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**BITTERLY TRIUMPHANT:
THE BIOLOGISATION OF NATIONAL CHARACTER
IN THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY EAST CENTRAL EUROPE**

Abstract

In early twentieth century racial ideologies and racial anthropology penetrated the traditional concepts of national specificity. It was a rule all over Western Europe, though Germany was clearly the leader both in ideological and institutional terms. In East Central Europe this development was accelerated by an increased intellectual influence of German universities. First World War marked the peak of these processes. Racial anthropology was expected to deliver a scientific interpretation of the continental conflict. In East Central Europe it was equally an argument in support of ethnic and territorial claims. The article discusses eight examples of regional theories based on discursive connections between race and nation: Hungary, Ukraine, Serbia, Poland, Finland, Romania, Lithuania, and Bohemia. Their authors were experts: professional anthropologists, geographers, ethnologists and medical scientists. Generally it can be argued that all of these theories were successful. A considerable part of them (notably the Serb, Polish, Finnish) contributed to the construction of 'national unity' of the newly formed states. Others, despite their failure to do so, were instrumental in the formation of national movements and strengthened the idea of national peculiarity. Almost all of them succeeded in entering the mainstream of the European racial sciences in the interwar period. Consequently, their authors made considerable careers in the academia. But in long run the post-1945 evolution of physical anthropology marginalized racial theories. After the collapse of the Third Reich what had been the mainstream of physical anthropology gradually turned into a scientific and ideological *Sonderweg*. The experts dealt with in this article caught up to the art of modernity that unexpectedly run out of fashion.

Keywords: racial anthropology, First World War, East Central Europe, Germany, national character, modernization

The origins of the cogitation on national character are pretty well sunk into oblivion. In the Antiquity era, descriptions of the nature of the natives, autochthons or aboriginals were, in some cases,

a fully-fledged part of the description of the lands they populated. A traveller who was willing to share his observations would mostly focus on everything that distinguished the aliens from the locals. The species whose genealogy was no shorter than that of historiography has been through the parallel developmental phases, affected by influential vogues, ‘spirits of the time’, and scientific concepts. In the Enlightenment era, it was often shaped by the climatic theory that linked the hierarchy of nations, and their corresponding political systems, with their tempers, civilisational advancement, and natural environment.¹ In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the gender discourse began playing a similar part; its influence was apparent in the popular analogies of stereotypical character of males and females and specific nations.² In the latter half of the eighteenth century, national character became a subject of scientific reflexion as part of the *Völkerpsychologie*. Following Wilhelm von Humboldt, the trend’s originators were of opinion that these characteristics are expressed in the language; consequently, they are not invariable and are evolvable instead (and thus get ever-perfected, they believed).³

This article deals with the subsequent turn in the line of thought concerning collective psyche. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, this mindset fell under the influence of a not-quite-well-ordered but extremely dynamically growing conglomerate of theories, practices, concepts, and beliefs related to the idea of race. For several dozen years, ‘race’ was a most a-la-mode social-sciences term. Physical anthropology was the obvious field in which it was used; as an outcome, a separate discipline evolved, named racial anthropology. However, the term was also adopted into the glossaries of psychologists

¹ Borbála Z. Török, ‘Die Kunst, provinziell zu sein. Siebenbürgische Landeskunde als Wissenschaft und literarische Fiktion’, in Ute Raßloff (ed.), *Wellenschläge. Kulturelle Interferenzen im östlichen Mitteleuropa des langen 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 2013), 145–82, analyses the influence of the climatic theory on the hierarchy of nationalities, using the example of the Transylvanian *Landeskunde*.

² See Ruth Florack, *Bekannte Fremde. Zu Herkunft und Funktion nationaler Stereotype in der Literatur* (Tübingen, 2007); further references in Maciej Górny, “Polacy uwielbiają swoje kobiety”. Płeć narodu w refleksji charakterologicznej okresu I wojny światowej i jej polskie refleksy’, in Andrzej Wierzbicki (ed.), *Klio polska. Studia i materiały z dziejów historiografii polskiej XIX–XX wieku*, v (Warsaw, 2011), 27–62.

