

Nature of the common good as the foundation of the community

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The subject of interest of the author of the text is the common good as an inalienable element of the organization of the human community. The paper consists of three parts. The first part analyses the need for a common good as the basis of social and political life. The starting point was the distinction of four forms of common life (community, society, political body and state), defining the nature of society, presentation of three forms of relationship between man and society (individualism, collectivism and personalism) and identifying problems related to the definition of the common good. In the second part, the author presented a reflection on the procedural common good in the liberal tradition, the issue of impartiality and identification of the common good in the process of the debate. In the third part, attention is paid to the personalistic view of the common good, which is based on the integral development of personal human nature in the framework of the appropriate institutions and structures. This understanding of the common good is, in the author's conviction, the best point of reference in social and political life.

Key words: *common good, forms of social life, human nature, liberalism, personalism.*

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Introduction

Social and political activity can be understood in two principal ways. First of all, in Machiavelli's spirit, this is an art of effective activities aiming at the acquisition and retention of power. Secondly, according to the tradition dating back to the thought of Plato, Aristotle, Stoics, Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas, it is defined as reasonable realisation of the common good.

The issue of the common good is becoming increasingly more visible in the contemporary debate concerning the shape of social life. However, it is not always accompanied by explanations concerning its nature. While defining the meaning of the common good, reference is often made to common intuitions. Its indispensability is emphasized since it unifies the activities of individuals and determines their direction and aim.

The subject of the reflections presented below is the common good as an inalienable element of organisations concerning various types of human communities. The paper consists of three parts. The first part demonstrates the need for the existence of the common good as the basis for social and political life. The second part contains a reflection on the procedural common good, which is a concept used in the liberal tradition, while the focus on the third part is on the personalistic (analogical) approach to the issue which, in the opinion of the author, is the most appropriate.

1. The common good – the foundation of social life

Before starting an analysis of the issues pertaining to the common good, it is essential to ask first about the genesis and the nature of the community itself. At the same time, a distinction should be made between the terms: society, community and state, for which this good makes the foundation and keystone.

Distinction between society and community is present in the work of a French philosopher, Jacques Maritain. Community is the work of nature, shaped by the inborn inclinations of the human being. On the other hand, society is consciously shaped by the human being as the work of his intellect and free will to realize the goods necessary for his personal development. The society of the specific socio-economic organisation is referred to as the "political body". It emerged as a result of pursuing the goal shared by people, namely the common good. The common good, reached within the political body, requires, according to Maritain, the existence of a special organ equipped with the subordinate power, which is the state. It plays an instrumental function. It is superior to other structures and authorities of the political body, but it is not superior to the political body. Moreover, it exists only for the purpose of

developing this body¹. Therefore, it can be claimed that the society, the political body and the state are directed towards the common good, which is related to the rational and free nature of the human being.

A Polish neo-Thomist, Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, observes that the emergence of the society and the state can be explained in two ways: genetic-evolutionary and causal-finalistic. In the first approach, they result from the evolution of nature. In the second approach, the human being needs the society and the state to develop his personal being². The aim of the society as the relational being is, in Krąpiec's opinion, a comprehensive development of potentialised human personality. Consequently, the human being is not subordinate to society as regards his personal activity, but only with regard to material goods³. Thus, Krąpiec is closer to the finalistic approach to the society, which assumes the need for personal development.

To determine the proper relationships between man and society, three possible solutions are suggested: individualism, collectivism and personalism. In individualism, the rights and interests of the individual are emphasised first and foremost, and society is reduced to the role of their guardian. Collectivism treats man as a state product, while in personalism, the human being is a person, i.e. a creature having a value in itself. The society is a community of persons, and it is based on the idea of the common good⁴.

It seems that the adoption of the personalistic perspective in perceiving the society and the state is crucial for properly defining relationships between social groups and the human being as a person, who is given priority in relation to all communities. Thus, it is important to pay attention to the personal nature of the human being, since it fulfils a fundamental role in the concept of the common good.

In this context, the views of an Italian thinker, Vittorio Possenti, according to whom difficulties related to the common good are, among other things, a consequence of the crisis of the concept of human nature⁵, should be considered right. Since the issue of the common good is related to the proper concept of human nature, it should be respected and affirmed in social reality.

