

R E V I E W

Concerning: Competition for the academic position of "Professor" in the Professional field 3.3. Political Science (Political Science - Political Ideas), according to the advertisement in State Gazette No 24 of 17 March 2023.

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1. Grounds for admission to the competition

There is one candidate - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Lecturer at the Department of Political Science of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (SU). He is an associate professor of Political Science at the Faculty of Political Science, Sofia. The Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (Article 29) formulates certain requirements for admission to the election procedure for the position of Professor. In this case, all of them are present: an acquired doctoral degree; holding the academic position of associate professor at the same higher education institution for 14 years; a published monographic work that does not repeat a work submitted for the acquisition of other educational and scientific degrees or for holding the academic position of associate professor; other original scientific research works and publications evaluated as a whole; significantly exceeding the minimum national requirements under Art. 26 (2), (3), and (5); and the absence of plagiarism in scientific works proven according to the statutory procedure. A strong educational and research background underpins all of these, including bachelor's and doctoral degrees from SU, a master's degree from York University (UK), research collaboration at New School University (USA), and specialisations in Norway, Italy, USA, and Poland.

2. Teaching, scientific, and applied activity of the candidate

This aspect of the candidate's work is respectable for its multidimensionality. From 1998 to 2000 he was an assistant professor, from 2000 to 2009 he was a senior assistant professor,

and since 2009 he has been an associate professor at SU. His teaching is entirely in the thematic field of the competition - the history of political ideas. The courses of Prof. Malinov include Political Ideas of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, History of Political Ideas of the Modern Age, Political Ideas of the 19th Century, and Political Ideas of the 20th Century. The research interests of Prof. Malinov are focused on the history of state institutions, conservatism, Christian democracy, liberalism, the theory of democracy, the European Union, and political parties. At the same time, he has participated in 6 research projects as head and member of the Department of Political Science, member of the European Parliament, member of the expert team of the Bulgarian School of Politics "Dimitry Panitza", an associate of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Centre for Social Practices.

This large-scale research and teaching activity related to political ideas is accompanied by an equally large-scale activity in the field of their dissemination and application in real politics. Prof. Malinov is the Editor-in-Chief of the journal RAZUM, Secretary of the Bulgarian Political Science Association, member of the European Parliament and three of its parliamentary committees (2011 - 2019), Member of the Bulgarian Parliament (2005-2009) and one of its committees.

The overall scientific achievements of Prof. Malinov include two habilitation theses, a monograph based on a defended dissertation, 59 articles and reports in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals and in edited collective works, 9 studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in peer-reviewed collective volumes, and the introductions of two textbooks. He has edited 9 collections and translated 5 books by Hume, Bacon, Burke, and Locke, serving as teaching tools for political science students. Prof. Malinov has selected the following publications for his candidacy for the academic position of "Professor": professorial thesis "Dangerous Minds. Essays of 19th-century political radicalism" (B3); the monograph "Critique of Political Rationalism", based on his defended dissertation (D5); 14 articles and reports (D7), two studies (D9), and the introductions to two textbooks containing works by Montesquieu and Locke (E21). Prof. Malinov has presented in support of his candidature only those citations to his scholarly works that are directly related to the field of the competition and indicate a broad academic interest in his work. These are 10 citations in scientific journals refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes (Indicator E 11) and 4 citations or reviews in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals (Indicator E 13).

3. Evaluation of the personal contribution of the candidate

3.1. Objective academic style

An objective academic style is evident firstly from the documents that Prof. Malinov included in his Professorial application. He does not indiscriminately use all of his publications, citations, and academic assets, but only those which in the strictest sense fall within the scope of the competition.

In his scientific publications, he approaches political thinkers "without anger and bias" and does not make any academic leaps aimed at attracting the reader's attention. All his research energy is directed toward uncovering the full and especially undiscovered potential of the political thinkers under analysis. In short, for Prof. Malinov, the analysis of the political ideas from the past is not a hidden opportunity to demonstrate the power of his analytical thinking, but an opportunity to offer such unconventional perspectives on long-analyzed political concepts that will shed new light on them and bring them closer to the dilemmas of our time.

