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‘We, the People’ fellow 2004 – 2005

WHO ARE THE BULGARIANS? - “RACE”, SCIENCE AND POLITICS IN FIN-DE SIECLE BULGARIA.

In many cases the issues of “race” and ethnicity were central in national ideologies and defining the nations. In the nineteenth-century the newly emerged consciousness of national identity received rational shape through scientific revolution. In fact, at that time nationalism was the driving force behind “racial” differentiation. In the scientific investigations one obvious area was that of “race” that often had political objectives as an attempt to assert the existence of “German”, “Italian” or “Hungarian” identity based on ‘innate’ racial characteristics. As El. Barkan emphasizes even the intensification of national rivalry in Europe in the latter part of the century stimulated the pursuit of still greater racial differentiation as modes of justification for nationalism that was sanctioned by the growing repute of biology and evolutionary theory.¹

Part of this process of constructing national ideologies in the nineteenth century was “the search for racial antiquity”, ‘ancestors’ and ‘common descent’.² Special importance also had different branches of modern science where the idea of inherent difference found legitimacy and “race” was perceived primarily as a scientific concept.³ As far as national ideologies played a crucial importance in public political domain the intersection between “race”, “ancestors”, ethnogenesis, science and politics was quite obvious.

Most of the studies concerning “race”, race theories or history of racial thought paid attention mainly to anti-Semitism, the notions about colored people in America or other former colonies. There have been recently some important historical studies concerning racial element in national ideologies, science and public political sphere as well.⁴ Nevertheless, the study of race in national ideologies still remains not very well explored field. In the Bulgarian case, as far as fin-de-siecle is concerned, most of the previous Bulgarian historiography has interpreted the problems concerning the Bulgarian “*people*” and different ethnic groups within Bulgarian state, imprisoned within the nationalist essentialist perspective itself and the “primordialistic” approach to ethnogenesis. Luckily, more constructivist perspective has informed some recent studies. However, still “racial” paradigm in fin-de-siecle Bulgarian political and scientific discourse has not been seriously opened for research. The “racial” language and many writings on “race” are largely ignored.

Most of the authors trace the origin of the modern, biological concept of “race”⁵ about the middle of the eighteenth century. Then it appeared something more than common definition of “race” as “lineage”. “Blood” lost its genealogical/class connotation gaining a biological grounding and national categories received racial

¹ Barkan, 1992, p. 17.

² Smith, 1983, p. 180; 1981, pp. 66-67; 1986, p. 147; 1991, pp. 21-22.; Gellner, 1983.

³ Fenton, 1999, p. 69; Christie, 1998, p. 36.

⁴ Bell, 2001, 2002; Hall and others, 2000.; Bucur, 2002.

⁵ About the origins and diffusion of the word “race” see Voegelin, 1998 (1933), pp. 80-83.; Augstein, 1996, p. IX.

overtones.⁶ In fact, in the course of history “race” had various meanings.⁷ By and large, the nineteenth-century use of the term was quite loose. It generally referred to a group believed to be united by common descent, something that today would be called “ethnicity” rather than “race.” Common descent was one element emphasized by race-thinkers, but combined in varying ways and proportions with an acknowledgment of other factors.⁸ Nevertheless, in the beginning of the twentieth-century the scientific usage of “race” continued to be multiple and at times self-contradictory. The term was used to refer to any geographical, religious, class-based or color-based grouping.⁹

In the last decades many studies have reached to the conclusion that “*race*” has no ontological status. It is a social and ideological construct. Racial categories cannot be explained through a scientific system of classification based on biological methods.¹⁰ Therefore, the decline of race as a category resulted from a lack of epistemological foundations for racial classification and incapability of racial typology for any consistent demarcations as well as the fact that the dispute over the relative impact of heredity versus environment could not be resolved.¹¹

As a definition, for the purpose of my study, I subscribe to a recently announced perspective by R. Brubaker that one should not treat “*rac*es” as things-in-the world or ontological realities. They are more perspectives *on* the world or epistemological realities.¹² One should think of “*rac*e” in terms of practical category, cultural idiom, ideology, narrative, cognitive schema etc. and a way of seeing, thinking, talking, and framing claims. It could be also a tendency to “*naturalize*” and “*essentialize*”, to emphasize “*the tie of blood*”.¹³ More specifically, based on theoretical and historical racial studies, I would define “*rac*e” as all things that were concerned with natural sciences and the notion of innate biological or genetic differences. It supposed the belief that people were members of a biological group with all that this implies. Racial thought emphasized visible physical characteristics of human variation, the differences in outward appearance. They included characteristics as face, shape of the human head, skull shape, complexion, skin color, lips, nose, hair texture etc. Those features were linked to the human character and

⁶ Literature on this topic is enormous. See for example Banton, 1998, p. 4-5; Zantop, 1997, p. 22; Boxill, 2001, pp. 3-4; Popkin, 1973, pp. 245-262.; Augstein, H. F., 1996, p. IX.; Barkan, 1992, p. 15; Boulle, 1985, pp. 220-221, 222; Hannaford, 1996, pp. 4, 5, 198-202, 227, 274 ; Bell, 2002, pp. 33-61.; Bell, 2001, pp. 82, 104-106; Zantop, 1997, pp. 22, 23, 28-29; Wilson, 2002, p. 67; Hall and others, 2000, p.191.; Wolff, 1994, p. 336, 339, 348; Neumann, 1999, pp. 85-86, Mosse, 1996, pp. 25-26; MacMaster, p. 12.; West, 2002, pp. 90-112.; Goldberg, 2002, esp. pp. 289-301; Bernal, 1991, pp. 27-28, 202-204.

⁷ M. Banton emphasizes that the word is not easily translated because of the multiple associations it has acquired in English. Banton 1998, p. 12 About some fluid and ambiguous meanings of “*rac*e” see Voegelin, 1998 (1933), p. 83-85; Boulle, 1985, p. 221; Augstein, 1996, p. IX, XXIX; Wiebe, 2002, pp. 56-57.

⁸ Brubaker, 1992, p. 211.

⁹ Barkan, 1992.. p. 2. El. Barkan gives us an example how according to a theory popular in the first two decades of the twentieth century, physical and social characteristics, such as height, intelligence, color, or behaviour, were inherited through a single gene. Ibid., p. 5

¹⁰ MacMaster, 2001, p. 1.

¹¹ Barkan, 1992.. pp. 3-4.

¹² Brubaker, 2004, pp. 78-79, 81.

¹³ Ibid., p. 11. See also the development of the argument on pp. 12, 13, 27, 82-84, 87.

capacities of human beings that were “racially” inherited. In fact, the innate qualities and defects were described as genetically transmitted through “blood” and “genes” and it gave in national ideology importance of the theme about common descent and the vision about “ancestors” of the nation. Moreover, we can speak about “race” when we find visions that people were different because they represented constant types; when come across the belief in hierarchy and inheritance; when they are used for causal explanation of social and cultural issues. Therefore, we can include visions that define a social group as endowed with unique hereditary traits that allegedly determine the mental attributes of this group as well as any essentialist view of the languages themselves or of the mental powers of their speakers.¹⁴

The goal of this study is to investigate instrumentalizations of the concept of “race” in the public sphere as well as in supposedly scientific discourse. I would like to explore the interaction and dissemination of various European ideas within the Bulgarian context in fin-de-siecle. I will try to reveal the meaning of the term “race” in Bulgaria at the time and its intersections with other similar terms; to trace how Bulgarian authors imagined and appropriated the vision of Bulgarian “ancestors”; how did they refer to the “*Bulgarian blood*”; how did contemporaries perceive and interpret certain historical figures or parts of the population in Bulgaria; how did Bulgarian elite tried to cope with racial hierarchies, and the idea of “white” supremacy. I would like also to investigate how did race discourse manifest itself differently in various texts, across political and ideological boundaries. I will try to trace the diversity in theoretical and philosophical perspectives as far as the ideas on “race” were concerned. Moreover, I will try to reveal the social meanings attributed to differences that were supposed to be “racial”; the interactions and the energies between different domains – politics, literature, journalism, science. Questions like these deserve an immense amount of research into background material, which I can not undertake within the frameworks of this article. It is not possible, within the space allowed, to analyze ethnic or racial stereotypes on popular level, state policy on “race”, Bulgarian attitudes to “races” that were not Bulgarian subjects at that time, state policy toward minorities; social and ethnic inequality; censuses; manifestation of “race” in different institutional structures etc.