Nevertheless, the notion of the common good is one of the most difficult. It is sometimes used interchangeably with such notions as commonwealth, general welfare, social good, public benefit, the happiness of all or the gen-

¹ Jacques MARITAIN, *Człowiek i państwo*, trans. Adam Grobler, Kraków, ZNAK, 1993, 8-10, 19-20, 26, 117-118.

² Mieczysław A. KRĄPIEC, *Człowiek i prawo naturalne*, Lublin, KUL, 1975, 178-179.

³ Mieczysław A. KRĄPIEC, *Człowiek i polityka*, Lublin, KUL, 2007, 160-161, 174-175.

⁴ Zdzisław PAWLAK, *Formy uczenia człowieka we wspólnocie według Karola Wojtyły*, *Studia Włocławskie*, 9 (2006) 51-62, 51.

⁵ Vittorio POSSENTI, *Religia i życie publiczne. Chryścijaństwo w dobie ponowoczesnej*, trans. Tadeusz Żeleźnik, Warszawa, PAX, 2005, 114-115.

eral interest. It has been understood differently throughout centuries and was sometimes treated as an empty formula.

The common good is, therefore, a concept whose content is difficult to specify, which can operate in various ways in the area of ethics, economics and politics. Ethics presents its relation to the dignity of the human being and the specific system of values⁶. Some economists claim that the common good helps to point out the path towards reducing inequalities and risks and includes all kinds of material and immaterial resources. Apart from resources, it also includes the community, as well as a set of principles, values and norms⁷. In the field of politics, the common good is sometimes treated as an element of democratic order, in which the primacy of rights and freedoms of an individual over the society is respected⁸. Consequently, Ernst W. Böckenförde, a German lawyer and thinker, distinguishes two components of the common good: static-principal and dynamic-purposeful. The former is the human being as the subject of rights, and the latter – the drive towards developing the conditions for the personal life⁹. Thus, in the opinion of the Polish lawyer and philosopher, Marek Piechowiak, the aim of the state is indicated, along with the need to determine the common good through human rights and freedoms¹⁰.

The common good is also believed to be a normative category. There are four main meanings of the term: aggregative common good (the sum of individual goods in the community), common good (goods in common possession or aims and values to be achieved), suppressive common good (the advantage over the good of individuals) and integral common good (the result of interaction and the condition for interpersonal cooperation)¹¹.

Piechowiak emphasizes two important issues in this context. First of all, the community is a condition indispensable for human development, yet it is an entity different than the sum of individuals forming this community. Good, therefore, cannot be described in categories of the sum of individual goods¹². Secondly, the common good should be differentiated from the shared good,

⁶ Joanna HELIOS, *Solidarność i dobro wspólne – kilka uwag w kontekście rozważań o metodach rozwiązywania sporów międzypaństwowych na przykładzie Unii Europejskiej*, *Przegląd Prawa i Administracji* 94 (2013) 11-25, 13-14.

⁷ Małgorzata SŁODOWA-HEŁPA, *Odkrywanie na nowo dobra wspólnego*, *Nierówności Społeczne a Wzrost Gospodarczy*, 3 (2015) 7-24, 15.

⁸ Marek PIECHOWIAK, *Filozoficzne podstawy rozumienia dobra wspólnego*, *Kwartalnik Filozoficzny*, 2 (2003) 5-35, 5.

⁹ Ernst W. BÖCKENFÖRDE, *Wolność-państwo-Kościół*, trans. Paweł Kaczorowski, Grzegorz Sowiński, Kraków, ZNAK, 1994, 250-252, 263.

¹⁰ Piechowiak, *Filozoficzne podstawy rozumienia dobra wspólnego...*, 15-16, 28-29, 34.

¹¹ Anna MŁYNARSKA-SOBACZEWSKA, *Dobro wspólne jako kategoria normatywna*, *Acta Universitatis Lodzianensis. Folia Iuridica*, 69 (2009) 61-72, 61-65.

¹² Marek PIECHOWIAK, *Filozofia praw człowieka w świetle ich międzynarodowej ochrony*, Lublin, KUL, 1999, 103; idem, *Filozoficzne podstawy rozumienia dobra wspólnego...*, 13.

since this second formula exposes obligations and subordination of people to the state. It loses the idea of the superiority of human dignity over the interest of the state and the group. On the other hand, in the common good, the serving role of the state and its obligations towards citizens are acknowledged¹³. The formula of the shared good is additionally related to the emanation (Platonic) concept of good, according to which the state has an advantage over individual persons and exclusivity in defining the good, while the common good should rather be related to the finalistic (Aristotelian) concept of good as the aim of the activity¹⁴.

