man living a meaningful and elaborate life by ensuring that the society in which he lives in serves well its intended goal of enabling man to successfully endeavor to remedy the impeding social evils that confront him.

What we have done in this work is to give a clear outline of Popper's thought which exhibit a systematic unity. This involves, for reasons which becomes clear after reading through this work his successful attempt to develop his thought after a careful and close study of human knowledge. What this means is that his epistemological thought played a priority role in shaping his entire philosophical thought, i.e, social philosophy, ethics and philosophy of science Popper has intended ideas originally worked in the natural sciences to the social sciences and knowledge of the former is indispensable to a deeper understanding of the latter. We have also made it clear why this philosophy has the influence it has, and in broad terms why it is at odds with other contemporary philosophies though it does not go into specific controversies involved.

Related to this, and of which it is important to grasp, is the belief that philosophy is a necessary activity because as it is always the case, many of us take many things for granted, and many of these things are of a philosophical character. So the critical examinations of presuppositions (which itself is a philosophical activity) is morally and intellectually important. this view pits philosophy as something lived and important for us all and not certainly as consisting

primarily in the study of the writings of professional philosophers. As such, this work has taken much trouble to make the thought of Popper more acceptable than ever before especially in his analysis of social change in relation to the political programme of a changing social setting. It makes it clear that what he said, though appearing simple and perhaps obvious, it is as complicated and necessary if we in any case would wish to evaluate why societies exist at all and in our assessment of the intended goals for which societies are destined to realise for their members.

The ancient schools, especially those of the pre-socratic thinkers did not only permit criticisms, but they also encouraged them. This can be drawn from the criticisms of Anaximander to his teacher Thales are regards the cosmological questions they posed to themselves. One thing that characteristically emerges from this understanding and of which we think it is worth noting is that, the most important development since the emergence of human language has been the emergence of criticisms. This spelt the end of the dogmatic tradition of passing on unsullied truth, and the beginning of a new rational tradition of subjecting speculations to critical examination and discussions. This in itself serves well the inauguration of the scientific attitude where error is turned from disaster to advantage. this means that whereas the entire weight of intellectual had been defensive and to preserve existing doctrines, for the first time it was put behind a questioning attitude and became a force of change. Though the pre-socratic philosophers concerned themselves with cosmological issues socrates and the later thinkers applied the same critical rationality to human behavior.

It is true that the social studies have not yet fully attained publicity of method, This is partly due to the intelligent failure to make use of social instruments of scientific objectivity. Most of us are unable or even unwilling to speak a common language and as such, the only course open to the social sciences is to forget all about verbal fireworks and tackle the practical problems of our time with the help of theoretical methods which are fundamentally the same in all sciences. with this we

mean the method of trial and error, of inventing hypothesis which can be practically tested and submitting them to practical tests. As for this therefore we are advocating for the need of a social technology whose results can be tested by piecemeal social engineering. This is because we cannot know without making an effort or without taking interest in studying the society in which we live in from a practical point of the political programme of the society, attempts have been made to discuss how the principles of Justice, Liberty and Sovereignty are celebrated in a changing social setting. In analysing and evaluating the philosophical implications of social change, the influence that this understanding of social change bear to our contemporary life situation is discussed at length, before drawing some conclusions and making recommendations.

Man finds himself in many dilemmas because of his inability to build a society that can guarantee him a meaningful and elaborate living. Even the so branded "good societies" may at times commit morally outrageous acts which will go a long way in obstructing the pursuit of change in the society. In such circumstance, the conscientious members of the society find that to be paradoxical which renders the need of performing acts which are according to their consciousness possible. Popper endeavors to shed some light on the nature and variety of actions that comprise this category of extra-ordinary political acts by distinguishing what he calls "the open society" from "the closed society".

One notable observes on made is that societal institutions need intelligent supervision in order to determine its headway to objectivity. when institutions are designed and manned in this manner, they end up influencing the character of political activities and decisions which are in like with the ever-changing needs of man. This means that, institutions can be manipulated consciously in order to control their development. In this situation, criticisms should not be seen as one thing because men view, this is because practice is not an enemy of theoretical knowledge but the most valuable incentive for it instead. The point is that we should always remain in touch with reality

with practice for those who overlook it have to pay lapsing into scholasticism practical application of our findings is thus the means which we may eliminate irrationalism from social fields and not in any way an attempt to separate it from knowledge.

