

STATEMENT

on a competition for the academic position of Professor in the professional field 3.3. Political Science (Political Science - Political Ideas) for the needs of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (SU), Faculty of Philosophy (FF), Department of Political Science, announced in State Gazette No. 24 of 17.03.2023

The opinion was prepared by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Olga Milentieva Simova, Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", Faculty of Philosophy and History as a member of the scientific jury of the competition according to the Order № ПД-38-257/17.03.2023 and changed ПД-38-282/5.06.2023 of the Rector of SU

For participation in the competition submitted documents only one candidate: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

1. Compliance of the submitted documentation with the applicable regulations

The documents submitted for the competition comply with the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria (ASDA), the Regulations for the Application of the Academic Staff Development Act, and the Regulations for the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and the Occupation of Academic Positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetoslav Malinov has presented a list of all his 75 publications, including 3 monographs in Bulgarian, 10 studies and 60 articles and reports in Bulgarian, English and other European languages, published in Bulgaria and abroad, as well as 2 textbooks. The documentation also contains a separate list of publications for the competition, including: the monograph "Dangerous Minds. An Essay on Nineteenth-Century Political Radicalism", submitted as a habilitation thesis; the monograph "Critique of Political Rationalism. A Study of the Political Thought of Edmund Burke," which is the publication of his doctoral dissertation; 2 studies; 15 articles and 2 textbooks. A number of other documents have been submitted: diplomas, certificates from an employer, a declaration under Article 115, paragraph (1) of the Regulations on the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and the Occupation of Academic Positions at the University of Sofia, a reference on the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements under Article 2b of ASDA, and many supporting materials. In the submitted documentation I did not find detailed information about the candidate's teaching activity.

2. Details of the applicant

Svetoslav Malinov graduated in Political Science (five-year Master's degree) at the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University. In 1996 he also received a Master's degree in Political Philosophy from the Department of Politics at the University of York. In 1999 he defended his PhD thesis on "Critique of Political Rationalism. A study of the political thought of Edmund Burke". In the meantime he participated in several summer schools in Krakow, Cortona, Oslo (1993-1994) and was a research fellow (Democracy Fellow) at the Graduate Faculty of the New School University, New York in 1997. Since 2009, he has been an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University, and since 2019 he has been its Head. Sv. Malinov was the editor-in-chief of the journal "Razum" (2002-2008), a member of the editorial board of the journal "Political Studies" (1995-1999) and Secretary of the Bulgarian Political Science Association (1998-2001). He was a

member of the board of the Political Academy for Central and Eastern Europe (2001-2004) and the expert team of the Bulgarian School of Politics "Dimitry Panitza" (2001-2010).

Svetoslav Malinov actively participates in the strengthening and development of not only democratic thinking, but also democratic institutions and practices in Bulgaria as Director of the Analysis Department of the SDS (2001-2002), founder and member of the leadership of the DSB (2004-2017), MP in the 40th National Assembly of the RB, and also in Europe as a member of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (2005-2009) and member of the European Parliament (2011-2019).

3. Characteristics of the candidate's scientific achievements.

The work of Assoc. Prof. Malinov is varied, but his main field of scientific interest is the history of political ideas after the French Revolution with an emphasis on conservatism and Christian democracy. His published research includes, in addition to the monographs mentioned above, numerous articles and studies in scholarly journals, but also translations and prefaces to translations of important classical works. Some of the articles submitted to the competition are devoted to the relationship between Christian religion and politics, and this is considered not only in historical but also in political-theological terms. Using his excellent knowledge of the ideological-political heritage, in a number of his publications the author also takes on a number of contemporary political issues, ranging from the characterization of Bulgarian populism, through involvement in the debate on the "democratic deficit" in the EU, to the question of Ukraine's accession to NATO, etc. It can be said that some of the theses developed in some of the publications have a contributory character. Here I will mention the most important of them, in my opinion.

The much used until a few years ago in connection with the European Union concept of "democratic deficit" Sv. Malinov criticizes in an original way, discovering that it is the fruit of a "false analogy" (J. St. Mill) between the modern democratic state and the EU. The real problem, according to the author, is the "conceptual deficit", the lack of concepts with which to describe a new entity, unknown in human history, such as the EU. Malinov's search in this direction seems promising to me, not so much as a linguistic expression ("demoi-cracy"), but as content. Instead of focusing on input-legitimation as in modern democratic states, it should shift to output and throughput-legitimation, because there is no united European demos and its emergence is not expected in the near future. This would prevent the Union from being undermined by expectations that it could not meet.