3.2. Innovative approach

The underlined striving for objectivity includes the innovative approach in the analyses of Prof. Malinov. In his doctoral dissertation, he seeks an interpretation that would allow putting Edmund Burke's seemingly contradictory theses into harmony. In the article "The democratic deficit of the EU", Prof. Malinov explains the popular thesis about the democratic deficit of the EU with the false analogy between the modern democratic state and the EU. To avoid this mistake, he suggests looking at the EU in terms of the unique public goods it offers. In the article "Reflections on Bulgarian Populism", Prof. Malinov expresses the original thesis that Bulgarian populism transfers the traditional characteristics of the elite onto the people. As a result of this operation, the elite is not only constituted as unable to rule but is placed below the people in moral and even expert terms. In his commentary on Francis Bacon's book, "The New Atlantis, or Science as Sovereign", Dr. Malinov again opposes the traditional view of it as incomplete. This impression has come about because of the inertia to seek in it a traditional narrative with a complete plot. Instead, he formulated the original thesis that this book would seem complete if viewed as a philosophical parable about an ideal society. In his article "Is There a Future for the Concept of Civil Society?" he argues that this notion draws its vitality from transitology and will gradually lose its practical force outside its context. In the article "Hannah Arendt on Totalitarianism and the Totalitarian Leader," Prof. Malinov justifies his conclusion that totalitarian leaders, unlike their subordinates, expand their space for freer and more spontaneous actions, at the expense of the ideological logic they officially embody. After

decades of analyses of totalitarianism, this original thesis opens the door to an entirely new rereading of totalitarianism.

In his professorial thesis the political thinkers Joseph de Mestre, Juan Donoso Cortes, Arthur de Gobineau, Houston Chamberlain, Max Stirner, and Georges Sorel - representatives of 'reactionaries', 'racists' and 'anarchists' currents - are placed for the first time in a common interpretive framework called 'political radicalism'. The aim is not simply to bring them out of oblivion, but, by indirect comparison with them, to illuminate more precisely and fully the theoretical legacy of the undisputed names of the 19th century, such as for example, Alexis de Tocqueville, Karl Marx, or Edmund Burke. As Prof. Malinov puts it, this interpretive framework allows us to see for the first time "the fundamental proximity between substantively different authors and to suggest new possibilities for classification and grouping in the history of political ideas."

3.3. A precise contextualization

Objectivity in the research approach of Prof. Svetoslav Malinov is manifested also in the precise contextualization of the political ideas and phenomena explored. It is no coincidence that the introduction to the "dangerous minds" of the 19th century begins with a focused reading of their biographies, situated in the meaningful political field of the "long 19th century". A striking example of the importance of contextualization in political analysis is the study of Edmund Burke's political thought. Its foundations are Christian metaphysics and natural law. But to this, Dr. Malinov adds "Reformation, Counter-Reformation, rational theology, French Enlightenment, Scottish Enlightenment, common law, Christian humanism, modern science, philosophical empiricism, skepticism, rationalism, utilitarianism, and political economy."

Against this background, it becomes clear how the radical thinkers of the nineteenth century sparked the research interest of Prof. Malinov. They do just the opposite by ignoring "the circumstances, the diversity, the complexity of human nature and societies" and pursue their ideas "to their logical end, narrow-mindedly, one-sidedly and straightforwardly, without regard for the real consequences for real people."

3.4. New conceptual apparatus

An innovative approach to the history of political ideas and institutions crystallized, where necessary, into new concepts. For example, Prof. Malinov qualifies his approach to the "dangerous minds" of the nineteenth century as **respectful exegesis**. It is the deliberate abandonment of something traditionally seen as a scholarly duty and achievement, namely to

refute the key theses of the authors under analysis by demonstrating their contradictions and weaknesses. It is the respectful exegesis that leads to the illumination of previously unnoticed aspects of political history, as discussed above. In *Reflections on Bulgarian Populism*, Dr. Malinov introduces the notion of **radical demophilia** to denote the extreme populist attitude that attributes the traditional characteristics of the "elite" to "the people".