I shall locate my study mainly within the “*fin de siecle*” – the years roughly from the 1880s until the Balkan wars. I shall be using the term because it provides a commonly accepted description of European context at that time, conjuring certain accepted aspects of the period that were important to the Bulgarian case. At that time European life was marked with anti-liberal shift in politics, cultural pessimism, growing militarism and the emergence of a new imperialism. The scientific racial discourse achieved increasing power and legitimacy and nationalism became more racial. Social Darwinism was omnipresent throughout European higher culture. Contemporaries used terms like “race” and “nation” as interchangeable. The nation was viewed as a distinct biological group carrying essential characteristics in the

¹⁴ This broad definition is based on authors working on more theoretical and sociological perspectives like Smith, 1991; Goldberg 2002; Barkan, 1992; Banton, 1998; Van den Berghe, 1967; Fenton, 1999; Boxill, 2001 as well as ones who worked in a more historical one. See Hall and others, 2000; Boulle; Gellner, 1983; Bell, 2001, 2002.

germplasm or “*blood*”.¹⁵ “Race” as a term and evolutionary and medical language influenced by Ch. Darwin entered intensively in the historiographic discourse.¹⁶ Even the notions of social groups, castes and classes were influenced by racial language and the conflict of races within nations became part of public discourse.¹⁷

“Race” in Bulgaria

The great political and cultural question in fin-de-siècle Bulgaria, as well as later, was how to reconcile the disparity of theory and practice. Although the theoretical concept of “*subject*” was intended to be inclusive largely under German intellectual influence, Bulgarian nationalism had been also swept by the romantic passion for the folkloric rediscovery of the “*people*”. It appealed mostly to language and cultural differences and saw the “*nation*” as existing from time immemorial. As in other parts of Europe nationalism appealed to “*language*”, “*blood*” and common descent. National myths and hegemonic historiographies continued to seek eagerly “*ancestors*” as a part of nationalist concerns for cultural authenticity.

However, it is known, that the populations in large territorial nation states are almost invariably too heterogeneous to claim a common descent. In this regard, the common ancestry of “*the people*” was always at least partially fictive. No nation possesses an ethnic base naturally or biologically. As E. Hobsbawm emphasized, the demographic history of Europe has been such that we know how multifarious the origin of ethnic groups can be.¹⁸ Cl. Christie stresses that scientific racial investigations were never satisfactory for nationalist propagandists because the historical process of migration and intermarriage meant that it was impossible to define clearly ‘innate’ racial differences except in categories that were so broad as ‘Mongolians’ or ‘Indo-Europeans’.¹⁹ As far as Bulgarian case is concerned, the precise mixture of pre-Roman Thracians, Romans, Greeks, Slavs, Old Bulgars, Vlachs, Pechenegs, Cumans, Tatars, Armenians, Ottoman Turks, Gypsies, Jews, Arnauts etc., make up the ethnicity or “*race*” a matter of debate. However, “visible” ethnicity was negatively applied to define “the other” and using proverbial racial stereotypes Bulgarian authors often took for granted the homogeneity of Bulgarian “*nation*”.

In Europe racism made its influence felt ever since the middle of the nineteenth century.²⁰ The proponents of what was viewed as race science believed that in the concept of “*race*” they held the key to history, culture and civilization.²¹ Moreover, in the second half of the century the transformation of that central concept of the social science, “*race*”, encouraged and strengthened the thought about the “*nation*”. Especially after the Franco-Prussian war (1870-71), explanations in racial terms became popular according to the established visions of “*ancestors*”, the Aryan myth, the established racial hierarchy between Europeans and non-Europeans as well as following the hierarchy among the “white race”.²² Even Darwinian evolutionism, supplemented later by genetics, provided racism with what looked like a powerful set of “scientific” reasons for stressing the importance of “racial purity.” As a result, it

¹⁵ This common characteristic of the period in Europe is described in MacMaster, 2001, pp. 4, 6, 20, 48, 56

¹⁶ Hannaford, 1996, pp. 250, 285-288; 306-310, 317, 323-324; MacMaster, 2001, pp. 35-36; Weindling, 1989, p. 58; MacDougall, 1982, pp. 99-103.

¹⁷ Weindling, p. 52; Hannaford, pp. 292-293, 298-302, 306, 323; MacMaster, p. 44.

¹⁸ Hobsbawm, 1992, p. 63

¹⁹ Christie, 1998, p. 37

²⁰ Mosse, 1985, p. 133.

²¹ Fenton, 1999, p. 5.

²² Weindling, p. 48; Brubaker, 1992, p. 101.; Hannaford, pp. 287-288, 319; MacMaster, p. 40.

even brought to the practice of using “*race*” and “*nation*” as virtual synonyms.²³

I would give more priority to that part of the European racial heritage that was concerned with proving essential differences within the European family itself.²⁴ D. Bell emphasizes that the intellectual framework for investigations into these narrower racial differences was largely the same, but here “science” developed in the service not of slavery and imperialism, but of nationalism.²⁵ Thus the catalog of “national characters” emerged with the classification of “*races*.” In cataloguing the variety of racial aliens, science simultaneously extended racial self-definition to the West. Therefore, the Europeans were also classified on the hierarchical scale from dark-skinned and passionate Southerners to fair-skinned and rational Northerners;²⁶ It was thought that Europeans from Northern and Western Europe were inherently more intelligent than the Alpines and Mediterraneans from Eastern and Southern Europe.²⁷

Situated within this international context, the Bulgarian discourse about “*race*”, and “*descent*” was accommodation and appropriation of the racist discourse and established racial hierarchy in Western Europe. Bulgarian elite had to invent, elaborate and underpin a myth of common ancestry and made this pedigree putative for the sense of ethnic identification.²⁸ Among this elite, after 1879 circulated ideas and concepts of the “*people*” (“*nation*” etc.) originating in the French Enlightenment, French Jacobinism, Mazzini’s nationalism combined with universalism and humanitarianism, Anglo-Saxon liberalism and civic humanism. However, the Herderian idea of *Volk* (people) that formed a *Blutsgemeinschaft* (community of blood), the *Volksseele* (national soul) and the *Volksgeist* (national spirit), prevailed and the Tyrnovo constitution (1879) bear witness to those alignments. In that context, the “*people*” became important dimension of the political transformations in the *fin de siècle* Bulgaria. The actual process of nation building resulted from the complex combination, negotiation, and confrontation of principles, expectations, and practices. Within them, competing ideas and notions appeared about the “*Bulgarian nation*”.

Many foreign authors who were important for the development of the nineteenth century racial thought were not translated into Bulgarian language. However, it is true that one does not need to have read racial thinkers in order to be influenced by their discourse. The whole atmosphere concerning newspapers, journals, brochures, etc. was quite sufficient. The Bulgarian press was also full with comments and translations that had been done from the major European newspapers and journals. The same trend was valid for the materials coming from Russia as well.²⁹ They were sufficiently impregnated with the current racial ideas. Many important books written by authors who had contributed for the development of racial ideas in Europe were not translated into Bulgarian language but at least some articles appeared in Bulgarian press. Nevertheless, it deserves mentioning that no monograph from the authors who embodied the extreme racial thinking (Arthur de Gobineau, Francis Galton, August Weismann, C. Vacher de Lapouge, Otto Ammon, Ludwig

²³ Hobsbawm, 1992, pp. 108-109.

²⁴ Hannaford, 1996, pp. 235-276.

²⁵ Bell, 2002, p. 60.

²⁶ Goldberg, 2002, p. 290.

²⁷ Boxill, 2001, pp. 24-25.

²⁸ Smith, 1991, p. 22.

²⁹ See for example the language about “Russian race” in *Национализъм...*, 1897, c. 165.

Gumpłowicz, Houston S. Chamberlain) was translated into Bulgarian language, although, it was clear that their basic ideas were known among the intellectual elite.

In the first years after the establishment of the modern Bulgarian state (1879) the usage of a term “*race*” was rare. Bulgarian authors in fin-de-siecle spoke about “*народ*” and/or “*народност*”, having in mind what the authors in other contexts meant as a “*nation*” (“*нация*”). In fact, the term “*Bulgarian people*” was equal to “*Bulgarian nation*”. In Romanticist discourse this “*people*” was associated with “*national physiognomy and self-consciousness*” or sometimes was even explicitly mentioned that they should be created through state action.³⁰ The term “*народност*” was completely equal in meaning with “*nation*” (“*нация*”). It deserves mentioning that in 1888 Ernest Renan’s celebrated lecture at the Sorbonne “*Qu’est ce qui un nation?*” (1882), was translated into Bulgarian journal with a title “*Що е народност?*”³¹ Those cases when Bulgarians used the very term “*nation*” were very rare.³² When the term “*nation*” was used it usually designated some foreign people. Sometimes to describe Bulgarian nation or the “*Bulgarians*”, authors also used the term “*nationality*” (“*националност*”) that was presupposed to have equal meaning with “*people*” and “*nation*” (“*народ*”). Largely, under German Romantic intellectual influence, Bulgarian notions about the “*folk*” can be discerned as well. Part of this rhetoric we can find in the language about Bulgarian uniqueness concerning “*our national physiognomy and our popular language*”, about “*our own face*”.³³ Therefore, like “*every other people*” the Bulgarian one was considered as a “*people*” with “*its own history, its own past, its own rights and customs, its own literature*.”³⁴ Special importance was ascribed to “*our language*”.³⁵

“*Race*” as a term began to be used relatively late and for a very long time it sounded alien within the Bulgarian context. There were some instances when the whole humanity was represented as a “*race*”.³⁶ In many other cases “*race*” was equal as a term with what was considered as common descent based on a language family and then the Bulgarian authors spoke about “*Slavic race*”³⁷ or “*German race*”.³⁸ In fact, in those and in other cases, explicitly or implicitly, the races in Europe were considered as German, Latin and Slavic.³⁹ It is very similar to the way in which the term “*tribe*” was used very often as the “*Slavic tribe*” as well as the “*Western German and Roman tribes*.” However, in other cases different nations were designated as “*tribes*” (the “*Slavic tribes*”, the “*English tribe*”, the “*Great Russian tribe*”, and the “*Bulgarian tribe*”). There were other examples when “*tribe*” was considered

³⁰ Свобода, VII, 15 май 1893., бр. 1100., с. 1. In fact, referring to J. G. Fichte, in 1870 newspaper “Macedonia”, in an article with the title “*Народ и народност*” spoke about it (them) as “*homogenous body*”. Минцес, Б., 1900. с. 6 и сл.