In relation to the study of populism and Bulgarian populism in particular Assoc. Prof. Malinov introduces a new concept - "radical demophilia", which refers to the transfer of the traditional characteristics of the elite onto "the people", i.e. the reversal of hierarchy, where the people are presented as superior to the elite morally, intellectually and in any other sense. One of the basic features of all populism - its anti-elitist orientation - is thus brought to an end. In future research on populism, I would recommend taking into account another characteristic of contemporary populism, formulated as fundamental by the US-based German political scientist Jan-Werner Müller (Was ist Populismus? Suhrkamp, 2016). He defines populism as the claim of parties, leaders, ideas and causes only to represent "the people" and to express their authentic opinions and interests. It seems to me that also in Bulgaria in recent years we can see this claim of singularity in defining the "national interest", "national traitors", etc., not only by parties and political leaders, but even by elite representatives occupying institutional positions that do not imply a need to struggle for electoral approval. I find the approach in which Bulgarian populism is considered not only in terms of political

ideas and their history, but also in terms of political culture in a specific historical context, extremely fruitful.

In his research on the relationship between religion and politics, and in particular between Orthodoxy and democracy, Sv. Malinov makes, in my opinion, a successful attempt to construct a political-theological perspective on the problem. Opposing some overly categorical views of authoritative Western thinkers of the recent and more distant past, who tend to "orientalize" (after Ed. Said) Orthodoxy, he concludes that from a doctrinal and dogmatic point of view it does not pose insurmountable and even serious obstacles to democracy. But at the same time, Orthodoxy does not promote it either, because of its excessive alienation from the world in general and from politics in particular. And this, in turn, fosters the development of apathetic attitudes towards these aspects of human existence, including democratic participation.

To the published doctoral dissertation on Ed. Burke, I will not address it here, as it was evaluated during its defense.

I would like to pay special attention to the habilitation thesis "Dangerous Minds. An Essay on Nineteenth-Century Political Radicalism." It is a profound and unconventional study of three groups of thinkers who seem marginal in terms of the "canon" in the history of political ideas, namely the reactionaries (Joseph de Mestre and Juan Donso Cortes), the racists (Arthur de Gobineau and Houston Stuart Chamberlain), and the anarchists (Max Stirner and Georges Sorel). Finding a basis for bringing together authors so different in the content of their theories is an original point. This ground is their political radicalism - going to the logical end of certain ideas without regard to the consequences for the real life of people and societies, and allowing, even praising, violence as an instrument for achieving desired goals. Malinov constructs the term "political radicalism", based on the definition of a 19th century author (Maurice Bloch) and enriching it with contemporary interpretations. Considering theories usually attributed to different parts of the political spectrum under the common denominator of political radicalism is, in my opinion, not just an original idea, but one that makes deep sense not only in relation to the nineteenth century, but also today. This approach makes it possible to trace the undercurrents, the dead ripples beneath the surface of political thinking illuminated by the "canon" and by its influence over time.

The author defines the method of the study as "respectful exegesis", the aim of which is to understand the internal logic of radicalism and therefore excludes the critical analysis of the ideas presented. This method has been followed successfully and has led to an extremely clear and logical reconstruction of the ideas. It begins with philosophical-anthropological and philosophical-historical premises (where they exist) in order to trace their logical relationship to conclusions concerning the social and political order. Moreover, the reconstruction is tailored to various relevant contexts: of political events in the period, of ideological disputes (especially in Stirner and Sorel), and even of certain biographical circumstances (e.g., in Chamberlain), which provides a brighter picture and a fuller understanding of "dangerous minds." The influences of various philosophical schools and ideas (especially in the case of anarchists) on the formation of their theories are pointed out. The main emphasis of the exposition falls, of course, on radicalism, but comparisons are also made of two of the groups (reactionaries and anarchists) with ideologically similar writers who are not perceived as radical, for example, with the classical conservatism of Ed. Burke with the reactionaries, with Feuerbach and the other Young

Hegelians with Stirner, with Marx and the dogmatic Marxism of the nineteenth century with Sorel. Thus the radicalism, the going to the logical end in the respective directions, stands out even more.