On the basis of this, the ideas of Popper philosophical concerns of understanding society. As for this, therefore, this thesis highlights the biography of Popper, the analysis of social change, social change and the political programme of the society, and the philosophical implications of social change. In his biography, the dimensions of his early life, his contemporary society, his early influences, his intellectual development, his major works and his general philosophical thought have been discussed in the analysis of social change, an attempt has been made to give the concept an epistemological interpretation, for instance, a historical survey of how different philosophers have conceptualized social change. It establishes that social change is the rational way through which the "closed society" is gradually transformed into the "open society". Further, in analysing the relationship between social change and, criticize in different ways and by different standards. Proposals for change are always defended in different ways with different sorts of reasons. As such the realization that societal institutions function in the way they do because men agree as to the sort of evidence that justifies or upsets a conclusion is important. This leads men to alter their policies and adopt other because arguing for a proposal is like establishing a theory and raising objections is like criticizing a theory. Criticism of a proposal is essentially a way of refining it further so much so that the end results are more elaborate and more accommodative. This follows from the argument that we owe our reason to intercourse with other men and so we must recognize everybody else with whom we communicate as potentially a source of argument and reasonable information. This is important in the sense that at the end of it all, it leads to the rational unity of mankind.

The practice of critical rationalism, which is a recurring theme throughout this work suggests that nobody should be his or her own judge and hence the idea of impartiality. This

practice can be termed as social experiments which can be used in the formulation of social policies which as a matter of necessity can be accurately repeated if at all a new situation which demands the same treatment arises.

Another realization that the real social problems should not be understood to be conflicts but as the problems of improvement. Men should, thus, have the target of improving matters arising, improve their lives as a progressive trend which is equated to a civilizing mission. This is an inclination to manifest that humanitarianism should be held as a policy for the society as a whole. It should also be a policy of protecting the weak or the meek. This goes a long way in making this realization a philosophy useful only from a limited point of viewing and managing things as they are in the world of reality, to a knowledge of how to change things.

Further, to say that we have got to know about something does not suffice to argue that our ideas about it have been finally certified as being or not being the case. This is because the method of investigation and the tests involved preclude such finality. As such Popper's conception of social change should not be viewed as a dogma but as a guide to action by men of rational understanding.

What unifies these ideas is our chief aim of realizing an open society under the guidelines of critical discussions and of offering workable solutions to the impeding social evils. This end is used on, worked out, and justified in terms of our original investigations of society and its laws of development. All these investigations are in turn guided by the prescribed methodology discussed in chapter three of "piecemeal social engineering". This is an approach of comprehending facts in their own and not in a fantastic connection, and in their change process, they are aimed at registering a progressive trend in the stages of societal development.

The move towards a higher aim in social change should put into consideration the frequent intervals and the conditions which prompt members of the society to clamor for change. There is need to take into account all social changes and factors of change in our complex critical

discussions. On the basis of this, we are able to base our pursued policies at different times and places as only fitting well in those particular situations. If this analysis fail then it is not critical, it is uncritical if it is not checked point by point or if it is not thoroughly revised wherever and whenever circumstances change or experience reveals an error.

Of course it quite often does fail but it is human to err and many of us make mistakes either through inexperience, incompetence or because we have no time to exhaust all the inquires necessary. This fact is crucial our approach to life issues, because the act of making mistakes is so deeply rooted in social realities that whenever some go wrong, others come forward to put them right. This means that error can be corrected and when circumstances change, changed policies are adopted to suit the changed circumstance. It is on this basis that Popper advocated for the perpetual practice of criticism of suggested proposals sot that the emergent solution can remedy the problems encountered in the society. This is an indication to show that if we make a mistake such as that of adding  $5 + 5 = 10$ .

In applying this approach, one is faced with conditions and tasks significantly different from the previous ones. Circumstances change, and the very achievement as well as the errors of the previous attempt present new tasks to others. In this way the Popperian analysis of one time is not precisely the same as that of another time and or place too.

In concluding this thesis, we would wish to contend with the following recommendations.