An American political theorist, economist and theologian Michael Novak additionally emphasizes the problem of the word “common” and the method of combining it with the word “good”. The word “common” has two basic senses. First of all, common is used to describe something that you share with others. Secondly, a certain entity that others can share is also considered common¹⁵. It seems that the first sense is more appropriate since the common good should be identified with a potentialised personal nature, in which specific freedoms and rights would be incorporated. It would provide the foundation and the reason for the existence of the society and the state, the aim of which should be its comprehensive development.

2. *The common good and the liberal tradition*

Liberalism, in the deepest belief of the political scientist Rafał Prostack, has been, and continues to be, a response to all attempts to construct excessively ambitious political projects, in which the common good is defined in a theological manner. The purpose of narrowing the political sphere is to liberate the non-political potential of individuals. The political sphere must be independent from perfectionistic projects constructed in the private sphere, which are characterized by holding a specific vision of the common good¹⁶. In the liberal tradition, the discourse over the issue of the common good was therefore moved to the private sphere, and the political sphere was freed from it, in the name of the specifically interpreted neutrality and focus on the protection of the freedom of individuals.

The American political philosopher William A. Galston quotes three basic arguments of liberals to support the state neutrality. First of all, there is no

¹³ Piechowiak, *Filozoficzne podstawy rozumienia dobra wspólnego...*, 8-10.

¹⁴ Danuta RADZISZEWSKA-SZCZEPANIAK, Polityka jako roztropna realizacja dobra wspólnego. Ujęcie Mieczysława Alberta Krąpca, *Studia Elbląskie*, 15 (2014) 315-331, 319.

¹⁵ Michael NOVAK, *Wolne osoby i dobro wspólne*, trans. Grzegorz Łuczkiwicz, Kraków, ZNAK, 1998, 233.

¹⁶ Rafał PROSTAK, Polityka liberalna i religia. Refleksje nad rozumem publicznym Johna Rawlsa koncepcjami pokrewnymi, *Kultura i Polityka*, 6 (2009) 14-32, 16-17.

common rational foundation which would make it possible to make choices among various lifestyles. Secondly, imposing a certain concept of a good life would be an infringement of individual freedom as the superior value. Thirdly, variety is a value in itself, and the resignation from it results in huge social losses¹⁷. Liberals, therefore, give up on the issue of the common good to preserve rationality, freedom and diversity, which are essential elements in their understanding of social reality.

Moreover, liberals do not like to refer to the common good because it implies, in their opinion, a mysterious theory of cognition. Besides, only exceptional and virtuous individuals are, in their opinion, able to define this good and to show it to other people¹⁸.

Thus, the narrative of the neutrality (impartiality) of liberalism is prevailing in discussions over the issue of the common good, as exemplified by the views of the American social philosopher, John Rawls. He called for the social order to be based on two principles of justice, which he understood in terms of impartiality with regard to the good. According to the first principle, every person should have an equal right to fundamental freedoms that are compatible with similar freedoms of others. The second principle refers to the social and economic inequalities existing among people. They should be arranged in such a way to lead to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged people and to equal access to offices¹⁹.

However, the Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor, criticizes the liberal idea of neutrality. Its consequence may be, in his opinion, the absence of state unity and a lack of identification of people with the community. He points out that neutrality is an effect of the atomic ontology of the liberal community. In this situation, the common good is often reduced to the sum of individual goods. However, Taylor observes liberalism does not have to assume atomic ontology. Likewise, the state community does not have to be instrumental in nature, i.e. merely help to achieve individual goods²⁰.

The common good, being the sum of individual goods, is defined by an American political scientist, Robert A. Dahl, as a distributive concept of good²¹. In the opinion of Possenti, it is then brought down to the set of private preferences²². In the opinion of the Polish personalist Stanisław Kowalczyk, under-

¹⁷ William A. GALSTON, *Cele liberalizmu*, trans. Andrzej Pawelec, Kraków, ZNAK, 1999, 99-100.

