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Badaczka niezależna

Society in the theory of Karl Popper

The aim of this article is to analyse the dichotomy between an open and a closed society and to examine the problem of individual freedom and the freedom of society as the foundations of a civil society¹. The author puts forward the hypothesis that the foundations of every contemporary civil society is the open society as discussed by Karl Popper.

What is the threat of a closed society to a civil society? In what circumstances can a civil society develop? When can one talk about individual freedom? When can we talk about the freedom of the whole society?

For over two thousand years people have striven to liberate themselves of prejudice and the influence of authorities. They have sought to construct a civil society that would correspond to the standards of freedom of the mind and humanity. They want to take responsibility for the world. The moral longings for a betterment of one's own and fellow-man's fate are civil problems of our era. Humanity still endures the process of transformation from tribal to open society.

Popper's philosophy² is soaked through with faith in the human mind and love of freedom³, defined as the right of an individual to make independent decisions and confront the consequences of those decisions. In his book *The Open Society and Its Enemies* Popper refers to social philosophy in an unflattering manner as that which claims the discovery of historical laws and which allows for the prediction of historical events. He ironically

¹ Civil society understanding as civic (rule of law, liberal democratic).

² Cf.: A. Chmielewski, *Filozofia Poppera: analiza krytyczna*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 1995; K. Niebrój, R. Karla, *Poppera koncepcja prawdy: kwestia podstawowego nośnika prawdziwości*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2010; K. Popper, *Spoleczeństwo otwarte i jego wrogowie*, PWN, Warszawa 2010; E. Pietruska-Madey, *Wiedza i człowiek: szkice o filozofii Karla Poppera*, Wydział Filozofii i Socjologii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 1997; G. Soros, *Kryzys światowego kapitalizmu: zagrożenie dla społeczeństwa otwartego*, Muza, Warszawa 1999; J. Szacki, *Historia myśli socjologicznej*, PWN, Warszawa 2011.

³ Cf.: "faith in reason, freedom and the brotherhood of all men – the new faith, and as I believe, the only possible faith, of the open society". K. Popper, op. cit., p. 2, 265.

called this philosophy “allegedly scientific prophecies” and recognized it as a form of escapism from reality and present responsibilities, an escape into an unknown paradise. He therefore departed from the paradigm of history. To the question ‘Does history make any sense?’, he responds: certainly not. For Popper, history does not have any aim and does not represent any values.

Popper criticises Plato, whose theory he understood as an escape into future paradise – a Platonian vision of state that he interpreted as an attack on freedom and reason, leaning towards a closed, totalitarian structure of social life, which reduces people to obedient thoughtless puppets of authority. He criticizes Hegel’s and Marx’s concepts, comparing both thinkers to arrogant intellectual prophets and fathers of the modern totalitarian system. He wanted to propose an alternative to an authoritarian society. Popper believed in a civil society based on piecemeal social engineering relying on solving immediate conflicts instead of following a general idea of a social well-being. People trapped under despotic rule are intimidated and deprived of the right to take responsibility for own actions and are therefore stripped of their humanity.

A part of being human, according to Popper, is having a moral responsibility that can only evolve under conditions of political freedom that is solely secured by democracy; “what Marxists describe disparagingly as ‘mere formal freedom’ becomes the basis of everything else. This ‘mere formal freedom’, i.e. democracy, the right of the people to judge and to dismiss their government, is the only known device by which we can try to protect ourselves against the misuse of political power; it is the control of the rulers by the ruled. And since political power can control economic power, political democracy is also the only means for the control of economic power by the ruled. Without democratic control, there can be no earthly reason why any government should not use its political and economic power for purposes very different from the protection of the freedom of its citizens”⁴. Popper defined democracy as open society⁵, the rule of law and not the majority rule. He was perfectly aware that government by the people can result in tyranny by the majority, which is not any better than any other form of tyranny. The political purpose of democracy is to provide freedom and justice reaching out as far as possible without any undue limitations to freedom⁶. Popper sees democracy as a guardian of law and freedom, a guardian of possessions. He doesn’t approve of Marx’s claim that economic power lies at the root of all evil, agreeing more with the views of Walter Lippmann and Bertrand

⁴ Ibidem, p. 2, 177.