- (1) Knowledge must be held as an open ended, on going pursuit where each successive formulation of our theories yield consequences that to go beyond the existing body of knowledge. What we call knowledge is of its nature provisional, since it has the tendency of solving our immediate needs. At no stage are we able to prove with the required certainty that "we know" is true because it is very possible to prove that it will turn out to be falls. Nothing in the world of reality is permanently established or nothing remains

unaltered since everything is changing all the time. As such, if we are in any case hoping to arrive at knowledge that is characteristically objective, we need not hold anything to be infallible.

- (2) The need of practicing critical attitude to accepted opinions in order to justify their foundations and at the same time validate what they profess to accomplish is a vital undertaking. This is so because it makes it possible for us to distinguish projects of dogmatic thinking from those of critical thinking. The former refers to a closed attitude to social life or "closed society, whereas the latter refers to openness or "open society" To make this work, the method of trial and error in our attempts to come close to objectivity must be held with a lot of esteem. For the purpose of clarity, this attempt also calls for the need of introducing the critical method of error elimination after our pursuit of trials as a way of objectifying our knowledge. This method is similar to a creative or inventive thinking, which is a combination of intense interest in some problem and the readiness to try it over again with highly critical thinking and even in readiness to attack propositions which for less critical thought determines the range from which our conjectures are selected. This gives us an initiative of imaginative freedom that allows us to see far unsuspected sources of error and possible prejudices of critical thinking and examination. For this reason therefore must look at rational criticism of already established opinions as our greatest instrument of progress. This intellectual tool of pursuing change that is based on critical discussions and also the kind of change that is progressive in orientation.
- (3) Social change must be understood as step-by-step process through which society is gradually transformed from a closed state to an open one. This is an indication that, just in as much as we may consider our societies to be open or closed, there is a greater need of enhancing the opening up process so that members live a considerably elaborate and

meaningful life in the final analysis. This view examines society not necessarily as a system or an organism, but as an open ended entity instead. This mechanistic view pits social change as the anticipated fate of any society that craves or professes to be open. For this reason therefore social change is a rational way through which the open society is entered into and it must therefore be the deepest revolution that men of reason must pursue. For this change to be possible, people must understand that societal institutions are man made and not as fixed and inviolable parts of the order of the universe. This gives us a strong faith in the open society and a strong admittance for the love of individual freedom.

- (4) Social change must be piecemeal or partial in the sense of starting to examine institutions as they are, examine in what ways they work badly, either by causing preventable human inconveniences or suffering or failing to alleviate it and then introduce reforms to make them work better. The piecemeal approach to social change advances by trial and error, it becomes more effective and successful as practical experiences accumulate, and in this way it can bid fair to be supported by the approval and agreements of a great number of people, rather than causing people to fall out with one another as it is likely to result from the more ambitious and far reaching project of social reconstruction. It works better in the elimination of concrete social evils than for the realization of abstract goods. To achieve this, we must identify what is considered as the urgent evil in the society and try patiently to convince others that we can satisfactorily get rid of it rationally by the use of direct means.
- (5) It is not enough for any one in power or any lesser organization to have policies in the sense of having aims and goals, however clearly formulated. There must be a means of achieving them. If the means do not exist, they must be created, otherwise the goals, however good, will not be reached. Institutions of every kind must be looked at as machines of implementing policies. Since policies are normally advocated and their implementation

supervised by people who are in some way committed to them, we recommend that changes of a certain magnitude involve change in personnel. So if the open society is to be a reality, the most fundamental requirement must be that those in power must be removable at intervals and without violence, and replaceable with others with policies different from those of the government. Further for this to be a genuine option, people with policies different from those of the government must be free to constitute themselves as an alternative government, ready to take over.

- (6) The society must not extend unlimited tolerance to its members since it is likely to be destroyed. As such, a tolerant society must be prepared in some circumstance to suppress the enemies of tolerance. Although this is the case, we recommend that the society must not do so, not unless they constitute a genuine danger. If they begin by denouncing all arguments, they may forbid their followers to listen to rational arguments because it is deceptive and teach them to answer arguments by the use of their first. A society can only survive if it is prepared in the last instance to restrain such people by force.
- (7) Further, unqualified freedom like unqualified tolerance is self destructive and is bound to produce its opposite. Proponents of complete freedom are in actuality, whatever their intentions are, enemies of freedom. What we must ensure is that the maximum possible freedom is an optimum, and not absolute, for it has to be restricted if it has to exist at all. As such, the best society we can hope for from a practical point of view as well as from a moral point of view is the one that extends the possible maximum freedom to its members which is a qualified one and that it can be created and sustained at optimum levels only by institutions as designed for this purpose.
- (8) The guiding principle of the open society must be the avoidance of suffering. This is significant in the sense that it means doing something about it as the first priority. The