My only comment to the text of the habilitation thesis of Assoc. Prof. Malinov seems at first glance to be minor. It concerns the translation of the central concept in the theory of M. Stirner - "Eigenheit". In the translation of texts from "The Ego and its Own" in the "Classics of Anarchism" under the scientific editorship of E. Mineva the term is translated as „своеобразие“ (singularity). I agree that, in the context of Stirner's theory, this term does not accurately express the author's thought in Bulgarian. In my opinion, with "Eigenheit" Stirner denotes the uniqueness of the human personality. Sv. Malinov translates the term as „себевладеене“ (self-control) without a detailed justification of this choice. Here I see a problem that can lead to misunderstanding or confusion. The notion of „себевладеене“/ "self-mastery," „владее на самия себе си“/ "mastery of oneself," has a long history in rationalist philosophy, from Plato's "to become master of oneself" by subjugation by reason of desire and anger, through Kant's "to make one's freedom reasonable" by conforming the maxims of one's will to a rational law, the categorical imperative, to the permeation of this meaning in everyday Bulgarian, but also in German. The word „себевладеене“/ "self-mastery" is perceived as close to and even synonymous with „самообладание“/ "self-control" (in German "Selbstbeherrschung"). One such meaning, however, contradicts some of Stirner's basic ideas. He is strongly opposed to the bifurcation of the human self into "higher" (spirit) and "lower" (body, emotions, drives, desires, etc.) and does not accept the subordination of the latter by the former. It is precisely such subordination, however, that „себевладеене“/ "self-mastery" implies, not only in the philosophical tradition but also in everyday language. I understand the intention of the translation of "Eigenheit" to approximate the notion of "ownership" (Eigentum) contained in the title of Stirner's work. It may derive some justification from another philosophical and political tradition, that of Locke, for whom property is an integral category that includes also the life and liberty of the individual insofar as it is based on his work. Going down this road, the appropriate translation of "Eigenheit" would, in my view, be not „себевладеене“ but „себеприТЕЖАВАНЕ“ / "self-ownership" или „приТЕЖАВАНЕ на самия себе си“/ "self-possession". This term expresses the idea that man is the property of himself and corresponds to some of Stirner's ideas, namely the idea that man has obligations only to himself and owes nothing to any other people, communities, unions or causes. Such a translation would, in my opinion, avoid the above contradiction.

As the greatest contribution to the study of political ideas in the habilitation thesis of Sv. Malinov, I see the approach that places the emphasis not on their content, but on the way of thinking about politics. This allows not only for new orderings, groupings and classifications, but also opens the way for many other similar studies, not only in the history of political ideas, but also in illuminating their contemporary state.

In summary, it can be said that the research of Assoc. Prof. Malinov have made a significant contribution to the enrichment of existing knowledge through new approaches (in the habilitation thesis) and inclusion in the scientific-political debates with vivid and sufficiently well-founded hypotheses. I do not want to miss something, in my opinion very important, which is usually not highlighted because it is considered routine. Thanks to Svetoslav Malinov's scientific creativity, translation and organizational work, in the last 20 years the achievements of political thinkers, who for decades remained out of its sight because of the prohibitions and ideological prejudices of the communist regime, became known and accessible to the Bulgarian public.

The significant results of the scientific work of Assoc. Malinov are also reflected in the publications of other authors. The research submitted for the competition has been cited 11 times in scientific publications in refereed and indexed world-renowned databases or in monographs and collective volumes (Indicator D 11), as well as 3 times in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals (Indicator D 13). Assoc. Prof. Malinov has participated in a total of 6 projects: 3 international, one of which he is the leader and 3 national, 1 of which is led by the candidate.

4. Teaching

Since joining the Sofia University in 1998 (initially as an assistant professor, and since 2009 as an associate professor) Svetoslav Malinov has been teaching the History of Political Ideas in the Political Science programme of the Sofia University.

Conclusion

Having read the competition dossier, I confirm that the scientific achievements comply with the statutory documents relevant to the procedure for the academic position of Professor in the professional field of 3.3. Political Science (Political Ideas). The applicant meets the minimum requirements and no plagiarism has been found in the publications submitted for the competition.

I give my positive evaluation on the application.

On the basis of the above, I recommend the Scientific Jury to propose to the competent authority for the selection of the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" to elect Svetoslav Hristov Malinov for the academic position of "Professor" in the professional field 3.3. Political Science (Political Ideas).

21.07. 2023 r.

Prepared the opinion:

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