³ Matti Bunzl, ‘Völkerpsychologie and German-Jewish Emancipation’, in *idem* and H. Glenn Penny (eds.), *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire* (Ann Arbor, 2003), 47–85.

and psychiatrists (owing to Cesare Lombroso, among others). Gustave Le Bon made the word an important element in his crowd psychology concept, believing that race may be a salvage against the crowd's barbaric nature.⁴ Ludwik Gumplowicz, an outstanding sociologist, christened his emergence of states theory the 'race struggle'. Is it legitimate to conclude, then, that human sciences in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were permeated by racism? Experts in the output of Gumplowicz remark that "the obviousness with which he used the notion of 'race' is incomprehensible today".⁵ However, the fact that the term's popularity is astonishing from the perspective of a different time does not imply that the contemporaries might have seen anything weird in it. Even more likely, they assumed either of the two stances (otherwise, not always easily identifiable): adherents or, merely, users of the notion of race. Stanisław Ossowski, who criticised scientific racism, noted in the 1930s:

People often get fascinated by the natural-science style of explaining the phenomena, as in the derivation of the entire dynamics of group processes. Similarly, newly-converted Marxists are dazzled by the derivation of any and all cultural changes exclusively from economic transformations.⁶

Fascination with an all-explaining formula could not be shared by everybody. But even though certain authors writing about race might have not adhered to it, they would nonetheless use some elements of racial theories. Following up the analogy proposed by Ossowski, one could say that, as alongside converted Marxists there was a number of barely 'Marxising' intellectuals, also among those writing of race there was a host of those passively integrating into the dominant discourse. Such differences in the approach towards racial theories surely reinforced the fluidity of the related ideas or notions. More importantly, just because race became so popular a term, it could be subjected with great ease to ideas drawn from elsewhere, up to expressing some convictions with which far less than all the 'licensed' specialists (above all, racial anthropologists) could have agreed.

⁴ Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologie des foules* (Paris, 1896).

⁵ Jan Surman and Gerald Mozetič, 'Ludwik Gumplowicz i jego socjologia', in *idem* (eds.), *Dwa życia Ludwika Gumplowicza. Wybór tekstów* (Warsaw, 2010), 45.

⁶ Stanisław Ossowski, *Więź społeczna i dziedzictwo krwi* (Warsaw, 1966), 72.

A classic example of a term originally drawn from physical anthropology and harnessed in the service of political ideology is the so-called Nordic theory, also known as Nordicism.⁷ It is paradoxical (though not quite rare, as far as the history of ideas is concerned) that the basics behind this theory contradicted the principles of its contemporary 'raceology' (quoting Gumplowicz's spiteful description). According to a definite majority of anthropologists, the racial categorisation did not convince with the national one; there were no 'racially pure' nations; the only space where they could possibly be found was prehistory. Since no 'pure' races were traceable in any historical period, nothing much specific could be said about their psychology, abilities, or character. In spite of a common agreement on this issue, the practical applications of racial anthropology repeatedly subsided into divagations about an anthropological character of individual nations, or distinctively separate regional groups. Such was the case with Franz Tappeiner, a Tyrolean physician and community worker, who advocated the theory of Rhaetic background of the region's population. His views reflected, to an extent, the awareness and pride of local singularity. The lineage dating back to the Ancient Rhaetic people not only ensured the Tyroleans the first option in the area they populated but also explained the brachycephaly of the living inhabitants of the region and of the skulls collected by doctor Tappeiner.⁸ From the standpoint of the period's science, the thesis whereby a relatively pure and peculiar race has survived for thousands of years in Tyrol, without a counterpart elsewhere, could seem doubtful, at best. All the same, the charges cast against Tappeiner concerned a completely different thing. Otto Ammon, a sociologist and anthropologist (and, coincidentally, a German nationalist), deemed the connotation between the indisputably Germanic region with

⁷ Hans-Jürgen Luthzöft, *Der nordische Gedanke in Deutschland 1920–1940* (Stuttgart, 1971).