⁵ It is worth noting the fact that terms the *open/closed society* were coined and first introduced into philosophy by Henri Bergson – Popper does not hesitate to mention this. Popper notes that his understanding of those terms slightly differs from that of Bergson’s. Freedom according to Bergson is closely associated with the creative aspect of an individual whereas for Popper it is linked with liberalism. More on Bergson’s open society can be found in: M. Środa, *Ludzie i terminy*, „Wiedza i Życie”, June 1996.

⁶ Popper writes in a preface addressing the Polish audience: “The great thinkers of the past who obliged us with these ideas, defended freedom in the name of a truth they were fully aware of: I can rule on my own! Our ideal therefore is not a majority rule nor “complete freedom” but autonomy. The law needs to reach where autonomy failed to extend or was not introduced. According to Kant’s teachings life in a society cannot be completely free: the freedom of every individual needs to be limited in a way as not to interfere with the freedoms of others. [...] If that rule is not abided by, law supported by the power of the government is obliged to interfere. That in short is the idea of a free and open society” – K. Popper, op. cit., p. 1, 8.

Russell⁷ that “it is only the active intervention of the state – the protection of property by laws backed by physical sanctions – which makes of wealth a potential source of power; for without this intervention a man would soon be without his wealth. Economic power is therefore entirely dependent on political and physical power”⁸. Wiktor Osiatyński points out that Popper strongly supports individualism in opposition to collectivism and tribalism⁹.

The idea of an open society can be fully understood through a comparison with a closed society. What in essence is a closed society? Popper highlights the magicality and irrationality of such societies, the leaning towards a tribal structure of social life: “It is one of the characteristics of the magical attitude of a primitive tribal or a ‘closed’ society that it lives in a charmed circle of unchanging taboos, of laws and customs which are felt to be as inevitable as the rising of the sun or the cycle of the seasons, or similar obvious regularities of nature”¹⁰. It is, therefore, a magical, collective, tribal society – it can be described in terms of a biological or an organic theory of the state. Popper compares it to a living organism: “A closed society resembles a herd or a tribe in being a semi-organic unit whose members are held together by semi-biological ties – kinship, living together, sharing common efforts, common dangers, common joys and common distress”¹¹. Below is a list of “spiritual treasures” of a closed (totalitarian)¹² society, which Popper ironically concocted in response to his reading of Hegel and Marx.

The first feature of closed society is obedience¹³ of the citizens to the rulers, following orders, released from liabilities – as Tacqueville would convey it – raising “slaves”

⁷ B. Russell, *Power: A New Social Analysis*, Routledge, New York 1938, p. 123; W. Lippmann, *The Good Society*, Brown and Co., Boston 1937, p. 188.

⁸ K. Popper, op. cit., p. 2, 178.

⁹ W. Osiatyński, *Spoleczeństwo otwarte według Poppera*, „Wiedza i Życie”, June 1996.

¹⁰ K. Popper, op. cit., p. 1, 93.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 250.

¹² Daniel Grinberg points out how the post-war and modern understanding of the term ‘totalitarianism’ is close to that of Popper’s vision. He states: “The key definition of totalitarianism, specified and codified in the mid ‘50s by Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzeziński, made an impressive career not only in political science. The following elements were supposed to contribute towards ‘the totalitarian syndrome’: 1) state ideology – monopolistic and obligatory for all citizens; 2) the mass membership party organised hierarchically, intertwined with the state administration; 3) completely compliant with political party and bureaucrats, armed forces together with the rest of the society; 4) state monopoly of information and media; 5) physical and psychological police terror as one of the core principles of rule; 6) centrally planned economy [...]. Extensive discussions that were carried out with consistent intensity up to the late ‘60s did not result in an agreement as to the distribution of posts. They did, however, enable a degree of clarification on the subject of a modified vision of social phenomenon. In this new vision, free from the enstrangling corset of multipoint syndromes, the emphasis is put on the eradication of a civil society actively absorbed by the omnipresent state, on striving for a gigantic mono-party state in order to mobilise mass society and on postulating a “permanent revolution”, generated in all state structures through an unbridled movement of activism... Although until recently the term totalitarianism was perceived literally and associated mostly with something ruthless and inevitable, encompassing and final, nowadays it is taken more figuratively; meaning not as much a factual state but the act of trying to achieve it; describing not an immovable monolith but a gradual and reversible sociopolitical phenomenon”. D. Grinberg, *Pre-face to Polish edition from 1993*, [in:] H. Arendt, *Korzenie totalitaryzmu*, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2008, p. 747–750.