¹⁸ Paweł ŚPIEWAK, *W stronę wspólnego dobra*, Warszawa, Fundacja Aletheia, 1998, 35.

¹⁹ John RAWLS, *Teoria sprawiedliwości*, trans. Maciej Panufnik, Jarosław Pasek, Adam Romaniuk, Warszawa, PWN, 1994, 48-49, 360, 414-416.

²⁰ Charles TAYLOR, *Philosophical Arguments*, Cambridge (Ma) – London, Harvard University Press, 1995, 181, 186, 188-189, 194-197.

²¹ Robert A. DAHL, *Demokracja i jej krytycy*, trans. Stefan Amsterdamski, Kraków – Warszawa, ZNAK, 1995, 107, 109, 143.

²² Possenti, *Religia i życie publiczne...*, 112.

standing the common good by liberals only as the sum of individual goods leads to the depersonalisation of social life²³.

However, it should not be forgotten that Rawls emphasises, on the one hand, the role of justice as impartiality with regard to the good, and on the other hand, he mentions the primary social goods to which every person must have access. These include income, wealth, power, rights, freedoms, opportunities and self-esteem. Alongside the natural primary goods (e.g. health, intelligence), social primary goods are an object of desire and aspiration for all people²⁴. It should also be noted that Rawls modified his concept over time. He stressed that democratic institutions of political society were a certain good for citizens because they enable the development of moral authorities, facilitate cooperation and guarantee equality and freedom. Moreover, he believed that justice was complementary to the good and its various facets²⁵. In this context, Possenti raises an important issue. He observes that in the name of alleged impartiality, a certain concept of good, identified with an autonomous moral personality, is privileged²⁶, since each person, in the name of freedom, can choose their own good, which, however, cannot interfere with the good chosen by other people.

It is worth noting that classic liberalism never doubted the existence of the common good, often describing it the “public good”²⁷. The common good can be the rights of an individual, individual safety²⁸, pursuit of happiness, satisfying one’s own needs²⁹, the welfare of all people³⁰, development possibilities or principles of peaceful coexistence and cooperation between people with various world views³¹.

Prostak also believes that liberalism stresses the importance of certain public goods, such as individual freedom and responsibility, individualism and openness, change and diversity tolerance, respect for human rights, social

²³ Stanisław KOWALCZYK, *Liberalizm i jego filozofia*, Katowice, Unia, 1995, 122.

²⁴ Rawls, *Teoria sprawiedliwości...*, 89, 348, 416.

²⁵ John RAWLS, *Liberalizm polityczny*, trans. Adam Romaniuk, Warszawa, PWN, 1998, 244-292.

²⁶ Possenti, *Religia i życie publiczne...*, 172.

²⁷ Stephen HOLMES, *Anatomia antyliberalizmu*, trans. Jakub Szacki, Kraków, ZNAK, 1998, 268-271.

²⁸ Novak, *Wolne osoby i dobro wspólne...*, 11.

²⁹ Anna MARKWART, Marta SZYMAŃSKA, Dobro jednostki dobrem społeczeństwa czy dobro społeczeństwa dobrem jednostki? George Berkeley i Adam Smith o postrzeganiu i moralności, *Etyka*, 46 (2013) 21-34, 21, 26-28.

³⁰ Ludwig von MISES, *Liberalism in the Classical Tradition*, trans. Ralph Raico, New York, Foundation for Economic Education, 1985, 7-8.

³¹ Dorota SEPCZYŃSKA, *Katolicyzm i liberalizm. Szkic z filozofii społecznej*, Kraków, NOMOS, 2008, 259-260.

peace and legal rules³². Consequently, some authors stress that the common good is constituted by the rule of law³³.

Attention is also drawn to the problem of identifying the common good. It is a consequence of pluralism and the size of political communities. Members of a large political community have conflicting views on the common good and on the ways to achieve it. The common good is therefore difficult to define. As a result, attempts are made to give up on its definition and reduce it to particular areas of life³⁴.

However, the theorists of social life try to indicate certain ways of identifying the common good. Some of those suggestions are examined below.

According to Taylor, there are two basic ways to identify the social good. The first is achieved as a result of referring man to the horizon of practices, institutions and meanings existing in a particular culture. The second way consists in an agreement between individuals³⁵. Taylor also appreciates the role of the community and the discourse within it, which contributes to articulation and realisation of this good³⁶. A Scottish historian of ideas and ethics, Alasdair MacIntyre, presents similar views on this issue³⁷.