⁸ Franz Tappeiner, 'Die Abstammung der Tiroler und Raeter auf anthropologischer Grundlage', in *Beiträge zur Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte von Tirol. Festschrift zur Feier des 25. jährigen Jubiläums der Deutschen Anthropologischen Gesellschaft* (Innsbruck, 1894), 1–37. Also, see Tatjana Buklijas, 'The Politics of Fin-de-siècle Anatomy', in Mitchell G. Ash and Jan Surman (eds.), *The Nationalisation of Scientific Knowledge in the Habsburg Empire (1848–1918)* (Houndmills Basingstoke, 2012), 220–2. Tappeiner's anthropological collection is today part of Vienna's Naturhistorisches Museum collection.

a non-Nordic (non-Aryan) people unacceptable. In his opinion, the aboriginal dolichocephalics, as the more intelligent and industrious people compared to brachycephalics, had simply emigrated to the towns and outside the region. As for brachycephalics, they were not autochthonous but, similarly to Etruscans, they had arrived from the depths of Asia.⁹ In response, Tappeiner argued that the shape of the skull did not determine the membership in the Aryan race, and thus the brachycephaly would not automatically mean an Asian descent.¹⁰

With the anthropological skull measurements as the underlying motif, the dispute around the origin of the Tyroleans focused on the questions the contemporaneous anthropology did not feel qualified to resolve: national territory, pureness of origin, abilities and psyches of races and nations. The subsequent decades saw the German-speaking human sciences notoriously revert to the like inconsistent and illogical (from the standpoint of physical anthropology's methodology) use of the term 'race'. The term appeared all the more adducible that the constructs built with its use seemed completely resistant to criticism, and to falsification. Let us take a closer look on one such construct.

Ammon's declared conviction about a higher intelligence and particular aptitudes of the Aryan dolichocephalics was used as a convenient argument in the Germans' conflict with Slavic nationalities. Even when the German publicists admitted that their compatriots were no longer the Germanic people of the past, they asserted that there was a spiritual bond and a biological continuity between the two. Wilhelm Jakesch, a German gynaecologist and national researcher from Cheb (*ger.* Eger) in Bohemia, admitted that there were no more pure *Germani*:

However, the entire habitus of the abovementioned [Bohemian Germans] displays what may be named a Germanic foundation – not to be found in any other nation.¹¹

The said habitus encouraged reference to continuity of Germanic culture, character, or psyche, as exemplified by a long sequence of

⁹ 'Anhang. Kritisches Sendschreiben von Otto Ammon an Dr. Tappeiner', in *Beiträge zur Anthropologie*, 33.

¹⁰ 'Erwiderungsschreiben an Otto Ammon in Karlsruhe', in *ibidem*, 35–7.

¹¹ Wilhelm Jakesch, *Die Schicksale der blonden Rasse. Die Kämpfe in Böhmen im Spiegel der Weltgeschichte. Zwei Vorträge* (Leipzig, 1907), 12.

geniuses of humanity, all belonging to the 'Germanic race'; for, as a continuator of Ludwig Woltmann's output remarked,

The Germanic culture, along with the Greek culture, is rightly considered the most beautiful bloom and summit of humanity's achievements. It probably constitutes, in actual fact, the topmost point in the development of humanity.¹²

The Germanic perfectness excelled, quite clearly, in contrast with the less talented races. The proficient sight of racist scholars could discern the ethnic divisions and hierarchies virtually everywhere. Hans F.K. Günther noted, for instance, that

when they intend to show a dowdy man, satirical periodicals, characteristically, usually equip him with traits typical of the Eastern race.¹³