consequence of this goes across the board for instead of encouraging one to think about an Ideal Society, it makes one to seek out and to try and remove the specific social evils under which human beings re-suffering. This is a practical approach to social life, and yet one devoted to change. This means that we must forget about building utopia for what is valuable is what we undergo here and now, and not some other imaginary categories of success that is only expressed in words and not in deeds. this will make the society to go a long way to rectifying abuses and anomalies within the existing pattern of life. We recommend that we must make this a methodological rule always to apply it first and act on the consequences, but whenever possible to look for a situation afresh, in terms of a second richer formulation which subsumes our first one.

- (9) It is true that people differ about what kind of society they want. So whatever the nature of the group that gets into power with an aim of putting its blueprint into production will have to render the opposition of others ineffective. But what appears as the most desirable form of society even to the people who made the blueprint will diverge further and further from it as they approach it. Even the successors who had nothing to do with the blueprint in the first instance will also follow suit. This follows logically that not only are the planners themselves part of the society they wish to sweep away, but their social experience and therefore social assumptions and aims, no matter how critical they may be, are bound to have been conditioned by it. This therefore means that an attempt to sweep it away includes sweeping themselves and their plans away too social reconstruction which is radical and prolonged is bound to uproot and disorient very large number of people, there creating widespread psychological as well as mental adversity. For this reason we recommend that any rational man in the society must be in opposition to some measures that threaten him with such effects.

- (10) Alongside with this individuals in the society must be seen as crews of a ship at sea, and they can choose to remodel any part of the ship they live in, and they can subsequently remodel it entirely, section by section, but cannot do it all at once. this logically follows from the fact that change is never going to stoop and this renders the very notion of the blueprint for a good society to be unrealistic. In as far as the world of cognition goes and to the best of our knowledge, the pace of social change seems to get faster with everyday that elapses. This process has no definite end, so to have any hope at all of a corresponding to the realities of a political approach must not concern itself with societies and states of affairs, but with change. This task is not the impossible one of establishing and preserving a particular form of a society, but to maximize our control over the actual changes that occur in the process of change which is never ending. and for this to be realistic, the control we secure must be controlled wisely on the basis of good justifiable evidence.
- (11) The wish for an open society entails the initiation of a new critical attitude which champions a new freedom of thought. This freedom must be free of dogmatic thinking that is characterized in the closed society. men in the contemporary societies seem to have done very little in setting free the critical powers of its members. We therefore recommend that our societies must afford to allow the practice of critical rationalism to prevail over everything else. This is a momentous strategy because it will go along way in contesting the dogmatic tradition which permits on one doctrine, and admit a plurality of doctrines which approach truth from a multi-dimensional angle. This means almost by necessity that our attempts to arrive at what is good or the truth is not final, but open to improvements. this is grounded on the fact that our knowledge is conjectural, and in this way trial and error is the method used, a critical procedure of error elimination as the way truth is controlled and critical discussions as the way knowledge grows.

- (12) We further recommend that innovative or creative thinking must be encouraged and regarded as the success or improvement of things in so far as they are justifiable. This leads to yet another realization that whatever appears as a notable accomplishment at any particular time may not be the same at another especially if it is put to the severe test of competing evidence. This means that there is an element of rationality in our attempt to understand the world and also in our bid to improve our social setting. We recommend further that in the open society, problem solving must be the primal activity of man in his evolutionary process. This is aimed at shaping his destiny by pursuing appropriate changes in the society. The solutions offered exhibit themselves in the form of a new reaction, new expectation and a mode of behavior which if they persistently triumph over the trials which they are subjected to, they tend to modify the life of man in the society. This is a developed sense of rationality which represents the sophisticated attempts to adapt to our environment. This realization makes use of the critical procedure of error elimination in our problem-solving proposals, hence an indication of development which assist us in suppressing inappropriate changes.

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