³¹ Димитриев., 1888, с. 682-725.

³² See for example Д. Петков in Независимост, I, 31 май 1886., бр. 23., с. 1 -2.

³³ Независимост, бр. 2, 8 март 1886., с. 1.

³⁴ Независима България, бр. 16, 25 окт. 1886., с. 2.

³⁵ Свобода, I, бр. 12, 10 дек. 1886., с. 1.; Свобода, III, 11 ян. 1889., бр. 234. с. 1.; Свобода, III, 22 юли 1889., бр. 286. с. 2.

³⁶ Демократ, I, 25 февр. 1885., бр. 1., с. 1.

³⁷ Кисимов, П., 1892, с. 11.; Свобода, бр. 27, 7 февр. 1887., с. 3-4.; Свобода, IV, 28 март 1890., бр. 351., с. 3.

³⁸ Народни права, I, 11 май 1888., бр. 26, с. 2.; Свобода, VII, 26 март 1893., бр. 1063., с. 1.

³⁹ Драгоманов, 1894, с. 75.

implicitly to have lower status than “nation”. Perhaps that is why sometimes the word “tribe” was left to designate people that were considered not “civilized” (“Asiatic tribe”). “Race”, as a factor, was counterposed to the “geographic” and “cultural” conditions.⁴⁰ In other instances the term had nothing to do with “common blood” but with temper and culture formed by history.⁴¹ Sometimes “*Bulgarian people*” was defined in racial and organicist language as “*everybody in whose veins flows pure Bulgarian blood*”.⁴² Nevertheless, it was not a rare case when Bulgarians were represented as related with other Slavic peoples with “*the same blood*.”

As one can see for a long time the usage of the term “race” was quite ambiguous, fluid and multiple. It could vary from members of linguistic family to biologically differentiated people sharing common “*pure Bulgarian blood*”. But even in those cases Bulgarian authors could rather use some other word than “*race*” in order to express the sense of community. The very concept of “race” was not essential to any of their designations or explanations. This word has no crucial analytical value and it was not used to designate especially the external physiological differences. Bulgarian nation was described with terms like “народ” and “народност” that were frequently used interchangeably.

The “Blood in our veins” or the “Our Ancestors”

In the nineteenth century history was already racialized in Europe by many authors. Especially between 1830’s and 1860’s it was seen as biography of “*rac*es”, which retained permanent essences.⁴³ In this regard, it is wellknown that the sense of unique descent need not accord with factual history. For the organic nationalists the romantic quest for “*our true ancestors*” was essential to the cause of the nation. That is why several myths of ethnic descent appeared combining historical fact and legendary elaboration.⁴⁴ The Romantic idea of transmission of “*blood*” and kinship gave the racist thinking and the notion of “*racial peculiarities*” intellectual respectability.⁴⁵ Looking for “*ancestors*” became part of historical discourse and “*ancestry*” turned to be one of the most important centers of gravity of the concept of “*race*”. Beliefs about “*ancestry*” have real repercussions in the thematization of racial issues not as a fact of life but as politics of culture. Moreover, the logic of Bulgarian imagination about “*our ancestors*” can not be explained without the developments in history, philology, anthropology and other disciplines on the topic in Europe during modern times. Since the end of the eighteenth century a great support in the West had had theories that the “*Bulgars*” of Asparuh were “*Tartars*” or “*Turks*” and contemporary Bulgarians “*Slavinized Tartars*”.⁴⁶ However, the idea about the general Slavic descent of the Bulgarians overwhelmingly dominated in the “Revival period”⁴⁷ and the notions about “*Tartar*”, “*Hun*”, “*Turkic*”, “*Fin*” or “*Hungarian*” origin of the “*old Bulgars*” were totally rejected or cover with negligence.

This view totally impregnated Bulgarian public space. It was exactly Slavic identity that gave the Bulgarians a chance for a symbolic escape from the Ottoman

⁴⁰ Ibid, с. 74 и сл.

⁴¹ КИСИМОВ, 1886, с. 25.

⁴² Независимост, I, 3 май 1886., бр. 15. Хроника, с. 2.; Свобода, VIII, 29 април 1894., бр. 1376, с. 1.

⁴³ MacDougall, 1982, pp. 2, 91-97, 119-121; Bernal, pp. 32, 226-227; Hannaford, 1996, pp. 243, 244, 248.

⁴⁴ Smyth, 2000, pp. 1394, 1397.

⁴⁵ Bernal, 1991, p. 224.; Lewis, Wigen, 1997, pp. 76-82.; Mosse, 1996, p. 39.

⁴⁶ Иречек, 1978., с. 153.; Дринов, 1971., с. 81.; Лилова, 2004, с. 266.

⁴⁷ Лилова, 2004., с. 159, 204, 206-207, 268-269.

Empire and better self-positioning according to the established racial hierarchy, the “Aryan myth” and different visions that circulated about the family of Indo-European people and languages.⁴⁸ Moreover, within this interpretative framework the Tartars and Turanian languages were represented as inferior to the Aryans.⁴⁹ Therefore, the wide reception of the idea of Slavic descent can be interpreted as a solution that Bulgarians took in the frameworks of the nineteenth century international policy and the development of Eastern Question. It was the accommodation and appropriation of the racialist discourse and established hierarchy in Western Europe as well. Moreover, the question of whether language relationship corresponded to biological one was hardly discussed at that time. It was believed that all peoples belonging to the same linguistic family had the same ancestors.⁵⁰

The Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 and the establishment of the Modern Bulgarian State (1879) just strengthen virtually axiomatic idea about the Slavic pedigree of the Bulgarians as well as the self-perception of the elite that the Bulgarian nation was part of the “*Slavic tribe*”. The relations with Russia and other Slavs were depicted as “*blood ties*” and “*tribal ties*”.⁵¹ The Bulgarians were represented as a “*pure Slavic*”, “*purely European*” and “*Indoeuropean type*” but “*Asparuch’s group of glorious Chuds, Fins or Tartar*” was neglected.⁵² Although the word “race” was not used, the very vocabulary about “*Indoeuropean type*” regarded as a permanent one and the “*purity of blood*” clearly shows the subscription to established racial thought in Europe at the time.

Even in the beginning of 1880s many representatives of the Bulgarian political class already shared the theory about “*the Turkic*” origin of the Old Bulgars in private discourse or as far as “*science*” was concerned. However, as P. R. Slaveikov admitted in a private conversation with the Czech historian K. Irechek, they were alerted of its public recognition because of “*political reasons*”.⁵³ During the St. Stambolov's government (1887-94), - when the diplomatic relations between Sofia and St. Petersburg were broken for the period of about ten years, - nationalist authors carry on to insist that “*the Bulgarians are so pure Slavs as Russians, Serbs and so on.*”⁵⁴ This firm identification with the Slavic pedigree and avoidance of the “*Tartars*” or “*Ugro-Fins*” was one of the ways to emphasize that the Bulgarians were “*Slavs*” and “*Europeans*”.

Nevertheless, during the Stambolov's government some different interpretations appeared about the Bulgarian “*blood*” and the qualities and temper that this “*blood*” had determined. Although still isolated and not turning into an elaborated and coherent discourse about the Bulgarian “*ancestors*” they marked crucial and fundamental rupture with the prevailing paradigm of the “*pure Bulgarian blood*” imagined as a “*Slavic one*” within the Bulgarian nineteenth century context. It was

⁴⁸ See Poliakov, L., 1971; Augstein, 1996, p. XXI; Bernal, pp. 219-220; Hall, C. and others, 2000., p. 188; Barkan, 1992, p. 19.

⁴⁹ Kemilainen, A. 1998, p. 71; Goldberg, D. T. 2002, p. 293.; Wolff, 1994, pp. 284-289, 302-304, 312. 345-346. 348, 286, 299-302. 348; Neumann, pp. 85-86; Bernal, pp. 224-230; Lewis, Wigen, pp. 76-82.