In a liberal democracy, the definition of the common good should also take place within the framework of an open social debate, according to the Polish political philosopher, Andrzej Szahaj. In his opinion, no one has the right to state what the common good is for a given community, without subjecting it to the judgment of other people who can freely express themselves. Otherwise, there is a danger of monopolisation and usurpation of the common good by a specific social group. This is how paternalism or curatorship is born. This, in turn, leads to alienation and rebellion of a part of the society which is deprived of influence on the definition of the common good. This destroys the spirit of community for the benefit of fractions that are at odds with each other³⁸.

The role of the debate, the aim of which is not only to identify the common good and the ways of its realisation but which is in itself a constituent of that good should, therefore, be appreciated. It starts with the recognition of human dignity, equality of people in their dignity and the correlation of rights and ob-

³² John LOCKE, *Dwa traktaty o rządzie*, trans. Zbigniew Rau, Warszawa, PWN, 1992, 256-258, 263-264, 286-287; Stephen Macedo, *Cnoty liberalne*, trans. Grzegorz Łuczkiwicz, Kraków, ZNAK, 1995, 320-321, 335, 343-346.

³³ Rafał PROSTAK, *Rzecz o sprawiedliwości. Komunitarystyczna krytyka współczesnego liberalizmu amerykańskiego*, Kraków, UJ, 2004, 184.

³⁴ Dahl, *Demokracja i jej krytycy...*, 418, 420.

³⁵ Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments...*, 136-140.

³⁶ Charles TAYLOR, *Philosophy and the Human Sciences. Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 2, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, 292.

³⁷ Alasdair MacINTYRE, *Dziedzictwo cnoty. Studium z teorii moralności*, trans. Adam Chmielewski, Warszawa, PWN, 1996, 37, 343.

³⁸ Andrzej SZAHAJ, *Liberalizm, wspólnotowość, równość. Eseje z filozofii polityki*, Toruń, UMK, 2012, 94-95, 157.

ligations. It allows us to better understand not only the truth that is the subject of the dialogue, but also the other person. It also enables an empathetic attitude, the development of principles and compromises for a harmonious life³⁹.

The Canadian political philosopher Will Kymlicka emphasises, in particular, the importance of the debate taking place within civil society. Individuals define the common good through participation in voluntary groups and associations (e.g. cultural, religious) that enable them to articulate their views and discuss them collectively⁴⁰.

It can, therefore, be seen that for liberals a key role in identifying and articulating the common good in liberal democracy is played by the debate taking place within civil society. It is a network of institutions independent of the state (associations) that unite citizens around issues of common concern. However, problems with identifying the common good can also lead to other solutions. One of them is a procedural understanding of this good. Liberals sometimes reduce it to a set of specified principles, helping people to make their own choices as regards their own concept of a good life.

The rules and procedures aim to develop a habit of cooperation between people and to achieve the benefits of this cooperation. Therefore, the nature of the common good is formal⁴¹. In liberalism, it consists of procedures, practices and institutions that allow individuals to formulate their own visions of a good life⁴². Procedures are important because of a lack of common understanding of people's values and interests. Moreover, the more concrete the values and interests are, the more likely people are to disagree on their specific content. It is precisely because of this disagreement that the common good is understood as a set of practices, institutions and procedures supporting a personal choice. However, the good of an individual is the result of their own choice⁴³.

In this respect, a distinction is made between the material and formal understanding of the common good in social life. A material common good is the intentions and goals determined by a collective decision of the members of the community. The formal common good, also known as the procedural good, consists in ensuring the benefits of cooperation based on procedures⁴⁴. However, the essence of the common good would be its formal dimension⁴⁵.

According to Prostack, the procedural concept of liberalism is unsatisfactory, since society must rely on a specific concept of good. We deal in it with certain

³⁹ Jan WAL, *Realizacja dobra wspólnego w dialogu i poprzez dialog*, *Warszawskie Studia Pastoralne*, 12 (2010) 60-75, 64-70.

⁴⁰ Will KYMLICKA, *Współczesna filozofia polityczna*, trans. Andrzej Pawelec, Kraków, ZNAK, 1998, 230, 247, 255.