The refinement of the concepts used also introduces a new point. For example, the prediction that the notion of **civil society** would lose its explanatory meaning outside the context of transitology opens the way for an analysis of the conceptual gap that would open up in its wake and the possible ways to fill it. The analysis of the evolution of the concept of **political radicalism**, which started from the basic notion of "radical" and reflected the changes in the political-historical context, is also highly impressive. This illuminates the genealogy of left and right radicalism, the universalization of contemporary radicalism drawing inspiration from everywhere - religion, economics, science, philosophy, and the subsequent pluralization of radicalisms from environmental to Islamic.

3.5. The contributions of the professorial thesis

The merits of the research approach of Prof. Malinov discussed so far, permeate entirely his professorial thesis "**Dangerous Minds. Essays on Political Radicalism of the Nineteenth Century**". However, the contributions in the analysis of the individual authors should be added to the contributory character of the approach considered so far.

What gives **Joseph de Mestre** his uniqueness are the new logical limits to which he takes the "usual conservative orientation". "Tradition contains something more precious than even the most powerful individual human reason," he says. This is the accumulated social experience, its "wisdom without reflection, the following of which is the surest support for a good life." Therefore, the arrogance of human reason, whose potential can undermine "sound social foundations and stable political institutions," must be humbled. Even more extreme is Mestre's attitude to war, qualified as "divine in itself, because it is the law of the world." If "evil is on earth and constantly manifesting itself, it is also constantly to be deterred by punishment." As Dr. Malinov summarizes, for Mestre, "man is so depraved that he must be curbed from the cradle to the grave; so vile that he deserves no freedom; so dangerous to his fellows that he must tremble every moment before the crushing authority of the alliance between Throne and Altar." It is only from this point of view that one can arrive at Mestre's conclusion that war "elevates nations, enriches culture, develops moral virtues, perfects the human spirit."

The initial impetus for **Juan Donoso Cortes'** reflections came from his "sense of an acute political crisis across Europe". "Hence the surprising direction taken by his radical critique of human reason... Revolting against divine truth, reason falls into a false freedom, throwing man into the abyss of absurdity." Sin has joined human reason and absurdity "in a marriage that nothing can break." "Men embrace delusions and go after the mind of sophists. After the sophists come the revolutions, behind the revolutions march the executioners."

In his critique of contemporary political ideologies, Cortes starts from the positions of Catholicism. He places both liberalism and socialism before "the court of theology." In Prof. Malinov's words, Cortes "concentrates all his contempt for liberalism in his famous definition of the bourgeoisie as a 'debating class'" which, by its constant deliberations, "has made freedom of speech a substitute for religion." Hence the assessment of liberalism as barren and harmless if it did not pave the way to "something much greater and destructive - the doctrine of socialism."

"Socialists go all the way - God does not exist and therefore everything, including the human world, must be explained without Him. ' And here again, Dr. Malinov shows his precise measure in political assessment: 'Donoso Cortes respectfully admits that, unlike liberals, socialists are aware of the enormity of this task of theirs and have no illusions that it will be solved by half-measures and compromises... Socialism is powerful because it is a theology - but it is a satanic theology. " Therefore, the salvation of mankind from socialism lies in the "theology of Catholicism."

Arthur de Gobineau sees the basic causes of the birth and destruction of civilizations in the mixture of races, the inequality between which is insurmountable. Although all men have a common origin, as the Holy Scriptures say, there are "physiological differences" between men of different races which generate different moralities. The white race is superior to the black and yellow races, but within its own boundaries, there is also a hierarchy - at its apex, Gobineau places the Aryans.

