

REVIEW

on the works of Prof. Dr. Svetoslav Hristov Malinov
the only participant in the competition for a full professor at the University of „St. Kliment.
Ohridski"

by professional direction 3.3 Political Sciences (Political Science – Political Ideas), announced in SG
No. 24 of 17. 03.2023

by Prof. Dr. Rumiana Kolarova

1. CONTEST DETAILS

Prof. Dr. Svetoslav Malinov is the only participant in the competition for a full professor of political science (Political Science - Political Ideas). I am not aware of any violations of the procedure for announcing and conducting the competition.

2. DATA ABOUT THE CANDIDATE

I have known Svetoslav Malinov since his first days at Sofia University, initially as one of my most brilliant students, and then as a respected and highly valued colleague, teacher and researcher, and also as an active participant in the political life of Bulgaria, holding representative positions in national and European politics.

The most distinctive and impressive quality of Prof. Malinov is his extreme consistency and thoroughness. Upon graduating as a political scientist, he chose the history of political ideas as the main field of his academic pursuits, and since then his contribution to this field has been fundamental for the Bulgarian political science - he was the first to translate in Bulgarian the political works of key figures in the discipline of history of political ideas authors, using a toolkit that corresponds to the latest achievements of political science and providing a commentary of high quality. Since 1996, Svetoslav Malinov has been a highly regarded translator, editor, and compiler—his systematic efforts include both translations of major works by Locke, Burke, Hume, Bacon, and Mill, as well as topical publications such as two volumes on conservatism and other collections of selected texts. The complete list of publications of Svetoslav Malinov is indisputable proof of his deep and systematic research interest in the field of history of political ideas of the modern era.

From the first years of his studies, Svetoslav not only showed thoroughness, desire and opportunity to acquire knowledge according to the highest academic standards, but also, even as a student, he actively contributed to the academic exchange between Bulgarian and European political science - thanks to his initiative and due to the high appreciation of him by our Norwegian colleagues, in 1991 Prof. Karasimeonov and I were invited to the University of Oslo and the Stein Rokan Center in Bergen, which marked the beginning of an extremely fruitful academic cooperation.

The work of Svetoslav Malinov as editor-in-chief of the magazine "Razum" (2002-2008), which he practically created and established as an authoritative forum for theoretical discussions and translations of classical and modern texts, also deserves a very high esteem.

As a colleague, Prof. Malinov is distinguished by his exceptional meticulousness, scientific and academic correctness and precision - both in his research and teaching work, as well as in his administrative commitments as head of the "Political Science" department. I would add that the high professionalism of Svetoslav Malinov is manifested not only in his academic activities, but also in his political career - as a deputy in the 40th National Assembly and as a member of the European Parliament during its seventh and eighth mandates.

3. DESCRIPTION OF SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

For participation in the competition, Svetoslav Malinov submitted twenty-one titles, of which: two monographs, two studies and fifteen articles published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes, as well as two university textbooks. Of the 21 titles included in the list, three are in English, and the rest are in Bulgarian.

Although thematically related, the publications have an independent meaning, with the exception of the three articles in English, which are variants of articles with an analogous (similar) title in Bulgarian, as well as the article on Arthur de Gobineau, which analyses aspects of the political views of this thinker. These views are examined in detail and in a new analytical framework in the habilitation monograph for the competition. The publications are also organically connected, insofar as through them the evolution of Prof. Malinov's scientific endeavours can be traced, and the articles complement and give density to the theses and arguments presented in the two monographs.

The main publication of Prof. Malinov, the monograph "Dangerous Minds. Attempts on the political radicalism of the 19th century" has a volume of 254 pages and includes an introduction, six chapters (organized into three separate parts), a conclusion, a name and subject index. The monograph is an attempt at a kind of comparative study of the political radicalism of the 19th century, which offers and argues an original taxonomy of the six thinkers under consideration - Joseph de Mestre (1753-1821), Juan Donoso Cortés (1809-1853), Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1869), Huston Chamberlain (1855-1927), Max Stirner (1806-1956) and Georges Sorel (1847-1922).

The second monograph included in the list for the competition - "Criticism of political rationalism. A Study in the Political Thought of Edmund Burke" (240 pp., nine chapters, conclusion and appendices), was published in 2004, but its inclusion in the current competition is highly relevant because it sets the conceptual and methodological framework for most of or maybe even on all other publications of Svetoslav Malinov.