⁴¹ Novak, *Wolne osoby i dobro wspólne...*, 111-112.

⁴² Rafał PROSTAK, *Teista w demoliberalnym świecie. Rzecz o amerykańskich rozważaniach wokół rozumnej polityki*, Kraków, OMP, 2014, 341-342.

⁴³ Dahl, *Demokracja i jej krytycy...*, 424-427.

⁴⁴ Helios, *Solidarność i dobro wspólne...*, 15; Prostack, *Rzecz o sprawiedliwości...*, 178-179, 184.

⁴⁵ Novak, *Wolne osoby i dobro wspólne...*, 229.

superior goods of the general social nature (e.g. justice, freedom, equality and human rights)⁴⁶. On the other hand, Taylor emphasizes that certain goods are incorporated in the social life of the liberal society⁴⁷. In his opinion, the state defends at least such values as equality and freedom of pursuing the goal⁴⁸. In Taylor's opinion, liberalism presents two visions of society. The first of them refers only to certain procedures, while the second one – to a specific concept of the common good⁴⁹. Therefore, it seems that it is not possible to avoid any reference to the common good in the social and political forum.

3. *A personalistic vision of the common good*

In this situation, it is worth investigating the proposal formulated by the representatives of personalism. It is a way of thinking that can also have an impact on the social and political dimension of human life as a personal being.

It should be emphasised at the outset that a personalistic vision of the common good presupposes a specific social ontology. It takes the primacy of the human person as a substantialist entity over the community. A person should be treated as an aim of an action and never as a tool or object. In this context, the common good has two dimensions: subjective (the state of human perfection as a goal in itself) and objective (the set of conditions under which perfection can be achieved)⁵⁰. Therefore, the principal common good is a man as the goal in himself⁵¹. His development is the foundation and sense of the existence for a community⁵².

In Kowalczyk's opinion, the personalistic concept of the common good allows for the distinction of its components: internal and external. The nature of the internal element is ontological and axiological, i.e. the good is the integral development of the human person and the set of values necessary to achieve this. Man develops, just like his psychophysical nature. He, therefore, needs vital and economic values, as well as cognitive, moral and aesthetic ones. The external component of the common good is the set of structures, institutions and social and economic conditions necessary for development. Those structures

⁴⁶ Rafał PROSTAK, *Liberalna autonomia, komunitarystyczna heteronomia. Charles Taylor jako krytyk „Teorii sprawiedliwości” Johna Rawlsa*, in: Bronisław Misztal, Marek Przychodzień (eds.), *Aktualność wolności. Wybór tekstów*, Warszawa, Fundacja Aletheia, 2005, 239-266, 258-261.

⁴⁷ Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments...*, 257-258, 287.

⁴⁸ Jocelyn MACLURE, Charles TAYLOR, *Secularism and Freedom of Conscience*, trans. Jane M. Todd, Cambridge (Ma), Harvard University Press, 2011, 16-17.

⁴⁹ Charles TAYLOR, *Reconciling the Solitudes. Essays on Canadian Federalism and Nationalism*, Montreal – London – Buffalo, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994, 177-178.

⁵⁰ Piechowiak, *Filozoficzne podstawy rozumienia dobra wspólnego...*, 19-20, 31-34.

⁵¹ Amitai ETZIONI, *The Third Way to a Good Society*, London, Demos, 2000, 11, 34-37.

⁵² Stanisław KOWALCZYK, *Zarys filozofii polityki*, Lublin, KUL, 2008, 138.

are of instrumental nature. The common good is dynamic since the human being develops in different conditions⁵³. The common good is sometimes defined as the sum of those social and political conditions which allow individuals or social groups to achieve their own perfection and development more fully and quickly⁵⁴. However, the problem is to determine what makes this “sum” of conditions. In this regard, it would probably be appropriate to stress in the concept of the common good the development of the human person in terms of their freedom⁵⁵.

In another place, Kowalczyk will stress that the common good is a formal element of every community, especially the state community. It gives it a shape and a sense of existence⁵⁶. However, Novak emphasizes that beside the formal aspect of the good of the community, we deal with its material dimension. It covers multiple, sometimes contradictory elements⁵⁷.