⁵⁰ Kemilainen, pp. 40, 66, 83, 209.

⁵¹ НБКМ БИА ф. 21, а.е. 10., л. 665.; Недоружамунята, 1886, с. 5-6.; Славянин, IX, 18 ноем. 1889., бр. 34, с. 1. Правда, I, 12 април 1886, бр. 4., с. 2.; Напред, I, 26 април 1886., бр. 7., с. 1.; Истина, бр. 7, 7 ноем. 1886.; Кисимов, П., 1886, с. 10.

⁵² Напред, 10 авг. 1889., бр. 10., с. 4-5.

⁵³ Иречек, К. 1995., с. 259

⁵⁴ Свобода, 17 март 1890., бр. 348., с. 2.

already mentioned that Bulgarian intelligentsia was aware about the achievements in science as far as the descent of Old Bulgars was concerned. On pages of journals the reader could learn about the "*strong Turco-Fin tribe*" which populated the Balkan Peninsula in seventh century and gave to the state the name "*Bulgaria*".⁵⁵ Moreover, in that period some Bulgarian politicians and journalists tried to find an escape from the idea of Slavicism. In this regard they evoked the origin of Asparuh's Bulgars and underlined it with its different versions – Tartar,⁵⁶ Fin, or Turkic.⁵⁷ This was often made with typical racial language that spoke about Bulgarian "*talent*", "*innate instinct*", and "*gift*" that were depicted as qualities inherited by "*our ancestors*" represented as Asparuh's Bulgars. In this context it was confessed that "*in our veins there is certain Tartar blood*" and this "*blood*" was depicted as a determinant of the military qualities of the Bulgarians in comparison with the Serbs.⁵⁸ In other case Bulgarian the Prime-Minister St. Stambolov domesticated a widespread racial view about the "Slavs" describing Bulgarian's qualities like "*a certain talent, innate instinct to govern and organize*" as intrinsic and inherited by "*our ancestors*", referring to Asparuh's Bulgars. To this virtues Stambolov juxtaposed the failed "*Poland, populated by pure Slavs*".⁵⁹

These versions were evoked within a context when the racial language became more visible in the Bulgarian public sphere. In these cases "*temper*" and "*qualities*" of a "*people*" were represented not as products of history, culture or social conditions but as determined by "*descent*" from a certain "*race*".⁶⁰ It was combined with still isolated attempts to appropriate some negative racial visions about the Slavs as "*feeble and of weak temper*" at the expense of some more positive characteristic of the "*German race*".⁶¹ Moreover, the German racial prejudice was adapted according to which the lesser breeds in the East were inherently incapable of state building, and hence fit only to be ruled by the others.⁶² This logic was appropriated in an original way in the above-mentioned language that depicted the availability of "*certain Tartar blood*" and possible mixture with it as a guarantee for higher military qualities in contemporary times than those of the pure Slavs like Serbs.⁶³

However, these examples also indicate how the vision of racial mixture was already seen as something superior and not leading the nation to "degeneration". In fact, the other elements of Bulgarian descent coming from Old Bulgars were seen as something that situated contemporary Bulgarians higher than the "*Pure Slavs*" as were regarded Poles and Serbs. The multiple pedigree gave to some Bulgarian politicians and journalists an opportunity to represent richer transmission of certain spiritual values within the lines of descent. However, it is known that myths of origin furnish the criteria for judging what is inauthentic or impure. Moreover, there was something more at stake here. In these versions is hidden a latent future possible clash of interpretation of authenticity. They contained the possible reformulation of the debate on what was intrinsic to the Bulgarians and what was foreign and extraneous.

⁵⁵ Критика, I, авг. 1891., кн. VII-VIII., с. 277.

⁵⁶ Свобода, IV, 20 дек. 1889., бр. 326.

⁵⁷ Свобода, 14 май 1894., бр. 1388., с. 1.

⁵⁸ Свобода, IV, 20 дек. 1889., бр. 326.

⁵⁹ Стенографски..., с. 56-58.

⁶⁰ Свобода, 26 март 1893., бр. 1063., с. 1.

⁶¹ Свобода, 26 март 1893., бр. 1063., с. 1.

⁶² See Malia, 1999., p. 133.; Wolff, 1994, pp. 300-301, 312.

⁶³ Свобода, IV, 20 дек. 1889., бр. 326.

It also could bring to different projects of “rebirth” and “reawakening” in order to achieve self-purification in the direction opposite to the one from the previous decades. Nevertheless, the above mentioned lack of coherent Non-Slavic or anti-Slavic discourse shows the limits of this process of “race mapping.”

It is interesting that in history textbooks this salient shift to more racial language did not happen. The term “race” was not used at all.⁶⁴ The interpretation of the “ancestors” also followed the version that had been basically established in the late 1860s and the beginning of 1870s. The problem of the pedigree of the Protobulgarians was not emphasized too. “*Finic Bulgarians*” were easy melt into the Slavs and “*Bulgarian people*” was coming from a “*pure Slavic tribe*”.⁶⁵ It is evident that there were no governmental efforts to make changes in those interpretations too. However, in the very end of the century one can come across with some slight nuances that were not dependent upon the political context. The possible explanation can be found in the above-mentioned renewed importance of the “Aryan myth” abroad. In some textbooks for the first time we see descriptions of the “Slavs” represented already explicitly as “Aryans”. Whilst in one they were the “*last Aryans who came from Asia to Europe*”,⁶⁶ in another a child could read: “*The Slavs migrated from Asia to Europe. They left their Aryan fatherland after the Germans.*”⁶⁷ These sentences were missing in the previous editions. In this regard, they are, at least partially, more revealing about what was at stake with the insistence on “Slavic ancestors” that had continued for decades.

There was also other facet of this search for symbolic link between contemporary Bulgarians and their “ancestors” embodied in the “*blood in our veins*”. During the political crises and campaigns for mass mobilization political writers invoked the names of Bulgarian medieval monarchs and their aristocratic “*blood*” to represent them as “*true ancestors*” of commoner males. It demonstrates again how ancestry was socially constructed and culturally elaborated, how writers venerated some remote ancestors and discarded others. In that way, they tried to provoke in their contemporaries the sense of honor, virility and “*knighthood*”. In the last decades history textbooks had tried to create a cult toward the “*military spirit of the forbears*” emphasizing the great moments and events from the medieval history of the First and Second Bulgarian kingdoms and the figures of their rulers.⁶⁸ There was also a political tradition already sketch in the proclamations of national revolutionary movement against Ottoman rule during 1860’s and 1870’s that referred to the “*pure Bulgarian blood*” of the medieval kings. During the political crises of 1886-87 the associations “Bulgaria for itself” released many proclamations and renovated this discourse. They summoned the patriots ready to defend their country (this time against the menace of Russian interference) as “*descendants*” of the “*glorious*

⁶⁴ Even the textbook on world history translated and adapted from D. Ilovajski represented “*racess*” as “*tribes*” designating them as “*Caucasian or white*”, “*Mongolian or yellow*” and “*Negritian or black*”. “*Caucasian peoples*” were depicted as superiour and as a main target of historiography because they lived in order and possessed “*high level of civility*” and “*education*”. See for example Манчов, 1883, c. 3

⁶⁵ See for example Бобчев, 1882., 1883, 1896. In Dr. Manchov’s textbook Old Bulgars were “*one Scythian group of Bulgarians*” Manchov, 1881, 5th edition, c. 9-10. In D. Gantchev they were “*not from Slavic origin, but Fin.*” Ганчев, 1888, p. 5, 1892, p. 6. In 1899 they were from “*Uralian-Fin origin, spoke Finnish language, mixed with Turkish words*”. Ганчев, 1899, c. 8.

⁶⁶ Dermanchev, 1896, p. 114.

⁶⁷ Bobchev, 1899, p. 9.

⁶⁸ Лилова, 2004, c. 199, 256.

Bulgarian kings” Krum, Boris, Simeon, Samuil, Asen, Kaloyan.⁶⁹ These political documents extended symbolically privilege descent and noble lineage to the whole Bulgarian people. “*Blood*” of ordinary Bulgarians was depicted as aristocratic and directly coming from the “*veins*” of the medieval monarchical figures qualified to reign and not to submit to someone else. These monarchs with their victories were invoked to embody the real “essence” of the “people”. Ordinary Bulgarians became symbolically men of noble blood. This should vindicate the uprising against Ottoman rule in the first case and the fight for “*autonomy*” and “*independence*” from Russian tutelage in the second. It is not by accident that it was the aristocratic quality of “*honor*” transmitted through “*blood*” and traditionally considered immanent for the aristocratic “lineage” that formed very important part of this discourse.