¹³ Bergson perceived intuition as well as reason and the ego as the basis for obedience. Popper, on the other hand, clearly connected obedience with primordiality and mindless abandonment of one’s freedoms in favour of the rulers.

instead of independent citizens that can take responsibility for their own actions. Plato states that: “The greatest principle of all is that nobody, whether male or female, should be without a leader. Nor should the mind of anybody be habituated to letting him do anything at all on his own initiative; neither out of zeal, nor even playfully. But in war and in the midst of peace – to his leader he shall direct his eye and follow him faithfully. And even in the smallest matter he should stand under leadership. For example, he should get up, or move, or wash, or take his meals... only if he has been told to do so. In a word, he should teach his soul, by long habit, never to dream of acting independently, and to become utterly incapable of it”¹⁴. Hegel echoed Plato, which Popper wrote about as follows: “Just as he [Hegel] opposes liberty and equality, so he opposes the brotherhood of man, humanitarianism, or, as he says, ‘philantropy’. Conscience must be replaced by blind obedience and by romantic Heraclitean ethics of fame and fate, and the brotherhood of man by a totalitarian nationalism”¹⁵.

Another of the features of closed society is indoctrination – controlling minds (Orwellian control of thoughts)¹⁶. The constant and harsh censure of all intellectual activity and perpetual propaganda is directed at unifying and molding of minds¹⁷. The state is free of any moral obligations. Therefore, history is the only judge. The only rule outlining individual codes of behaviour is the collective good – propaganda lies and adjusting the truth become acceptable. The truth is important as long as it serves the state. If the situation and state interest call for it the rulers can cheat and lie. Since intellectual independency is the foundation of intellectual dexterity, the totalitarian state takes all measures necessary not to allow for the development of critical thinking of its citizens. Intellectual independence leads to complications, which prove impossible to overcome within the framework of any form of authoritarianism: “The authoritarian will in general select those who obey, who believe, who respond to his influence. But in doing so, he is bound to select mediocrities. For he excludes those who revolt, who doubt, who dare to resist his influence. Never can an authority admit that the intellectually courageous, i.e. those who dare to defy his authority, may be the most valuable type”¹⁸.

Next feature illustrating the closed society is a stable form of mobilisation and education system directed at the development of physical strength. Training of the body over training of the spirit – sport instead of the humanities – intensive and constant form of mobilisation. Monopoly of the ruling class for military training – the right to carry arms and access education. Popper highlights this aspect of totalitarianism within Plato’s works: “The political principle that determines the education of the soul, namely, the preservation of the stability of the state, determines also that of the body. The aim is simply that of

¹⁴ K. Popper, op. cit., p. 1, 25.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 2, 73.

¹⁶ Cf.: “The pessimistic fear that totalitarian regime can cause irreversible changes in minds of its victims or even change the essence of humanity, can be detected in a book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* from 1963, in which a slightly metaphysical concept of ‘radical evil’ was substituted [by Hannah Arendt] with a completely contrary idea of ‘banality of evil’. D. Grinberg, op. cit., p. 746.

¹⁷ K. Popper, op. cit., p. 1, 133.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 1, 198.

Sparta. While the Athenian citizen was educated to a general versatility, Plato demands that the ruling class shall be trained as a class of professional warriors, ready to strike against enemies from without or from within the state"¹⁹.

Popper also adds to the list strict isolation of the ruling class: the superiority of the ruling race over the ruled, who serve as the working class, fulfilling the needs of those ruling. "Plato distinguishes three classes in his best state, the guardians, their armed auxiliaries or warriors, and the working class. But actually there are only two castes, the military caste – the armed and educated rulers – and unarmed and uneducated ruled, the human sheep; for the guardians are no separate caste, but merely old and wise warriors who have been promoted from the ranks of the auxiliaries. That Plato divides his ruling caste into two classes, the guardians and the auxiliaries, without elaborating similar subdivision within the working class, is largely due to the fact that he is interested only in the rulers"²⁰. The caste system was connected with racial purity, mixing race, according to Plato, led to the degradation of state. Therefore, class intermingling was considered a great crime²¹.