Following MacIntyre, it should be assumed that the common good is first of all realisation of the personal nature of the human being, in which a certain *logos* is inscribed. This nature should be additionally understood within a broader moral order, which gives it a meaning. The moral order would be of teleological nature. Its demonstration would be potentialised human nature and its direction towards becoming real⁵⁸. A similar approach is represented by Taylor⁵⁹.

Consequently, Krąpiec emphasizes that the good as the real being is the aim of the human aspiration⁶⁰. Thus personalism assumes the finalistic concept of good, being the aim of the activity. The good of the human being is an increasingly fuller realisation of their potentiality inscribed in their nature and revealed through natural (biological and spiritual) inclinations. Such an aim may become the common good, realized in an analogical (similar, relevant) way by every human being. Krąpiec observes at the same time that an increase in the good of a specific person is always an increase in the good of the entire society⁶¹. Consequently, Novak emphasizes that if anybody neglects their own development, they harm the entire society by their neglect⁶².

Krąpiec distinguishes between personal and subjective common good. The personal common good consists in the self-improvement of the human being,

⁵³ Stanisław KOWALCZYK, *Człowiek a społeczność. Zarys filozofii społecznej*, Lublin, KUL, 1994, 234-239; idem, *Zarys filozofii polityki...*, 138-139.

⁵⁴ Helios, *Solidarność i dobro wspólne...*, 21.

⁵⁵ Tomasz CZERNIK, Indywidualizm, komunitaryzm i trzecia droga, *Perspectiva. Legnickie Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne*, 2 (2011) 21-35, 32.

⁵⁶ Kowalczyk, *Zarys filozofii polityki...*, 134.

⁵⁷ Novak, *Wolne osoby i dobro wspólne*, 234-235, 239.

⁵⁸ MacIntyre, *Dziedzictwo cnoty...*, 78-79, 112-115.

⁵⁹ Taylor, *Philosophy and the Human Sciences...*, 257-259.

⁶⁰ Mieczysław A. KRĄPIEC, *O ludzką politykę*, Lublin, KUL, 1998, 79.

⁶¹ Krąpiec, *Człowiek i prawo naturalne...*, 180-186.

⁶² Novak, *Wolne osoby i dobro wspólne...*, 201-203, 236, 243.

realisation of basic natural inclinations, and actualisation of one's own potentiality in terms of cognition, freedom and love. The binding with it is not by an external order, but results from within. Only thus understood good can be shared by all people and can become the reason for the existence of the community. It is infinite because the acts of knowledge and love can grow in man infinitely, and non-antagonistic because this growth does not harm anyone. On the other hand, no material goods, which are merely means for the development of the personal human good, can be considered the common good. The subjective common good are objects of personal activity, which include truth, goodness and beauty⁶³. Krąpiec also emphasizes that in the domain of personal rights, man remains free and does not serve the state, but the state serves the man. The subordination to the state is only in respect of material goods⁶⁴.

In the opinion of a personalist from Cracow, Karol Wojtyła, the common good, understood as striving for personal development in the community and for self-fulfilment, is an expression of human transcendence⁶⁵. He emphasizes that the common good refers to the domain of living with others. Its purpose is the fulfilment of the person, which is achieved through a genuine act. It consists in recognizing the truth in one's own conscience and its free choice. The condition determining a fulfilment of a person is, therefore, obedience to the conscience, in which the truth is experienced and the conviction of the obligation to act emerges⁶⁶. An important attribute of the human nature is, therefore, freedom, which is realized in relation to the truth. The purpose (good) of human existence is to discover the truth in one's own conscience and to subordinate one's existence to it.

Bearing in mind the personalistic concept of the common good, one should conclude that a definition of the common good cannot be made independently of the way the good itself is understood. It is in the nature of good to be the aim of the activity. The nature of the aim, on the other hand, is to be a motive for action. Good, as an aim, is the foundation and bond of every community. Its perception is related to the need to recognize the potential of the human being (to preserve life, to pass it on to the offspring and to develop cognition, love and creativity), which requires actualisation. The good expressed in terms of finality can be the good of both a particular person and the whole community. It does not antagonize, it does not exclude anyone, but everyone can participate in it. Bearing this good in mind, the primacy of the personal sphere over the social reality is respected, because the person as a substance is superior to the

⁶³ Mieczysław A. KRĄPIEC, Dobro wspólne, in: Andrzej Maryniarczyk and others (eds.), *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii*, vol. 2, Lublin, PTTA, 2001, 628-639, 631-633.