The remaining publications - two studies and fifteen articles are not exclusively in the field of history of political ideas (articles and studies on Hobbes, Mill, Bacon, Arendt, Dahl, Stirner, Gobineau), but also in the broader field of political theory (Malinov discusses a variety of topics - the definition of politics, the concept of "civil society", the democratic deficit in the EU, the Bulgarian populism, the "Orthodox political theology", the future of the national state), and their common distinguishing feature is the author's original approach and his unconventional theses. They offer an alternative view on widely debated topics and issues.

An important part of the publications are the two university textbooks, notable for their high quality, innovative approach and format. In my opinion they are a significant contribution to the development of the education in Political Science at Sofia University.

4. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

I will begin with the monograph „*Critique of Political Rationalism. A study of the political thought of Edmund Burke*” because in my opinion, as I indicated above, it sets the conceptual and methodological framework of all the main publications of Svetoslav Malinov. I see two main contributions: /1/ a critique of the "methodological setup (formulated most convincingly by Quentin Skinner) rejecting altogether the possibility of a comprehensive and uncontradictory interpretation of political thinkers" (which sets the grounds and logic of the analysis of political radicalism in the following monograph of associate professor Malinov) and /2/ the reasoned assessment of Burke as a thinker who professes "epistemological ideas related to the Christian understanding of the limitations of human reason". Particular attention is paid to the fact that Burke sharply criticizes and denies the ideas and practice of the radicals of the French Revolution, their "self-confident social metaphysics" as "not only theoretically wrong, but politically dangerous doctrines capable of harming every good orderly society“. In the final part of the monograph, Malinov analyses the concept of "political rationalism" of the British political philosopher Michael Oakeshott, which denotes the political attitude that "guided by the light of reason, every person is able to constantly improve social institutions until the achievement of a perfect political order; traditions are therefore an obstacle to human improvement which must be overcome by a new collective will born of a rightly directed intellect'. According to Malinov, "as a political thinker and statesman Burke is the very opposite of a political rationalist", and in ideological terms he is a thoroughgoing critic of political rationalism. These, in my opinion, are the ideological and methodological positions of Svetoslav Malinov as well.

In the habilitation thesis "Dangerous Minds: Essays on the Political Radicalism of the 19th Century", University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2022; 254 p. Svetoslav Malinov continues his research by analysing six political thinkers who can even be defined as Burke's

contemporaries (to the extent that they work in the period of „the long XIX century“). They are defined as representatives of radicalism because they argue and develop their ideas in politics "without considering the circumstances, the diversity, the complexity of human nature and societies; following these ideas to their logical conclusion, in a narrow-minded, one-sided and rectilinear pattern disregarding the real consequences for real people“. The connection with the Burke monograph is obvious.

In this second monograph, however, Associate Professor Malinov analyses not the classic authors who marked the history of political ideas in the long XIX century, but thinkers who were rejected as radicals, preaching ideologies destructive to well-ordered societies. Moreover, at the core of his analysis of their works lies precisely the presumption that if we deny the possibility of a comprehensive and uncontradictory interpretation of the views of such political thinkers, this deprives us of the possibility of understanding the logic of their political radicalism. That is, in his monograph, in my opinion, Malinov argues the thesis that the methodological approach defended by authors such as Quentin Skinner hinders the understanding of nineteenth-century radicalism. On the other hand, according to Malinov, only by revealing the inner logic and consistency of radical political thinking can "go beyond the extravagances of radicalism and see its meaning and foundations." This is not to say that Malinov rejects Quentin Skinner's other major thesis—that the analysis of minor and marginal thinkers is essential to understanding and interpreting classical authors in a history of political ideas. In fact, the idea of the study "Dangerous Minds" is precisely this - through "a conscious refusal of critical analysis, of refuting key theses, of demonstrating contradictions and revealing weaknesses" to outline the ideological and political context of the 19th century – the century of Hegel, Marx, Mill, Tocqueville, and to some extent Burke. The analysis of marginal authors is not a rewarding task, but the results reached by Svetoslav Malinov in his monographic research are significant and should be highly appreciated.