There is another feature on Popper's list, namely strong interference of state into private matters of citizens – communistic principle (uniformism). For Plato, state interference meant introducing a completely new social structure, dependent on a group, with the removal of the family unit. Plato stated: "No member of the ruling class must be able to identify his children, or his parents. The family must be destroyed, or rather, extended to cover the whole warrior class. Family loyalties might otherwise become a possible source of disunion; therefore 'each should look upon all as if belonging to one family'"²². Communism in which there is no place for major poverty as well as excessive wealth, was supposed to protect people from the perils of an economic nature and serve as means of reducing the economic interests and guarantee ruling class unity.

Popper also draws attention to state autarchy. State interest takes precedent – the state needs to strive for economic autarchy otherwise its stability will be shaken. That which serves the greatness of the state, caste or part becomes law. Even such a value as justice sustains the power, health and stability of a state: "Plato's theory of justice, as presented in the Republic and later works, is a conscious attempt to get the better of the egalitarian, individualistic, and protectionist tendencies of his time, and to re-establish the claims of tribalism by developing a totalitarian moral theory"²³.

According to Popper, closed society is also characterized by nationalism, which is as a historicist mode of thinking that defines the state as an embodiment of a God/Spirit of a self-forming nation (or race). One chosen nation (chosen race) is destined to dominate the world. Popper highlights that modern nationalism can be based on language, as is the case with Ficht, or on a theory of the historical nation as is the case with Hegel. The nation, according to Hegel, is a unified spirit that operates through history. It is unified by a common enemy and the brotherhood of arms during a conflict. Popper warns that nationalism

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 1, 89.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 1, 79.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 1, 82.

²² Cf.: K. Popper, *op. cit.*, p. 1, 81.

²³ Ibidem, p. 1, 177.

appeals to our primal tribal instincts, to feelings and prejudice and to a nostalgic craving for setting oneself free of the individual responsibility in place of a group or collective liability: “The principle of the national state, that is to say, the political demand that the territory of every state should coincide with the territory inhabited by one nation, is by no means so self-evident as it seems to appear to many people to-day. Even if anyone knew what he meant when he spoke of nationality, it would be not at all clear why nationality should be accepted as a fundamental political category, more important for instance than religion, or birth within a certain geographical region, or loyalty to a dynasty, or a political creed like democracy (which forms, one might say, the uniting factor of multi-lingual Switzerland). [...] The principle of the national state is not only inapplicable but it has never been clearly conceived. It is a myth. It is an irrational, a romantic and Utopian dream, a dream of naturalism and of tribal collectivism”²⁴.

We will meet in a closed society an ethical idea of war, glorification of war. The state as the natural enemy of all other states must assert its existence in war. The ‘ethical’ idea of war (total and collectivist) especially in the case of a young state against an old one. War fate and fame are the most desired goods.

We meet also a significant role of an individual. The creative role of the Great Man, the world-historical personality, the man of deep knowledge and great passion (now, the principle of leadership). The ideal of a heroic life (live dangerously) and “the ‘heroic man’ as opposed to the petty bourgeoisie and his life of shallow mediocrity”²⁵. Popper defied the closed societies (totalitarian) with the idea of an open society that guarantees individual freedom, especially the freedom of thought, that enables piecemeal social engineering, understood as a gradual improvement of structures and institutions of social life: “the closed society is characterized by the belief in magical taboos, while the open society is one which men have learned to be to some extent critical of taboos, and to base decisions on the authority of their own intelligence (after discussion)”²⁶. The transition process from tribal to open society is far from completed, our civilisation, as Popper states, has not yet fully recovered from the shock of its birth – the transition from the tribal to ‘closed society’, with its submission to magical forces, to the ‘open society’ which sets free the critical powers of man.