Although a devout Christian, Gobineau attempts to reconcile polygenism with the Christian concept of monogenism. He declares that there is no Christian civilization because otherwise should deny the differences between the races. Indeed, the church has a presence in all races but remains above them. In Prof. Malinov's words, "the ability of all people to accept Christianity and improve their social order should not be confused with the ability to create civilization." Moreover, the role of the black and yellow races is reduced to a passive human mass in the creation of civilizations. Seven out of ten civilizations - all but the three American civilizations - came into being after decisive intervention by the Aryans, due to their superiority

in intellect and energy. And it is here, notes Prof. Malinov, that "Gobineau's racial dialectic leads to a deeply pessimistic paradox."

With its vitality and vigour, the superior white race catalyses processes that benefit all humanity. But the mingling of the races elevates the inferior and debases the superior, so it results in complete absorption and destruction of the Aryan characteristics. The absurd idea of human equality degenerates humanity and leads to the "end of human history" and the "last man." In this pessimistic prognosis, summarizes Dr. Malinov, "there is no room for free will and human freedom." Even great personalities are only a fuller embodiment of the qualities of their race.

Houston Stuart Chamberlain synthesizes his view of history into three questions: what is the legacy, who are the heirs, and why are they at war with each other? Chamberlain provides answers to all three, offering a coherent and complete historical narrative, the cracks of which are covered by his personal conviction that he is standing on an unshakable foundation: the theory of race. This approach is in complete accord "with his audience's need for the races to exist", comments Dr. Malinov. Unlike Gobineau, however, Chamberlain sidesteps the conflicts between monogenists and polygenists, and the result is different – a new optimistic theory. As summarized by Prof. Malinow, for Chamberlain, "the normal and healthy course of human development is not ... from races to racelessness, but the opposite - from racelessness to increasingly distinct races." That is, the dominant race stands out and asserts itself in solving the practical problems that history poses.

Chamberlain also sees racial miscegenation as the cause of the decline of Roman civilization. In this context, the figure of Jesus Christ breathes a "new youth" into humanity growing old in its sameness, and creates a new morality on the ruins of the old. It is here that Chamberlain pays the heaviest toll of his racism: Christ is a Jew by faith but not by blood. Therefore, "his teaching is not a refinement of Judaism, but its very negation. The Savior speaks of love, while Judaism is obsessed with formalism, rationalism, and crude materialism." The God of the Jews is "spiteful and vengeful, incapable of rising above their tribe." The complete antipode of the Jews are the Germans, who are "open to the world idealists, possessed of inner spiritual and intellectual freedom, loyal to the leaders they have chosen for themselves, with a highly developed sense of honour and dignity - their God preaches to love our neighbours and is converted to the whole human race." This brings the Jews and Germans into a permanent clash in which the loftiest ideals, "the soul of European humanity, and then of the other nations, are at stake."

Max Stirner subjects religion to a radical critique based on anthropomorphism. He comments that other critics of religion put the man in the place of God, and this is only a "change of masters" because the personality is torn between a "higher" and a "lower" self, between "essential" and "accidental" characteristics, between "good" and "bad" beginnings. "I am imputed the duty to strive for the 'higher', the 'essential', the 'good' and to despise the rest of myself. Thus ... I engage in battle with myself."

In order to free oneself completely, one must belong entirely to oneself. And this is only available when he is subject to no one else: "God, man, the senses, the government, the laws, the church". "Selfishness creates and liberates, gives power and ownership". All man's actions "are unacknowledged, secret disguised egoism", thanks to which men have "freed themselves from the world of the old gods".

It is this vision of the free man that brings Stirner into severe conflict with the state. Even the republic retains state oppression since the general will expressed in it could be challenged tomorrow by people who changed their minds, and this would bring them into conflict with their yesterday's will. Therefore, concludes Prof. Malinow, with the same uncompromisingness Stirner rejects not only Christianity but also the state, even if it relies on consent and the social contract.

