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Stefan Baley's Views on Social Morality

The problem of social morality is considered by Stefan Baley in his early article *The Notion of Moral Good and Evil in Contemporary Philosophy*. According to the scientist, morality was sanctified by the authority of the gods, which "seemed to be extremely necessary in forcing a man to sacrifice his ego"[1].

It was believed for many centuries that morality was created by the gods; only they, forcing people to blindly obey the laws of ethics, full of mystical content, could decide what is good and what is bad. However, in the process of development of the surrounding world a man obtained the experience and knowledge that promoted the development of his identity and allowed him to feel himself personality, the creator of his person and his destiny. Subsequently, a critical attitude to the previously unshakable authority of gods appeared. A man realized that he was the real creator of the moral laws: "Not gods, but people created morality, its requirements did not come to people readymade somewhere from the celestial spheres; humanity itself by the sweat of their brow had to create their own ethics"[2].

A century-old process of morality formation, even if only in general features, is reflected in a development of moral views of a child. In the work

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[1] S. Balej, *Ponâttê etičnogo dobra ì zla v sučasnìj fìlʹosofìï*, S. Balej: zìbr. pracʹ :u 5 t. ì 2 kn., Lʹvìv–Odesa 2002, t. 1,, p. 139.

[2] Tamże, p. 149.

Psychology of the Age of Puberty Baley notes that moral principles of a child are based on the absolute authority of an adult, first of all parents, so they are assimilated by him passively. However, further accumulation of knowledge gives rise to more conscious comprehension of ethical postulates. And certain religious doubts appear. A young man wonders: why the almighty and perfect God allows so much evil and blatant injustice in the world? He actively searches the answer to this question inside himself. In this way he adapts the already known ethical standards that get internal approval and are perceived now as his own life principles.

Freed from religious bondage and excessive claims of metaphysics, modern philosophy tends to empirical way of thinking. Moral laws do not already seem to be the creature of supernatural forces, but express life values of a person. In the 19th century, mainly in England, positivist direction in ethics, known as "utilitarianism", appeared. Its supporters insisted that the principle of the greatest happiness for all people was the principle of common good. But in this case the concept of happiness was associated with the material well-being. It turned out that the basis of moral values was profit. Selfish, over-confident person asserts her sensually cognitive values that were measured by her practical interests. What was only beneficial to an individual was recognized as useful to society. Conversely, the value of individual solutions and actions depended on their social use. Baley notes: "Utilitarianism in its present form is definitely social ethics, though its starting point is unit. And this is one of the most important points, in which modernity of utilitarian system breaks"[3].

However, benefit as the basis of social morality leads to irreconcilable conflict between selfishness, which is expressed in the desire to satisfy one's own interests and altruism, the basic postulate of which is selfless serving to humanity. In the article *Cant* Baley retraces two variants of the solution of this conflict in favor of whole nations' selfishness.

The first case provides the possibility of a conscious withdrawal of the moral principles from among categorical imperatives and replacing them with others that are currently in the beneficial interests of a nation. Such views were followed by the supporters of evolutionary theory. They argued that in the struggle for existence each social group, each nation may neglect existing norms of morality and follow their own rules of conduct. According to Baley, when asked about their attitude towards Poles, Germans in their ter-

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[3] Tamże, p. 145.

ritorial claims coming out with these did not bother with unnecessary moralizing and said that "they should be pressed".

In the second case hypocritical, although unconscious attempts to justify national selfishness, appealing to human values, take place. Bernard Shaw criticized the morality of this kind under the name "cant" which means hypocrisy and slyness in English.

The English writer noticed that many of his compatriots were trying to assure the other, i.e. that all what was useful for them, was dictated by the laws of morality, and they willingly believed it. At the beginning of the First World War German a philosopher Max Sheller picks up this theme and blames the British for their illness of "cant". He says that the British, justifying their participation in the war, explained this by the need to protect the weak as well as the heritage of the world culture from the onset of barbarism, i.e. Germans, but actually aimed at their own interest. However, this hypocrisy is inherent not only to the British. Baley illustrates the episode of the Ukrainian-Russian relations, which shows that the desire of Ukrainians to achieve the right for implementation of broad autonomy within Russia, transformed into the Federal Republic, caused true outrage of the Russians who found moral justification of their opposition to the Ukrainian national movement. So Baley writes: "An ordinary Russian, who at the current time appears to suppress the Ukrainian "separatist" movement, does it, on his own beliefs, not for the purpose of the Russian national selfishness, but because this movement breaks the unity of the State, provokes internal rebellion and helps reactionary aspirations. So this separatism should be squeezed in order to ensure human achievements of the revolution in the name of the highest good. And this Russian intellectual makes not hypocritically, only being convinced, that he guards the general good. But will the present Moscow opponents of the Ukrainian separatism become its supporters, when the days of the revolution pass? Probably not"[4]. The further course of history only confirmed this conclusion of the scientist.