What was ironic here was that the great majority of the Bulgarian peasants neither had heard the names of their medieval rulers, nor have suspected their existence. Moreover, how “*pure*” “Bulgarian” and “Slavic” this “*blood*” was? It is very well known that Proto-Bulgarian Dulo dynasty had had monarchical lineage that had come from the designation “Bulgarian” not as an ethnonym but as politonym.⁷⁰ Although identifying themselves with the Bulgarian political and monarchical tradition, the ethnic descent of King Samuel and his brothers is contestable and perhaps Armenian.⁷¹ The same political identification was also valid for the three dynasties of the Second Bulgarian kingdom – Asens’, Tertsers’ and Shishmans’. However, it seems that ethnically they were predominantly of Cuman descent.⁷²

The above mentioned instances demonstrates that although the word “race” was not very often in the Bulgarian public sphere and scientific or academic language the very racial vocabulary was already there. The notion that the “people” had some essential permanent qualities and virtues that were transmitted and inherited through “*blood*” was very salient. Nevertheless, still skin color, hair form, eye form, and other facial features were not thematized in public discourse. Typical for the racial thought physical differences had not turned yet into important social or national markers. However, as far as periodical, literary and political press was full of reviews and translations from the major international newspapers and journals the category of “*race*” and racial language were represented on their pages. The literate Bulgarians at the time must have been informed that in Europe the vague category of “*race*” was already equal to “*nation*” (“народ”) in many cases when the press referred to “*French race*”, “*German race*”, “*English race*” etc.

Academy, Science, “Race” and “Descent”

As far as history as an academic discipline was concerned, one should emphasize that the historical discourse was not very influenced by the developed and elaborated idea of “*race*”. The word was usually translated as “племе” (“tribe”) in the broadest sense of the term. However, in 1888 (translating E. Renan) M. Balabanov, instead of “tribe”, used “паса” (“race”), describing it as a “foreign” word. “Race” was used to describe ethnic⁷³ or ligusitic differences between groups. In that way

⁶⁹ For more see Дечев, 1997

⁷⁰ Степанов, 1999, с. 175.

⁷¹ Иванов, Й., 1925

⁷² Златарски, 1933; Дуйчев, 1981, с. 50; Мутафчиев, 1928.

⁷³ It is evident that the meaning of word “ethnic” was not very clear for the Bulgarian public. Thus “ethnic difference” from Renan became in Balabanov’s translation “етническа” but with an additional clarification “народна”. Димитриев, 1888, с. 698.

Balabanov tried to distinguish “race” from the French word “tribu” that he translated as “племе”. Otherwise, in the text “tribes” and “tribal” could substitute in the translation “races” and “racial” in a sense of ethnic or linguistic division between different communities.⁷⁴ Balabanov felt a need to clarify for his readers: “... *the question here is not at all about the primary and widely known separations of the humanity to 4-5 main tribes or races, different between them in color of the body, yet different in their intellectual qualities, in their capabilities or inabilities for state organization, in their historic development or centuries-old stagnation.*” He added that it was talked about the “*so called white race of the Caucassian or Iranian peoples*”, about “*the peoples from this **white** (M.B.) race...*”⁷⁵

Moreover, some traces of racial thinking widespread in Europe at that time entered on the pages of the Bulgarian academic journal. Balabanov admitted that “*the question of the races as whole, that had been left or forgotten, or underevaluated before, for some time had acquired great scientific importance, it was often raised and it was treated in various ways.*” According to Balabanov the peoples from the white race were “*more lofty and elevated than all other races, Ethiopian, Yellow etc....*” and they were called “*with justice*” “*the peoples of history.*” However, it was the publication by Renan that exactly subverted the concept of “race.” Balabanov himself definitely opposed racial theory as well. More precisely, he was against the hierarchies among the “white” or “Indo-German race” according to “*intellectual development*” and “*state life.*” For Balabanov some authors had already made exaggerated statements. That was why he quoted Bluntchli who subscribed for the “*unity of human kin*” and “*common human nature even in the lowest tribes*” emphasizing the importance of this unity for “*every one civilized state.*”⁷⁶ Moreover, in order to attack the insight that the Slavs were racially inferior in comparison with the peoples from “Aryan” or “Semitic tribes”, he quoted Danilevski’s idea that the future belonged to the “*Slavic tribe.*”⁷⁷ This opposition against racial explanation was not isolated. Some other university professors were at odds with it as well. The Ukrainian M. Dragomanov announced that the differences between Slavic institutions, on the one hand, and Roman and German ones, on the other, were results of “geographical” and “cultural” condition not of racial factors. In this regard, he emphasized the differences in political institutions among the Slavs themselves.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, there was a Romantic notion of “*history of fatherland*” that really prevailed among the professionally trained historians and specialists in humanities. Historiography was irrevocably bound up with the ideas of nation and nation-state. It was obvious in many Bulgarian journals. In 1901 the Bulgarian Historical Association was established to study most of all “*history of the fatherland.*”⁷⁹ It admired what was seen as a nineteenth century critic to the “*rational method*” from the previous century of the Enlightenment. According to the Society’s philosophy “*life of the peoples is an organic development, that is determined by multiple, various factors, which are not always obeyed to human’s will and they have its own natural development....*”⁸⁰ Thus, history was called to demonstrate that the

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 690, 698, 700.

⁷⁵ Ibid., c. 705.

⁷⁶ Ibid, c. 705-706.

⁷⁷ Ibid, c. 707

⁷⁸ Драгоманов, 1894, c. 74

⁷⁹ Бележки..., 1905., c. 4

⁸⁰ Ibid., 1905., c. 6.

unified and homegeneous community remained the same despite the process of historical change over centuries. Even Balabanov, despite Renan's idea that nations are "*something fairly new in history*", regarded them on the Balkans as something eternal. He wrote how the "*different peoples fall silent*" during the "*4-5 ages under Turkish domination*" keeping their "*tribal affiliations*" when began to "*awake*" during the nineteenth century.⁸¹ Perhaps the author was impossible to ignore completely reality in which the Bulgarian nation still had to be forged. That is why he spoke how "*there is much more to be desired, much to be expected, much to be done and much to be added...*"⁸²

Some professional historians like V. Zlatarsky, especially in the beginning of his career, were not able to avoid a cluster of contemporary Herderian and German Romantic terminology that concerned the national development and the process of nation-building. Having in mind medieval phenomena, he spoke about "*raising of national spirit*" and "*the establishment of the popular ideal*."⁸³ He represented the "*nation*" that developed "*its own national principles*" at the medieval age.⁸⁴ In the end of the lecture, Zlatarsky even entered the future fulfillment of the "*common popular ideal*", which the Bulgarian people should do in order to fulfil "*with success the destined from the beginning task in the history of the whole Slavicism*."⁸⁵

From the point of view of the "race" these notions were contraversial and in certain contexts they could have different additional developments. In this vision one could see the language of German Romantic nationalism and its insight of an "*organic nation*" as well as a possible opportunity this ethnic interpretation of the "nation" to turn into definition in racial terms. The organicism somehow presupposed genetically transmitted differences and inheritance. The historiographic notions about "community of blood" and "national spirit" situated this presumably scientific disciplinary language very close to the "pure" national ideology that was dominating in political journalism. According to German Romanticist canon as far as the "spirit of the nation", and therefore its language, reflected the body, nationality was based on "*blood*" that was supposed to be "*pure*". It explains why even the Bulgarian academic history canon, as we will see later, for a very long time supported Marin Drinov's narrative from the late 1860s, emphasizing the Slavs and neglecting the Bulgars. It illustrates how interconnected were "language" and "blood" and why referring to Asparuh's Bulgars it should be emphasized that the Bulgarian people "*is not their descendent and there is nothing common with them*" counterposing Ancient Bulgars to "*our ancestors Slavs*".⁸⁶ However, perhaps there was still a difference between this self-assertive national vision of the past and a biological theory of "race". It could emphasize the priority of some internal essence, although even transmitted through "blood", over external physiological differences. Moreover, it was evident that still the word "*race*" had not acquired its honorable place in scientific vocabulary. Nevertheless, Balabanov interpreted Renan's "spiritual principle" or "soul", in a more German fashion reprecenting "*spirit*" and "*soul*" as penetrating into the "*organism*"

⁸¹ Димитриев, 1888, p. 687, 692.

⁸² Ibid., c. 722. To a certain extent it was pressuposed by Renan himself. As Martin Thom notes Renan has never denied the particular contribution of the French revolution for proclaiming the existence of a nation of itself. However, he beleived that the principle of nationality was both the creation of more recent period (1813-15) and of a more distant one concerning Germanic invasions. Thom, 1990, p. 29.

⁸³ Златарски, 1896, c. 30.

⁸⁴ Ibid., c. 32.