Some of the other publications that are included in the list for the current competition again analyse little-known political thinkers to the Bulgarian public, or little-known works by them (for example, Bacon's "New Atlantis", the often neglected first twelve chapters of Hobbes's "Leviathan", Locke's Letters on Toleration, Mill's On the Subjection of Women). The author again consciously refrains from critical analysis, from refuting key theses, from demonstrating contradictions and exposing weaknesses, his aim being to focus "entirely on the content, analyse the main concepts, extract and arrange the meaning of these classical texts ".

In other of his articles, Svetoslav Malinov analyses with the tools of political theory key concepts such as "civil society" (an interpretation that I personally do not share), argues his definition of politics, analyses the "epistemological dimensions of majoritarianism" and "orthodox political

theology". In each of these texts he demonstrates both erudition and a good knowledge of theory, as well as the ability to argue his original theses.

One of the special merits of Svetoslav Malinov's research pursuits and achievements is the parallel interest in current topics and problems related to both the national political process and the political process in the European Union. Although he is actively engaged with a certain political force, in his research Associate Professor Malinov analyses objectively and impartially, offers his original theses and arguments on topics such as the "democratic deficit in the EU", and Bulgarian populism.

5. TEACHING WORK

Svetoslav Malinov is a well-established lecturer in "History of Political Ideas" major for the "Political Science". Within the bachelor program of the "Political Science" major, he teaches four courses - two compulsory and two elective. He reads compulsory and elective courses in the same discipline at the Faculty of History and the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University.

His lectures, in continuation of the tradition established by Prof. Dimitar Ivanov, are distinguished by exceptional precision and clarity, and in terms of content, they meet the highest criteria for teaching activity. Noting the fact that his required courses are highly valued by colleagues and his electives are popular among students, I still want to pay special attention to the two university textbooks that Assoc. Prof. Malinov included in the list of publications for the competition, as they set a new style and a new level in making teaching aids. Both are entitled "brief introductions" with the first "handbook" within 254 pages looking at John Locke's Two Treatises of Government and the second at Charles-Louis de Montesquieu's On the Spirit of Laws (in a volume of 166 pages). First of all, I must emphasize the extremely clear style - in my opinion, the texts are not simply readable, but even enthralling. They do not impose any interpretation, nor do they appreciate the influence that these two titans of thought had and still have today. Associate Professor Malinov consistently follows his style in the analysis of political ideas - "to focus entirely on the content, to analyse the main concepts, to extract and arrange the meaning of the leading ideas" (pp. 115-116 of the book on Locke). In the book on Locke, the author analyses the entire text of the "Two Treatises of Government" and not just the second treatise, which makes it possible to evaluate Locke's work as a whole. The text demonstrates not only Malinov's high erudition, but also his virtuoso knowledge of Locke's works and ideas.

The main focus of the book on Montesquieu is the structure of the narrative of „On the Spirit of the Laws“, which has been the subject of sharp criticism both by Montesquieu's contemporaries and by current scholars. At the end of the textbook, Malinov publishes the detailed content of Montesquieu's epoch-making work, which is 26 pages long and definitely aids familiarity with the

original text. The chosen format enables students not only to appreciate the main idea of Montesquieu's work, but also to navigate the large text of the book.

In the two study aids, in addition to a detailed analysis of the texts of Locke and Montesquieu, Malinov pays particular attention to the historical context and the biographies of the two classics of political thought. In both books, the parts entitled "bibliographic recommendation" (which direct students to publications in Bulgarian that will enrich and expand their knowledge) make an exceptional impression. I am convinced that these two textbooks will be repeatedly reprinted and will substantially raise the standards of teaching the history of ideas at Bulgarian universities.

I know and highly appreciate the activity of Svetoslav Malinov as a lecturer and compiler of study aids in the training programs of the Bulgarian School of Politics, which built the political culture of Bulgarian politicians for several decades.

6. CONCLUSION

Bearing in mind the importance of the scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, the high academic standards to which his teaching and research work meets, his many years of fundamental contribution to the development of the field of "history of political ideas" in Bulgaria, the responsibility and the precision with which he performs his teaching and administrative duties related to the management of the educational and research process in the "Political Science" department, I will confidently vote "for" him to occupy the academic position of professor.

MEMBER OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY:

10.08.2023

Prof. Dr. Romyana Kolarova