⁶⁴ Krąpiec, *Człowiek i prawo naturalne...*, 190-191.

⁶⁵ Karol WOJTYŁA, Osoba: podmiot i wspólnota, in: idem, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, Lublin, KUL, 2000, 371-414, 406.

⁶⁶ Karol WOJTYŁA, Osoba i czyn, in: idem, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, Lublin, KUL, 2000, 43-344, 181, 185, 194-210, 319-322.

community. However, the common good can only be achieved in the community, that is, in relations with other people⁶⁷.

Conclusion

The subject of the investigations presented above was the common good as an inalienable element of organisations made by various types of human communities. The discussion consisted of three parts. The first one demonstrated the need for the existence of the common good as the foundation for the social and political life. The second one involved a reflection over the relationship between the liberal tradition and the issue of the common good. In the third one, attention was drawn to the personalistic approach towards this problem which, in the Author's opinion, is the most appropriate in the social life organisation process.

It should probably be assumed that social and political life is not a matter of chance, but is generally shaped by purpose. It has its foundation and its *raison d'être*, which is the common good that can be understood in three fundamental ways: material, formal and analogical. The first two approaches seem to be insufficient. The common good cannot be reduced to a broadly defined set of specific goods, which can only be a means to achieve an aim. Nor can the common good be reduced to a series of procedures aimed at a harmonious coexistence and cooperation of people. The third solution should, therefore, be adopted, which, based on a finalistic understanding of the good as an aim of action, emphasises that the common good consists in the development and fulfilment of the personal (psychophysical) nature of man within the framework of relevant structural and institutional conditions. The common good is, in a sense, of a formal nature, because it gives shape and purpose to the state community. However, it always involves a reference to the complete development of the man, which occurs in proportion to his abilities, and its specific means and ways are historically, culturally and socially determined. The common good would, therefore, be the good of the person whose development would be fostered by certain goods for a person as a means to an end.

An analogical understanding of the common good is present in the personalistic vision of society, which has been built on certain anthropology. Its essential element is the conviction about the existence of a specific human nature, i.e. a being who is the source of action. According to personalists, the man has a personal nature. As a human being, he is a substantial spiritual-corporal entity, the aim of any action and an entity worth of affirmation. Every society, including the state, exists because of him. Through established laws, structures and

⁶⁷ Danuta RADZISZEWSKA-SZCZEPANIAK, Charakterystyczne rysy filozofii polityki Mieczysława A. Krąpca, *Przegląd Tomistyczny*, 21 (2015) 525-537, 530-533.

institutions, a human being should be provided with appropriate conditions for the development of potentiality hidden in their nature. The state, however, cannot succumb to the temptation of paternalism. Its role should be limited solely to creating conditions and ensuring social order. It cannot usurp the right to decide for individuals what is best for their personal development. Thus, not only will the state fulfil its function, but also man will fulfil himself as a person.

Karol Jasiński*

Priroda općeg dobra kao temelja zajednice

Sažetak

Rad obrađuje opće dobro kao neotuđiv element organizacije ljudske zajednice, a sastoji se od triju dijelova. Prvi dio analizira potrebu za općim dobrom kao osnovom društvenog i političkog života. Autor polazi od razlikovanja četiriju oblika zajedničkog života (zajednica, društvo, političko tijelo i država), zatim definira prirodu društva, predstavlja tri oblika odnosa čovjeka i društva (individualizam, kolektivizam i personalizizam) te identificira probleme povezane s definicijom općeg dobra. U drugom dijelu autor predstavlja razmišljanje o proceduralnom općem dobru u liberalnoj tradiciji, pitanju nepristranosti i identificiranju općeg dobra u procesu rasprave. U trećem dijelu autor obraća pažnju na personalistički pogled na opće dobro koje se temelji na cjelovitom razvoju osobne ljudske prirode u okviru odgovarajućih institucija i struktura. Prema autorovu uvjerenju, ovakvo je razumijevanje općeg dobra najbolja referentna točka u društvenom i političkom životu.

Ključne riječi: liberalizam, ljudska priroda, oblici društvenog života, opće dobro, personalizizam.

(na hrv. prev. Vlaho Kovačević)

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