What steps should be taken in order to build open society? Popper does not provide a direct answer to this question. However, a careful study of his works makes it possible to devise a map leading to an open society. Most of all he notes that there is no return to a harmonious state of nature. The process of the civilizational development was established. If we turn back, then we must go back the whole way – we must return to the beasts. The only direction we can take on a road to development is that towards an open society, following reason and freedom. Any attempt at violating these values through the persecution of reason and truth means a devastation of what is human: “But if we wish to remain human, then there is only one way, the way into the open society. We must go into

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 2, 75.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 2, 90–91.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 1, 288.

the unknown, the uncertain and insecure, using what reason we may have to plan as well as we can for both security and freedom"²⁷. The first and the most important indication the author of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* gives us is the freedom of an individual fearing responsibility. Popper warns against escaping reality, the here and now, in exchange for building future paradise. He claims: "the only rational attitude and the only Christian attitude towards the history of freedom is the belief that we are the ones responsible for it just as we are responsible for our actions during our lifetime and that our only judge can be our conscience and not material success"²⁸:

People should not pose as prophets but become the makers of one's own fate. Instead of fortune telling be hard-working and mindful of committing mistakes. The future depends on ourselves and we do not depend on any historical necessity. Instead of looking for justifications in history we should follow our own conscience and reason: "it is we, and we alone, who are responsible for adopting or rejecting some suggested moral laws; it is we who must distinguish between the true prophets and the false prophets"²⁹.

Popper was fully aware how difficult it is to define the level of freedom that can be given to a citizen without endangering the part of freedom that should be protected by the state. He claimed it was possible and he relied on examples of democratic states that managed to achieve it. He was certain that this is one of the core tasks of a legislature in democratic countries, where liberalism and intervention by the state are not in opposition. He advocated that no freedom is possible if not protected by the state:

Freedom, we have seen, defeats itself, if it is unlimited. Unlimited freedom means that a strong man is free to bully one who is weak and to rob him of his freedom. This is why we demand that the state should limit freedom to a certain extent, so that everyone's freedom is protected by law. Nobody should be at the mercy of others, but all should have a right to be protected by the state. Now I believe that these considerations, originally meant to apply to the realm of brute force, of physical intimidation, must be applied to the economic realm also. Even if the state protects its citizens from being bullied by physical violence (as it does, in principle, under the system of unrestrained capitalism), it may defeat our ends by its failure to protect them from the misuse of economic power. [...] Under these circumstances, unlimited economic freedom can be just as self-defeating as unlimited physical freedom, and economic may be nearly as dangerous as physical violence"³⁰.

Popper believed there is a need to create social institutions that will protect the freedoms of the weaker from the stronger, including economic freedoms. He considered this part of civil rights protection that did not threaten others as a core responsibility of the state. To his mind the state had the right to limit everyone's freedoms in a balanced manner without exceeding what is necessary in order to achieve equality in limiting freedoms. Another recommendation he proposes is to meticulously plan the structures of institutions designed for protecting freedoms, especially the freedom from exploitation. Social engineering of

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 1, 287.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 2, 374.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 1, 105.

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 2, 173.

this kind is our task, that is in our power, and that we must not wait for economic earthquakes miraculously to produce a new economic world for us, so that all we shall have to do will be to unveil it, to remove the old political cloak³¹. Democratic institutions that provide safety and freedom need to be supported. Those are the institutions that allow for the contral of power, since all forms of power are dangerous and require constant civil monitoring. All large-scale politics need to be institutionalised and not individualised. All democratic long-term politics should be inducted to institutions and not individuals. Popper firmly rejects Marx's type of holism and advocates piecemeal social engineering. He claims: "If it is easier to reach a reasonable agreement about existing evils and the means of combating them than it is about an ideal good and the means of its realization, then there is also more hope that by using the piecemeal method we may get over the very greatest practical difficulty of all reasonable political reform, namely, the use of reason, instead of passion and violence, in executing the programme"³². Popper perceived a solution in creating legal frameworks for institutions to protect citizens and administrative privileges of the state agencies to intervene within set borders. This is essential to achieving certain aims outlined in a particular period by the ruled. He agreed, however, with Marx in that one should not waste time analysing the possibilities of eternal existence of a world we are not content with. He rejected the fortune-telling of a better future and creating a better world through irrational means, conflicting with logic or connected with violence. He supported the development of technologies in order to piecemeal engineer the world as well as the development of interventionist democracy³³.