⁸⁵ Ibid., c. 37.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Шишманов, c. 565-566.

of the “*Bulgarian people*” and creating the Bulgarian “*mode*” (“*бѣт*”).⁸⁷ He even wrote that according to Renan “*history creates the grandchildren equal with the ancestors.*”⁸⁸ In 1896, when V. Zlatarski published his university lecture about the main periods of Bulgarian history, he asserted that the “*history of fatherland*” began with “*the emergence of the Bulgarian kingdom*” in the late seventh century.⁸⁹ The rulers in the First Bulgarian kingdom united “*the kins of the same Slavic tribe*” and later “*the parts of the same nationality (“народност”) – Bulgarian one*”.⁹⁰

However, the limits of the Bulgarian academic discourse were salient in the reaction of the academic circles to Heinrich von Treitschke’s death in 1896. The journal “*Български преглед*”, that was edited by professors at the University of Sofia, marked the event with a long article reprinted on its pages from “*Revue historique*”. Although recognizing Treitschke’s great talent, the article stated how he was harmful with its passion for German historiography and how Leopold von Ranke criticized him.⁹¹

What did Bulgarian academy say about the “ancestors”? Definitely, it spoke about “*the disappearance of the Trachians without any traces.*”⁹² Young Zlatarski also ignored any role of Old Bulgars in the establishment of what he called “*българска народност*”. According to him, during the Grate migration of the peoples, “*this country*” was “*devastated by majority of barbarian peoples and tribes*”. Nevertheless, he stressed, it received “*its national physiognomy, which it keeps until present time.*” Balkan Peninsula was populated by “*Slavic tribes, who gradually united themselves and founded an entity, one nation (“народност”) – Bulgarian.*”⁹³ Later he was much more revealing writing about the “*unification of the Slavic tribes in one Slavic nation (“народност”).*”⁹⁴ In this regard, even the superficial glance gave the viewer an opportunity to see how Zlatarski strictly followed the interpretative canon and moral implications established in the late 1860s by M. Drinov.

At that time in Europe it appeared the above-mentioned amalgam of biological theories of social change known since 1890s as “Social Darwinism”. It possessed potency to attract and incorporate both racial thinking and nationalism into a new matrix. Darwinism was applied to support theories of mental and physical degeneration through heredity and acquired traits. Several thinkers like Gustave Le Bon, Francis Galton, August Weismann, Lapouge and L. Gumplowicz contributed for the elaboration of those ideas.⁹⁵ Special importance had the works of Otto Ammon and L. Woltmann. By the end of the nineteenth century, as a result of those developments, it was accepted that man could be recognized for what he was from the instant and immediate signs of his material appearance. Cephalic index was applied as

⁸⁷ Димитриев, 1888, с. 721-725.

⁸⁸ Ibid., с. 718. It is not surprising that he had some reservations about the application of the principle of “people will” reminding that even according to Renan it was not relevant for the establishment of the French nation in the past. Ibid., с. 719.

⁸⁹ Златарски, 1896, с. 26.

⁹⁰ Ibid., с. 27.

⁹¹ Български преглед, III, 1896, кн. VII-VIII, с. 307-310.

⁹² Златарски, 1896., с. 27.

⁹³ Ibid., 1896, с. 31-32.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 1896, с. 32.

⁹⁵ Weindling, pp. 81-82, 86, 91-92, 93, 96; Hannaford, pp. 279, 289-290, 298-302, 306, 323, 330-331; MacMaster, pp. 36-37, 53-56, 42;

an analytical tool and scholars began to make judgements about the “*race*” through measuring shape of the skull and using racial rhetoric.⁹⁶

In Bulgaria new methods concerning a measuring of the thousands of conscripts received positive responses among some circles of the Bulgarian scientific community. It was still 1894 when the academic journal “Български преглед” commented on Otto Ammon’s measuring of thousands of conscripts and pupils. It was believed that if even part of Ammon’s conclusions were right, it would mean that “*from the anthropological explorations and dry tables that are now a matter of interest only for the specialists, after some time it will be possible to be drawn not a few instructive conclusions.*”⁹⁷ It was a sign that in the near future the Bulgarian context would not be untouched by respectability that racial theories achieved in anthropology at the turn of the century. As a result of the European trend within the Bulgarian intellectual field one can regard the great number of publications that covered the fashionable and more prestigious topic of heredity as well. It was used to explain a great variety of social phenomena like crowd behavior, criminal behavior, neurasthenia etc.⁹⁸

However, the educated Bulgarian was also aware of the intellectual developments in biology and the achievements of other scholars like E. Haeckel, T. H. Huxley and R. K. Virchow.⁹⁹ Therefore, he was informed of many warnings against current ideas about “*race struggle*” as a key to human development. He knew that there were no “pure” or “higher” and “lower races”, but only mixtures of morphological types and that differences between people were more cultural than physical. It was known that existing hostility against some aristocratic and chauvinistic theories of an Ancient Germanic or “Aryan race”. It was known that Renan had rejected the confusion of “*race*” with “*nation*” and “*linguistic groups*” and he emphasized how “*the greatest European nations are nations of essentially mixed blood*” and “*race*” as a category has no application to politics, history and philology.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Hannaford, p. 328, 332.

⁹⁷ Български преглед, II, 1894, кн. II, с. 167.

⁹⁸ See Законът ..., 1898; Драмов, 1898; Крафт-Ебинг, 1900, Наследствеността... 1900, кн. 3., с. 206-212.; Д-р Ень, 1901, IX, с. 560-567. Как трябва ... , 1897, кн. IX, с. 605-613, 1897, кн. XI, с. 633-651. Психология на тълпите..., Български преглед, 189, кн. с. 128-160.

⁹⁹ Калина, 1896, с. 49-64 ; Развитието ..., 1901, кн. V-VI, с. 364-373.

¹⁰⁰ Димитриев, 1888, с. 694, 699-700, 703-704. 707, 709. 711.

G. Katzarov - representing Eduard Meyer's book "Zur Theorie und Methodik der Geschichte" (1902) – wrote about the "attempt to represent as authentic the unity of the historical life of the nation and its development". This view was considered a result of the influence of the "history of the XIX century, that is governed by the idea of nationality..." He even insisted that nations in history were not something "given and primary" but a "complex product of historical development." What is more, "their pedigree" was depicted as something caused by "chances". "Nationality is not necessarily based on the unity of the people, - Katzarov carry on – on the contrary, most of the nationalities contained in themselves different peoples (народности)." As a response of Renan's concept, nation was seen as based "on the will". Notwithstanding, the Germans and Italians were regarded as nations before the establishment of their united national states.¹⁰¹

Very soon the Bulgarian academy and intelligentsia became very suspicious especially towards Lapouge and Ammon's "laws", their "ultraDarwinistic spirit" and "suspicious precision". Some intellectual circles were even against "this Darwinist sociology" that was regarded imprecisely as a "pointless repercussion of Nietzsche's teaching." The Bulgarian educated public was aware of the difference between the Darwinist theories in sociology some forty years ago with E. Haeckel, on the one hand, and Lapouge and Ammon's current ideas about "race struggle", on the other.¹⁰² Moreover, it is very telling that the circle around journal "Мисъл" – strongly influenced by Fr. Nietzsche thought - was one of the least racially oriented. There were also many materials in the press that opposed the predominant racial notions and thinking in Europe.

Nevertheless, at the turn of the century internationally the science of race, which traditionally had belonged to physical anthropology, reached its zenith in Europe.¹⁰³ That is why in Bulgaria it was impossible some physicians not to take anthropometry quite seriously. Following the practice of anthropological societies in Germany, they started to measure "the color of eyes, hair and skin" and to discuss the importance of these features for the "racial disposition" of the people. It was explicitly stated that the final goal of the project was to write "a monograph about the Bulgarian race."¹⁰⁴ Notwithstanding, in those cases, not extremists like Lapouge and Ammon, but moderate R. K. Virchow was the main point of reference and authority for the Bulgarian specialists. Moreover, these studies subscribed to opinion that the "peoples are only mixtures that express nowhere the real race."¹⁰⁵ Their methods provoked a serious discussion among specialists and even university professors joined the debate. Although some of them were definitely opposed,¹⁰⁶ it seems that others were ready to rely on this measuring.

This trend reached some figures working in other branches of science as well. It is true that exploring Old Bulgars, philologists Ivan Shishmanov was not very optimistic about the definition of the "Bulgarian type" with "antropological data"

¹⁰¹ Кацаров, 1902., с. 188.

¹⁰² See for example Енгевльгард, 1903, с. 43-45.

¹⁰³ Barkan, 1992., pp. 4, 19-20.

¹⁰⁴ Ватев, VI, кн. VII, 1900, с. 68-85.

¹⁰⁵ Ватев, VII, 1900., с. 76, 84-85. See also Ватев, 1900, IX, с. 100-105.