Baley wrote the above lines in 1917, when all of the former Russian Empire trembled from the events that took place after the February revolution. The overthrow of tsarism caused a powerful national movement in Ukraine. Leading the Ukrainian Central Rada, a prominent historian Mykhailo Hrushevskyi publishes a number of features with such titles: "Which autonomy and the Federation do we want", "Who are Ukrainians, and what do they

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[4] S. Balej, «*Cant*», S. Balej: zìbr. pracʹ: u 5 t. ì 2 kn., Lʹvìv–Odesa 2002, t. 1, p. 257.

want" and some others, eloquently testified that the idea of self-determination of the nation obviously ripened in the Ukrainian society. However, Russian intellectuals and democrats, basing on the positions of the Russian national selfishness, found ethically justified reasons to prevent the creation of the Ukrainian national-territorial autonomy. As Hrushevskyi noted then, "there are a lot of people who sincerely wish freedom and equality and sincerely believe that they are the true representatives of the new democratic order, the Republican system, and that when they are trying to restrict the Ukrainian movement, they do this in the interest of culture!"[5].

Baley notes that in "cant" ethics the concept of culture is used not so much to denote progressive forms of human activity, but to approve the selfish needs of a nation. The desire to regain control over Alsace and Lorraine during the First World War was explained by the French as a protection of their own cultural achievements in those lands. And they firmly believed that had a "moral" right, because it was not "annexation" on their part but only "de-annexation" of the previously lost territories. Balei states: "This argument of cultural work and the protection of cultural achievements plays a leading role also in the Polish-Ukrainian relations"[6]. In those years the long-standing disputes between the Ukrainian and Polish population of Galicia escalated. So, referring to their own cultural contribution to the development of the land, Poles even during the Austrian dominion considered it their "Eastern borderlands". And the protection of these "borderlands" became a moral obligation for them on the mental level. However, Ukrainians were unwavering in their demands: "Know it Pole, the Sian is ours!"

In that competition for national "status occupation" neither of the sides considered themselves to be the aggressor but solely victims who were forced to defend themselves. In 1902, appealing to the participants of the Polish *viche* in Zolochiv, a local priest shouted for: "Polish people, the Sian is not our boundary but here is our boundary; here we put our bones in the defence of the land from the Turks and Cossacks. For that each Pole should hold his homeland and not release it."[7] In cases like this, the moral indignation

[5] M. Gruševs′kij, *Zvìdki pìšlo ukraïnstvo ì do čogo vono jde*, Tvori, t. 4, kn. Ì: *Suspìl′no-polìtičnì tvori (doba Ukraïns′koï Central′noï Radi, berezen′ 1917 – kvìten′ 1918)*, L′vìv 2007, p. 178.

[6] S. Balej, «*Cant*», S. Balej: zìbr. prac′ : u 5 t. ì 2 kn., L′vìv–Odesa 2002, t. 1, p. 258.

[7] R. Sirota, «*Lìnìâ Kerzona*» či «*Lìnìâ Nem`êra*»? Kordon ì modernìzacìâ v bagatoetnìčnomu regìonì, Vìsnik L′vìvs′kogo unìversitetu, Serìâ: Ìstorìâ, 2005, Vip. 39−40, p. 321; *Še pro «vêc pol′s′kih vloscân» v Zoločevì*, Dìlo, L′vìv 1902, Č. 210, 19 veresnâ (2 žovtnâ).

is based on a sincere conviction that national rights are grossly violated. And to protect these rights, even with the help of soldiers' boots, is considered ethically justified as a noble deed. Baley notes, that the United States of America entered the First World War, arguing such a move as a need to protect human values. And although some people believed that President Wilson was only an obedient instrument of the policy of the American monopolies, which were expected to cash in on the war, he was genuinely convinced that the United States participated in it solely for defensive purposes, designed to protect the world from the German aggression. Later, American policy-makers resorted to such rhetoric as well. In particular, in 1919 the United States marines landed "to maintain order" in Honduras, and in 1920 for "the salvation of the life of Americans" in China. In 1921 they "restored order" in Panama and Costa Rica, and in 1924–1925 – again in Honduras, Panama and China[8]. Of course, there was the moral justification for the invasion of the United States in Nicaragua, Cuba and others.

As it can be seen, not only interstate and international, but also other social conflicts are, at least partly, the result of selfish aspirations of individual communities, divided according to psychosocial attitude into "their" and "strange". Such an opposition is easily transformed into hostility. In this case each of the warring groups tries to accommodate morality for their own needs and to justify themselves in such a hypocritical way. All that can facilitate their useful targets, under the influence of mental mechanism becomes moral value, which the laws of ethics instruct to seek. Social groups impose a system of values on an individual, which affects his ethical views and social behaviour. Group interests require their members to comply with the rules of corporate ethics. So, denying gods the right to be legislators of morality, a man for a long time did not dare to take responsibility and admit that, actually, he is the creator of ethical imperatives. When, finally, a man has realized that morality was his creation, he has faced the problem of improving the moral laws. In this regard Baley observes: "Of course people still did not create their morality consciously and appropriate. Because they did not know that morality is their fruit and considered it a work of someone else. However, when a man has known the true source of morality, when he has realized

