

Description for the general public: THE IDEA OF THE POLITICS OF REALISATION IN JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET

The goal of my research project is to present the idea of the politics of realisation as defined by Ortega y Gasset. This philosopher made his mission the fight for “new vital Spain” that could be made real through its Europeanisation. It was the grounds for Ortega’s involvement in the intellectual as well as social and political life of his nation which changed him into an activist promoting the Second Spanish Republic and the creation of strong and self-conscious civic society therein. The vision of political activities proposed by Ortega was different from the traditional one. It was not focused on soliciting for votes and keeping the power but its goal was to exploit the potential of the nation and to grow the vitality of Spain. This philosopher from Madrid clearly distinguished ‘common politics’ from his own concept of ‘Politics’. *The first one* consists in soliciting for votes and fighting for posts and its objective is the power. *The second one* is focused on working at the grass roots, that is activation of citizens and the creative potential in them and the activities aimed at the development of national culture. Such perspective of ‘Politics’ became for Ortega the politics of realisation. It was the result of overcoming political idealism and naïve realism. For Ortega, the idealism in political sphere was exemplified in abstract liberalism. Its mistake consisted in the affirmation of an empty idea of freedom. The naïve realism in politics was exemplified by pragmatism and materialism which neither respected the ideals nor created them. Ortega abolished the aforementioned standpoints, as interpreted by Hegel, and specified his own project of critical realism in the form of the politics of realisation. For him, the realisation means the “higher imperative in the area of politics”. It draws the attention to the fact that the purpose already includes the realised activity. It does not act against the ideal but draws it from the real structure of things and not from our subjective desires and ideas. It is not about the creation of ideal social organism, about the subordination of facts to our ideas but about the “observation of reality with humble attitude” in order to introduce the ideas on its basis and to fulfil the most urgent historical needs of the nation. Such interpretation of politics is the grounds for *the basic thesis of my project* that is to prove that the idea of the politics of realisation is for Ortega the translation of his project of overcoming idealism into practical area that he considered as “the task of our times”. The politics of realisation was the attempt to negate the subjective content of practical idealism. The latter one embraced each concept which gave priority to ideals with belief that they were worthier than the reality. The things were subdued therein to ideals interpreted as ‘essence of subjectivity’. The main thesis of my project is also the grounds for other characteristics of Ortega’s idea of the politics of realisation. *First of all*, the politics interpreted in such terms was in fact the pedagogy based on liberalism. *Secondly*, it assumed the transformation of the state politics into the national politics and that the state serves the nation (yet, it was not nationalism). *Thirdly*, it stated that healthy and efficiently functioning society is a dynamic synthesis of the mass and the elite minority. *Fourthly*, it stated that the highest social right is the right of the minorities’ influence on the masses. The last statement was the grounds for Ortega’s belief that “where there is no minority that influences the mass and the mass that can accept such influence, there is no society or it is close to the situation where there would be no society”.

My project requires the application of two methods: *the method of critical analysis of source materials* and *the hermeneutic method* based on understanding. The first one includes the analysis of Ortega’s works, and also of his notes and correspondence, the analysis of the works devoted to Ortega’s social and political thought and the analysis of the works concerning the development of social, political and pedagogical ideas in Spain. The second method consists in the reconstruction of Ortega’s – the author’s – historical situation to understand what had defined such direction for his thoughts and to separate in it what lost its meaning with the passage of time from the ideas that are still topical.

The nature of the project shows that its importance for the development of science is theoretical. It significantly improves the existing condition of research concerning Spanish culture, history and philosophy in crucial period in its history, that is the first half of the 20th century. It was a turbulent time in which the modern structures of Spanish state were formed. Ortega made efforts to not only describe such transformations through reflecting on them but also to create them. His thought in that area remains topical although it refers to the situation from the first half of the 20th century as it refers to two basic spheres of modern Western man’s life: the national sphere and the European sphere, and to their mutual relations. Ortega’s idea of the politics of realisation is one of the attempts to solve this problem and explain such notions as ‘nation’, ‘Europe’, ‘society’, ‘state’, etc. and the relations existing between them. Furthermore, the proposed project is also inventive and significantly contributes to the development of knowledge about not only Ortega’s philosophy – and thus joins the world research on that topic – but also wide-ranging social and political philosophy through presenting it from a new perspective, that is the Spanish perspective.