¹⁰⁶ Юринич, VI, 1900, кн. V, с. 117.

and “*craniologic measuring*”, basically because there was no sufficient data.¹⁰⁷ However, in other cases he took them more seriously, even those made by Bulgarian specialists “*for good honor*”.¹⁰⁸ He was even ready to excuse the “*physical anthropology*” for possible mistakes because it was a young discipline.¹⁰⁹ What is more, Shishmanov was the one who even prepared the plan for some anthropological research including “*height, eye color, hair color, physiological features*” as well as “*heredity*”, “*acclimatization*”, and “*mixing*”.¹¹⁰ He even explicitly stated that “*complex ethnogenetic questions*” could not be resolved “*only with a grammar in hand*”. According to him, “*especially the linguist*”, who often was compelled to build theories on “*much more unhealthy material than the skulls*”, should received “*cordially*” the help that was given to him by anthropologists as well as the one given by historian, ethnographer and archeologist.¹¹¹ Despite his caution to physical anthropology, Shishmanov referred to craniological data and measuring among which including those of P. Broca, Virchow and John Beddoe.¹¹²

Shishmanov’s study that marked the fundamental shift in treating the problem of Bulgarian ethnogenesis was written in the best traditions of nineteenth century science. It was a demonstration of the serious professionalization that Bulgarian academy had passed from the late 1880s onwards. Not discussed in the history textbooks the problem of the pedigree of Old Bulgars was already represented in academic writings and debated in the best traditions of European thought. Shishmanov stated that the problem about the “*descent of Protobulgarians*” was still not resolved.¹¹³ However, he announced many times in the text that lately the “*science*” had subscribed to the long debated hypothesis of “*Turco-Tartarian origin*”. The success of the hypothesis Shishmanov explained with the “*development of linguistics*”.¹¹⁴ He also represented definitely the failure of the last representative of the Slavic hypothesis D. Ilovaisky since he had not been very well equipped and the “*sober critic*” had broken his arguments.¹¹⁵ The readers also could see that according to craniologist Broca and its measuring of the “*pure Bulgarian skulls*” they were “*Non-Slavic*”.¹¹⁶ Shishmanov added as information Virchow and Beddoe’s achievements that rejected the Slavic descent of Bulgars too.¹¹⁷ Even according to the most detailed “*cranilological data*”, presented by Bogdanov, the population near Volga had already been “*Non-Slavic*” whilst the “*contemporary Bulgarian craniological type*” was the one of the “*very mixed population*”.¹¹⁸ Shishmanov also presented Bogdanov’s final conclusion that “*Old Bulgars had not been Slavs*” but they had not been “*Chuvashs*” either.¹¹⁹ This argument clearly demonstrated a double shift in the Bulgarian academic field. It testified that study on ethnogenesis became less romantic and more professionalized, converted in a scientific (*wissenschaftlich*) exercise. The

¹⁰⁷ Шишманов, 1900, с. 748, 751.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., с. 749, 750-751, 752

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., с. 752-753.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., с. 752

¹¹¹ Ibid., с. 753

¹¹² Ibid., с. 748-749.

¹¹³ Ibid., с. 512.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., с. 510, 518, 568.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., с. 595.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., с. 748-749..

¹¹⁷ Ibid., с. 749.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., с. 749 -750.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., с. 751.

vision about the historical ethnic mixture among contemporary Bulgarians was conspicuous.

To a certain extent, this trend of professionalization is confirmed by Vasil Zlatarsky's lecture course on medieval Bulgarian history for the academic year 1901/02. He supported "*the most widespread and commonly accepted by the famous and authoritative scholars view*" about the ethnic origin ("народността") of Asparuh's Bulgars. They were "*neither from Slavic, or at all of Aryan origin.*"¹²⁰ According to Zlatarski "*Bulgarians were neither Fin, or Slavic tribe, but they always were a people close to the Huns.*"¹²¹ He announced that almost all new historians consider the Huns as part of the "*family of the Turkic peoples.*"¹²² However, subscribing to the "*Turkic-Tartarian*" theory, Zlatarski emphasized that he was against "*Tunman-Engel's theory*" that "*contemporary Bulgarians are rather Tartars or Turks than Slavs.*" He referred to M. Drinov's thesis that the "*ancestors of the contemporary Bulgarians we should not consider the group of Asparuh but the Slavs...*"¹²³ Nevertheless, he defined Drinov's interpretation as too extreme one. Zlatarski did not accept that Asparuh's Bulgars disappeared in a way that "*no one drop of blood from this people could not enter in the veins of surrounding Slavic tribes.*"¹²⁴ According to him the "*disappearance of the Bulgarian element*" did not happen so fast and it did not finish around the middle of the ninth century. Moreover, he emphasized that it survived especially in northeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula where even later "*other Asiatic peoples as Kumans and Tartars*" was to settled.¹²⁵

However, this professionalization of the Bulgarian science was not a linear process and it had its discontinuities. Stefan S. Bobchev, for example, was an university professor and a specialist on history of Bulgarian law. In 1909 celebrating the released of Drinov's historical works, Bobchev permanently referred, as some decades earlier, to things that were "*Bulgarian and Slavic*" and he spoke about Bulgarian history many times as "*native and Slavic*" one. At the first glance like Shishmanov he admitted that Drinov's thesis about "*Chudo-Fin descent*" of the Bulgars of Asparuh later had been transformed in "*Turcik theory*" ("*тюркската теория*"). However, he emphasized that the "*last word*" on the topic had not been said. Moreover, whilst Shishmanov presented Drinov as a biased scholar, Bobchev still stressed his insight about how Protobulgarians of Asparuh "*imported political unity among the fragmented Slavic tribes*" and how they were "*swollen*" into "*this Slavic element*".¹²⁶

Shishmanov's study also demonstrated a shift to phraseology, which included "race" as a legitimate scientific domain. At that time international science legitimized racial idea and it turned the concept of "race" in respectable scientific category. In the academic discourse the ideas of "race" and "ethnicity" existed side by side, intertwined and overlapping. This step to "racialization" of science was not that unexpected. To a certain extent, there was always a risk involved in the way that sciences in Bulgaria were deeply inbeded in the paradygm of Romanticism. It is visible that like other scholars at the time, Shishmanov was not immuned by the usage of contemporary terminology in describing past reality either. Several times,

¹²⁰ Златарски, 1902., p. 205

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 207

¹²² Ibid., p. 208

¹²³ Ibid., p. 213

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 214

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 214 -219

¹²⁶ Бобчев, 1909, с. 635

having discussed the descent of Old Bulgars, Shishmanov wrote about their “*nation and language (“народността и езика”)*” and the “*quarrel upon the nationality and the language of Protobulgarians*”. (“*разпрама върху националността и езика на прабългарите*”).¹²⁷ Moreover, in Shishmanov’s text the term “*race*” was overwhelmingly appropriated. Its meaning moved between “*descent*” and “*group of people*” with common origin. He also expressed its faith that it had been a mistake to make some conclusions about the “*race*” of Old Bulgars only upon linguistic data.¹²⁸ Following time’s fashion and referring to Kopernicki’s studies, Shishmanov used the term “*Aryan*”, “*Aryan skulls*”, “*Semitic and Fin skulls*” charging them with a scientific weight and not contesting their explanatory power.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, as I already mentioned, Shishmanov used the term “*race*” with a great fluidity and he took racial differentiation as limited to physical characteristics without accepting race typology as an element of causal cultural explanation. Besides, Shishmanov definitely informed his readers, that according to some new data announced by L. Niederle, the Slavs and the Germans had no “*genetic difference*”. He also added Bogdanov’s conclusion that the Slavs together with “*the Germans, the Fins, and the Scythians*” had common descent in a “*Proto-European tribe*.”¹³⁰ Therefore, it is evident that as science legitimized the idea of “*race*” it made it also very vulnerable in case of changes in scientific outlook. More attentive observer is able to see that science has its own internal dynamic. Its professionalization could lead to questioning and later disappearance of a primordial race of mythical ancestors. However, politics of culture and coming wars would put limits to this process.

This direction in the academic field increased a sense of “*racial*”, namely ethnic duality and even plurality in Bulgarian history. This awareness of ethnic complexity in their own past could encourage some Bulgarians to stress the benefits of racial and cultural mixture at least among the Europeans or among the “*whites*”. It could provoke in British or some French manner reluctance to attribute notions of racial and cultural purity in a German way. However, as far as “*non-Whites*” were concerned, intermixture was definitely considered dangerous and disastrous. In fact, in Bulgarian case, as we have seen, some important politician and journalists had already stated publicly the benefits of this duality or plurality of “*blood*”, “*talent*”, and “*instinct*”. However, perhaps the position of Old Bulgars on the European racial scale combined with political conjecture and the traditional strong element of Slavism in Bulgarian national ideology were obstacles to subscribe more firmly to similar vision.

“Bulgarian race” and country with “*races*”?

The above mentioned changes in the European intellectual environment as well as in the politicized and cultural journalism in Bulgaria, the impregnation of the public space with language about “*race*” and “*heredity*” brought to some very new tendencies in the tematization of “*race*”. All “*progress*” and “*science*” of modernity came at the last century from Western Europe. Therefore, some received the prevailing racial thought at that time as the last word in science and prove for

¹²⁷ Shishmanov, c. 512 и сл., 556, 570.