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[8] A. Valûženič, *Amerikanskij liberalizm: illûzii i real'nostì*, Moskva 1976, p. 183.

that he pulled it out of himself like a spider, should he do it consciously? [...] Is it man's right and obligation to "revaluate the values", as Nietzsche said?"[9]

It was Friedrich Nietzsche who gave new momentum to the development of ethical teachings, having put forward the slogan "revaluation of all values". In the work "On the Other Side of Good and Evil", he writes: "Take a look, for example, at tireless, fearless English utilitarians, how awkwardly and worthy they imitate Bentham […]. No new thoughts, no more elegant development of the old thoughts […] An old English defect called c a n t that means a m o r a l tartuffe is hidden this time under a new form of scientism and crept into the souls of these moralists; they also have no lack of secret protection from remorse, from which the former Puritans race will inevitably suffer in any scientific attitude to morality"[10]. Nietzsche rejects the utilitarian doctrine because he understands that it is impossible to make everybody equally happy: in practice, everyone is committed to personal happiness. Equality is a chimera, which was made up by Christianity. It blames the moral downfall of mankind. Religion in general and Christianity in particular generates a "slave morality", which gets on the side of the weak and depressed. The latter feel hidden envy of those who are stronger and braver than them; in this regard they constantly have to dissemble. Joining together in groups, they are similar to the herd animals who dream about green pastures and personal security. Nietzsche laid out his vision of the ethical problems as follows: "Morality in Europe is now the morality of the herd animals; there is, therefore, in our view, only one type of human morality, apart from which, before and after which could or should be any other, first of all higher morality"[11]. Unlike Christian morality, which is reduced to obedience, a higher morality approves the will to power, elevates the individual – a true aristocrat, a vivid example of which was daring, unpredictable and passionate man of the Renaissance.

Baley commends the efforts of Nietzsche, who finally managed to destroy the metaphysical halo of morality and deny the divine holiness of its laws, imposed on a person by the Bible. But the scientist couldn't agree with Nietzsche's voluntarism, which leads to the collapse of the ideals of mind, goodness and truth. In this regard, he writes: "However, when the fact that a man has the right to create ethical values is recognized, it does not mean that

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[9] S. Balej, *Ponâttê etičnogo dobra ì zla v sučasnìj fìl'osofiï*, Zìbr. prac': u 5 t.ì 2 kn., L'vìv–Odesa 2002, t. 1, p. 149.

[10] F. Nicše, *Po tu storonu dobra i zla, Sočineniâ*: V 2 t., Moskva 1998, t. 2, pp. 349–350.

[11] Tamże, p. 322.

complete randomness already existed there and everyone could freely call the good or evil all that they wanted. We must realize that ethical good and evil are social notions, which can make sense only in social life. And so they must stay in social life and earn the recognition. And they will not hold and earn the recognition, if they do not meet the needs of social life"[12]. Therefore, a man should clearly realize that morality is his own spiritual creature and he cannot create moral value arbitrarily, without the approval of other people. So, there is a problem of conscious ethical creativity and responsibility of the individual to society and himself.

When discussing those problems Baley adheres to the ethical principles characteristic of the Lviv-Warsaw philosophical school, following of which was required by Kazimierz Twardowski. The general rule for all his students, regardless of their own ethical views, was the desire to free morality from irrational influences and to justify its requirements on a rational basis. According to the Polish researcher Jan Woleński, "Twardowski distinguished individual and social ethics, calling the latter science of the conditions and methods of maximizing the harmonization of individual interests with those of community groups"[13]. And in order to make real harmonization, it is necessary to understand what actually a group is and what its interests are.

That and several other issues are separately considered in Baley's last great work *Introduction to Social Psychology*. Interest in studying of psychosocial life was largely motivated by the horrific consequences of the Second World War. But, raised at the beginning of the 20th century by yet young scientists, the problems of social morality became his first step on that path.

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[12] S. Balej, *Ponâttê etičnogo dobra ì zla v sučasnìj fìl'osofìï*, Zìbr. prac′: u 5 t. 2 kn., L'vìv–Odesa, 2002, t. 1, p. 149.

[13] Volen′skij Â., *L'vovsko-Varšavskaâ filosofskaâ škola*, [per. s pol'sk. V.Porus]. Moskva 2004, p. 63.

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Abstract

On the basis of the works *The Notion of Moral Good and Evil in Contemporary Philosophy* and *Cant* Stefan Baley's views on social morality are analysed. It is shown that Baley supports conscious ethical creativity and the responsibility of the individual to society and to himself. It is proven that Baley follows the ethical principles of the Lvov-Warsaw philosophical school. Kazimierz Twardowski required following these principles as well.

Key words: Stefan Baley, ethics, social morality