Another proposition Popper makes is to limit the competence of those ruling. To control through respectively established institutions, to remove the government without bloodshed, and introduce changes on peaceful terms. "A consistent democratic constitution should exclude only one type of change in the legal system, namely a change which would endanger its democratic character"³⁴. Only a system which enables the introduction of reform without the need for violence, can become a fertile soil for all rational changes. Such regulations should be introduced in order for it to be no longer profitable to undertake antidemocratic actions in place of seeking a democratic compromise. A vital element on the path to an open society is to rely on the law of justice, which Popper defined as follows:

1. equal division of social burdens, i.e. in those freedom limitations that are unavoidable in social life;
2. equality before the law, provided that the law does not favour or limit particular individuals, classes or groups of citizens over others;
3. judicial impartiality;
4. equal division of benefits, which the state can offer its citizens³⁵.

³¹ Ibidem, p. 2, 180.

³² Ibidem, p. 1, 182.

³³ Popper considers this criticism of Marxism as particularly important. He made a mention of it in §17/18 „Nędzy historycyzmu”. He claimed that only adapting a historicist moral theory will free Marxism from accusations of preaching a faith.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 2, 224.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 1, 133.

As Wiktor Osiatyński points out in his article devoted to Popper: “for an open society to exist it takes more than free land or opportunities for increases in social mobility due to new technologies. Just as fire needs wood and life nutrition the existence of an open society requires a constant upkeep of energy necessary for its existence and development. An open society would not survive without institutions, without legal limitations of power or without civil independence. In other words, an open society requires the existence of civil society. It was the creation of civil society that preceded the beginnings of an open society on the frontiers of America in the 18th century and later on also in West European democracies”³⁶.

Czesław Porębski makes an interesting point in his article *Man In a Completely Open Society*³⁷. He points out that the risks connected with the depersonification – free market, equal opportunities, lack of tribal ties and tribalism based on (for example) obeying authorities – can lead to the breaking of inter-human relations. According to the author of this article Popper puts special emphasis on individualism, and the necessity of cooperation, but also competition. He highlighted the freedom of those individuals to make decisions and their readiness to take responsibility in opposition to the egoism of ‘monads’ who isolate themselves from others.

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³⁶ W. Osiatyński, op. cit.

³⁷ C. Porębski, *Człowiek w społeczeństwie całkowicie otwartym*, „Diametros” 2005, No. 5, p. 160–168, <https://www.diametros.iphils.uj.edu.pl/diametros/article/view/141/116> [accessed August 03, 2013].

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Streszczenie

Społeczeństwo w teorii Karla Poppera

Czym są społeczeństwa zamknięte? Jakie niosą ze sobą zagrożenie? Na czym zbudować społeczeństwo otwarte? Czy powyższe pytania są ważne i aktualne? Popper twierdził, że tak. Artykuł poświęcony jest analizie idei Poppera i jego teorii społeczeństwa otwartego i zamkniętego. W pierwszej części autorka dużo uwagi poświęca społeczeństwu zamkniętemu, opisuje jego filary, takie jak: posłuszeństwo, indoktrynacja, stała forma mobilizacji, kastowość, autarkie państwa, nacjonalizm, gloryfikacja wojny. W drugiej części przybliżony został aksjologiczny wymiar społeczeństwa otwartego, w tym zasady i wartości, na których Popper oparł swą teorię.

Słowa kluczowe: społeczeństwo, społeczeństwo obywatelskie, społeczeństwo otwarte, społeczeństwo zamknięte, obywatel, wolność

Summary

Society in the theory of Karl Popper

What are closed societies? What are the threats? How does one build an open society? Are the above questions important and current? Popper claimed that they are. The article analyses Popper's theory of an open and closed society. The first part of the article considers the 'closed' society and describes its characteristics. These include obedience, indoctrination, a constant form of mobilisation, caste, state autarchies, nationalism, glorification of war. In the second part of the article, the author introduces the axiological dimension of an open society. The principles and values on which Popper based his theory are considered.

Keywords: society, civil society, open society, closed society, citizen, freedom