The politics of egoism advocated by Stirner "can only be deployed after the disintegration of liberalism in all its dimensions." Political liberalism is dangerous to "the Unique" precisely because of the direct relationship it establishes between the individual and the state. Social liberalism (socialist, communist, and anarchist-collectivist ideas) is dangerous because of its ultimate goal: no one should own except society, i.e. everyone should be poor. The humanistic liberalism of the neo-Hegelians is most dangerous because it deprives the individual "of the possibility of independent thought and personal criteria of good and evil." In Dr. Malinow's conclusion, "political liberalism crushes our will to make decisions about our own lives, ... social liberalism deprives us of the possibility of property, and finally humanistic liberalism destroys the foundations of our thinking and essentially robs us of our own thoughts."

What is the alternative, according to Stirner? Prof. Malinow synthesizes it this way: a union of egoists in which everyone participates "without owing either the whole or its members anything, the egoist being included in or excluded from such a community solely with a view to his own benefit." Therefore, the egoist should not rise in rebellion "but should rise above the state and go his own way."

Prof. Malinow gives an extremely synthetic and complete characterization of the last analyzed author. **Georges Sorel** was a French Marxist in the late nineteenth century, which

meant "to be perfectly free in interpreting Marx and to be burdened neither by authority, nor by tradition, nor by any party discipline or loyalty." There is "a constant gravitation towards moral and psychological dimensions, a deliberate retreat from the 'economizing' of human culture and history typical of Marxists at the time. Even Sorel's style reflects his rebellion against the emerging Marxist orthodoxy and is reminiscent of Bergson's process of creative evolution."

Sorrell comes into a rupture with his Marxist contemporaries along several lines. While he accepts the Marxist understanding of class struggle, he abandons "economic determinism, historical materialism, Hegelian-Marxist teleology," as well as "the very grounds for understanding human freedom as a 'conscious necessity.'" The guiding idea in Sorel is an apology for violence: an intensification of class struggle and an increase in antagonisms to the point of fundamentally collapsing capitalist society. This defines Sorel's radical critique of both socialists, who struggle to improve the situation of the working class, and political liberalism, through the actions of which "the bourgeoisie realizes the need for voluntary self-limitation and the sharing of a portion of power with its mortal enemy, the proletariat." To achieve the radical goal, Sorel a special myth is needed: that of the "general strike." "The aim of this strike goes far beyond the improvement of any working and living conditions within capitalism. Its goal is the end of capitalism." As Dr. Malinov astutely observes, this apology for violence explains "the strong solder between far-right and far-left ideas between the two world wars."

In his summary, Prof. Malinov concludes that the historical dynamics of the "long nineteenth century" leads to the notion that "the world can be changed. Resulting is a clash between the questions of whether it should be preserved as it is or whether it should be changed, and what the consequences would be. These dilemmas generate a "huge diversity in the sphere of political thinking". To grasp the "subversive characteristics" of that time, authors with extreme, radical ideas must also come into view in the political analysis together with the mainstream classical thinkers. In this brilliant contextualization of the entire study lies the most profound argument supporting its significance.

And when the logic of radical ideas "takes precedence over the implications for what actually exists," the "boundaries between left and right" begin to disappear, revealing "a surprising closeness between representatives of antagonistic ideological families." With this final chord, the study of Prof. Malinov provides the key to understanding the radicalisms of the twenty-first century, and his historical study takes on exceptional relevance.

Conclusion

The works of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetoslav Malinov are indicative of a thorough, impartial, and subtle analyst of political ideas. Thanks to these qualities, his analysis revives the universal and topical meanings implanted in the political ideas of the past, making them markers of our time. To build in this way a bridge between the past and the present of political history is the leitmotif of the author's entire scholarly career. This approach reminds every political researcher that, along with addressing specific research questions, they have a far greater responsibility – to political history. Respected by this vision and embodiment of the research responsibility towards politics, I support in the strongest possible terms the candidacy of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetoslav Hristov Malinov for the high academic position of Professor.

August 10, 2023

Sofia

Reviewer:

(Prof. Nikolay Naydenov, Doctor Habil)