¹²⁸ Ibid., c. 512

¹²⁹ Ibid., c. 749

¹³⁰ Ibid., c. 752. It was in 1888 when it was announced with Renan’s words that long time ago Germans and Slavs were united in the “*big undifferentiated mass of the Scythians*.” Димитриев, c. 708. Renan also emphasized that East of Elba Germany is “*Slavic*”. Ibid., c. 704

progress. It should be applied in Bulgarian context to explain Bulgarian phenomena. Being European fin-de-siecle fashion, “race” turned to be in an unprecedented way a part of the Bulgarian intellectual environment. Especially the period after 1900 brought to enthusiasm for racial interpretations combined with the hereditarian fervor. Within the context of the Romanticism prevailing in the Bulgarian intellectual tradition the step to “race” was not that hard. Differences were to be conceived as organic, genetically transmitted and intrinsically associated with the presence or absence of certain social abilities or cultural characteristics, vices and virtues.

Although, academic scholars were much more obsessed with the racial science in comparison with one or two decades ago, by and large, they were still caution in applying racial methods for resolving social and cultural issues. However, in journalism, non-academic historiography, literature, these ideas were much more received and they became part of new directions in the thematization about Bulgarian nation, political and cultural figures, different segments of the Bulgarian population and the way of “mapping” of some regions. The authors who did it had no caution that Shishmanov had. They coped with the category of “race” and current racial thought in Europe freeing their fantasy and imagination as much as possible without many limits and beyond any definite and rigid procedures. In fact, in the beginning of twentieth century the term “race” or “потекло” (“lineage”) was used more often. It coincided with the increased appropriation of the terms “nation” and “nationality” instead of “народност”. Moreover, one comes across constant usage of already racial terms like “Bulgarian tribe” referring to “blood”.¹³¹ “National peculiarities” and “national character” were seen openly as “biologically” determined.¹³² There were already some suggestions for the possible relationships between biology and psychology as well.¹³³

The above-mentioned widespread writing on heredity in the turn of the century elevated the importance of “blood” and “genes” for defining temper, character and culture, whether some group of people is “civilized” or “barbaric”. Moreover, it strengthened the insight that “race” could be recognized from the human face relating it to the historical knowledge about Bulgarian past and its ethnic complexity. The legacy of theories of the division of humankind into fundamentally different “types” also linked the term “race” with physical or visible difference. Explicitly or implicitly, this conveyed the notion that populations were marked by characteristic appearance and therefore they were biologically different.

The notion of possible “racial mixture”¹³⁴ in Bulgarian past presupposed within this cultural context the appearance of some attempts for racial explanation.

¹³¹ See for example Гидиков, 1911, IX, с. 1236

¹³² Гидиков, 1911, II, с. 146.

¹³³ St. Gidikov wrote: “Noone can deny that for biological and historical conditions some groups had been created that are called nations, differing one from another in specific psychology.” Гидиков, 1911, II, с. 144. “The ostensible sameness – carry on Gidikov - hides deep differences in racial temperament or the historically established psychology of every nation.” Ibid., с. 145. Speaking about “Slavic tribe” Gidikov emphasized how “racial community” of the Slavs predetermined their “close psychology.” Гидиков, 1911, III, 279.

¹³⁴ Justifying the need for “craniological measuring”, S. Vatev wrote: “If we wanted to please ourselves with a small number of observed people, it was enough to quote the opinion of some traveler, that the Bulgarians seemed once like Tartars, once like Gypsies, that the Bulgarians had few Slavic type, that the swarthy prevailed most of all in Southern Bulgaria etc.” Батеv, VI, 1900, IX, с. 104

The space of the article does not give opportunity to go in details, but yet in the beginning of 1890s there were already some attempts for racial explanations in some disciplines like history, history of law, medicine, etc. Cases concerning the lack of chastity of the Bulgarian brides were explained as a supposed vestige of an ancient Thracian custom.¹³⁵ The Bulgarian writer Ivan Vazov made classical racial description where the backwardness of the Shops visible on their “*faces*” and distinguishable in their “*temper*” was inscribed in their supposed “*Cuman*” or “*Pecheneg*” “*race*.” On the contrary, the Slavs became an embodiment of those who were able to accept and adapt the civilization.¹³⁶ This kind of racial discourse was also appropriated in popular histories in order to explain in racial terms the political behavior of regions and large parts of Bulgarian population. The journalists Simeon Radev tried to explain why during the political crises of 1886-87 the population from the North was much more loyal to the Bulgarian authorities whilst some regions in the South were involved in rebel activities. The oppositions he delineated between North and South of Bulgaria were charged with racial language. To the “*healthy Bulgarian race*” in the North, “*pure*” by “*ethnic sediments*” he juxtaposed the ethnic mixture in the South - a result of *migrations*” and those “*ethnic sediments*” left in the past. Moreover, we have opposition between the health in the North and implicit “*degeneration*” in the South that was caused by the “*touch with Byzantium*” and the same “*ethnic sediments*”. Racial language was charged with a salient gender perspective as well. The population in the North was explicitly depicted as “*masculine*” and that in the South implicitly as feminine one.¹³⁷ Vazov and Radev wrote texts in which they strictly followed the intellectual fashion in Europe with heredity and racial generalizations quite barely disguised or even not in the language of science. Even if one supposed for the moment that the above-mentioned physical signs or racial types were real, they were unevenly spread over Bulgaria among groups of the population. Moreover, the assertion that their social and moral characteristics were grounded in their biological difference was erroneous. Even when these groups could be distinguished by their outward appearance the relation between culture and appearance was accidental.

Conclusions

Despite some early examples, “*race*” and modern scientific racial thinking in Bulgaria was a latecomer. It is evident that in most of the cases theoretically and stylistically Bulgarian thinkers and scholars depended on the influence of foreign authors. The sources of Bulgarian fin-de-siecle racial thought were a combination of Bulgarian ethnocentrism, the rise of the Bulgarian national ideology, German Romanticism, Russian Slavophilism, different currents in French racial thought in science and literature, some interpretations of Social Darwinism, the ideas of heredity etc.

The racial thought borrowed from Western Europe were adapted and accommodated to serve to the specific political and cultural purposes coming from the Bulgarian context. It should have helped Bulgarian leaders to situate their nation biologically among the “*Whites*” and “*Europeans*”. Moreover, “*Aryan myth*”, which was somehow energized in fin-de-siecle, situated some white races superior to others. In this regard, the other genealogies of the Old Bulgars put them not among Indo-Europeans but still among the whites (Ugro-Fin, Turcic, Turanian). To a certain

¹³⁵ Оджакон, 1893., с. 53.

¹³⁶ Вазов, Ив. Събрани съчинения, т. 10. С., 1977., с. 79.

¹³⁷ Радев, С., 1990, с. 261-262.

extent, it was enough that they were not “Mongoloids” or “Blacks”. It deserves thinking about the possible associations between Old Bulgars whose state was put north of the Caucasus and “Caucasian race” from the textbooks in geography and history. And why not think about the beginning of appropriation, to a certain extent, of the European fascination of the East, Orient, and Asia? Moreover, the Slavs were considered enough to support the Aryan disposition. Even at this point one comes across strategies that tried to represent the Slavs as equal or superior to the “Germans” through inverting the hierarchies.

The racist discourse was not that strong in Bulgarian society in comparison with many other countries. Most of the people among the academia who adapted racial science do not subscribe to its value judgments but to some of its methods. For them it was more a purely scientific exercise with a sincere hope that these methods could help some scientific issues to be resolved. Moreover, most of the authors who somehow utilized the racial language and value judgments as if did an exercise and speculations with a fashionable current of thought than to subscribe firmly to racist ideas. Despite their inclinations to ethnic national perspective, the majority of the Bulgarian authors in humanities rejected racism in the pseudo-scientific narratives. Historiography in Bulgaria was even linked less to biological and racist ideas and more to the idea of cultural nation. That is why other ethnic elements were not at the core of Bulgarian history narrative. Moreover, the Bulgarian public was aware that it almost does not exist nation in which some race to be kept pure. In this regard, Bulgarian case is not close to the German one, but to the context of countries like for example Spain and Italy when the unification of races was seen as harmony. In this regard, it was close to the European states that were not preoccupied by racial mixture.

Changes in politics not always and not overwhelmingly brought to changes in the interpretation of “ancestry” especially in history textbooks and academic science. As far as scientists were concerned as individuals, they were the ones who elected in this debate about the ancestors which theory to support. Presumably, their participation was not determined solely by pure scientific motives. Although committed scholars they also thought about themselves as Bulgarian “patriots.” However, they did not fulfil this task and they did not devote to the “nation” in a way that several decades ago their forerunners had done. The above-mentioned combination of professionalization of science, on the one hand, and the “racialization” of the public sphere, on the other, were just a historical coincidence. The very political and cultural context as well as the configuration of international politics still made some constraints on paradigm of “ancestry”.

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PRESS

Две и две пет, Девети Август, 19 февруарий, Демократ, Дума, Добруджа, Македония, Малък вестник, Напред, Независимост, Независима България, Пловдив, Правда, Свобода, Свободно слово, Славянин, Средец, Светлина, Съединение, Търновска конституция.

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