The picture outlined so far would remain one-sided without the whole galaxy of scientists and publicists who criticised, condemned and ridiculed such theories. There were many such critics, representing an extremely wide array of milieus and worldviews. They were all united by the futility of efforts taken against the racial ideologists. The defensive mechanisms of that specific faith handled rational arguments very efficiently; one example is the stance of the liberal anthropologist Felix von Luschan as juxtaposed with that of the nationalist publicist Ludwig Trampe. Luschan pointed out to a thing that became blatantly obvious to Günther, but their interpretations were pretty dissimilar:

For instance, amongst the Bohemians, one finds comparatively very rarely in real life the type which since the middle of the past century has been predominant in Austrian satirical magazines. Many fanatic leaders of today's Bohemians bear German names and represent the German type and, moreover, most of them probably are of genuine German family background. After all, also with the bearers of purely Bohemian names, what we are accustomed to describe as the 'German type' appears in much

¹² Walther Rauschenberger, *Die ungleichartige Begabung der germanischen Rasse* (Mannheim, 1923), 2.

¹³ Hans F.K. Günther, *Rasse und Stil. Gedanken über ihre Beziehungen im Leben und in der Geistesgeschichte der europäischen Völker, insbesondere des deutschen Volkes* (Munich, 1926), 26.

higher numbers than the low-foreheaded contemptible human being with protruding cheekbones, their nostrils poking almost vertically.¹⁴

Based on this observation, Luschan concludes, among other things, that the intellectual potential of Slavs should not be neglected, since the German-Slavic ethnic borderland is populated by a blend of races. One realises how persistent the racial stereotypes were when looking at the way in which Trampe summarised a similar observation:

Resulting from the German-Polish racial war in the Eastern March, under profound influence of the German element, everything that has remained Polish is, in the depths of its nature, racially German.¹⁵

In other words, the advantages of Slavs only prove the effect of the German(ic) influence.

An even better example, perhaps, of how critique-proof the German racial ideology was is the response given by Richard von Hoff, a pedagogue and Nazi follower, to the doubts expressed with respect of special endowments or abilities of the Nordics. Hoff once addressed the arguments proposed by Stanisław Poniatowski and Jindřich Matiegka at a 1927 anthropologists' congress in Amsterdam. The Polish scholar reported on his findings, concluding that the aboriginal Aryans were rather short, dark-haired and dark-eyed, their skulls short and faces broad, the so-called Nordic type being one of the people's they assimilated in a later period. The Czech scholar added barbed remarks on the flexibility of the German notion of race, which allowed for deeming Hindenburg a German, although, in Matiegka's opinion, he was a typical representative of the Baltic race.¹⁶ Hoff put off these, and other, reservations using a truly universal formula:

It suffices to take into account that the science of European peoples is the work of Nordic Greeks, against whom no other race has ever proved capable of contrasting anything equally valuable, to acknowledge that not only the

¹⁴ Felix von Luschan, *Rassen und Völker. Rede am 2. November 1915* (Berlin, 1915), 7–8.

¹⁵ Ludwig Trampe, *Ostdeutscher Rassenkampf* (Leipzig, 1907), 93.

¹⁶ Jindřich Matiegka, 'Die Gleichwertigkeit der europäischen Rassen in geistiger Hinsicht', in Karel Weigner (ed.), *Die Gleichwertigkeit der europäischen Rassen und die Wege zu ihrer Vervollkommung* (Prague, 1935), 88–9.

questions posed but also the mode of scientific proof is conditional upon the spirituality of race.¹⁷

It is, verily, difficult to controvert a theory that not only determines the content of the opinions voiced but also denies the right to speak one's views.

The dynamic development of racial anthropology and akin trends in German and German-speaking countries gains in special importance when we take into account the role this region played in the scientific life of East Central Europe. With increasing numbers of students and a democratised education system, German-language universities, closer to reach and much cheaper than their British or French counterparts, began attracting young people from the entire region. Witold Molik has demonstrated that the numbers of foreigner students at German universities were growing systematically until the First World War, going beyond 8 per cent of all the matriculated (as of 1912). In aggregate, over 70 per cent of such outlanders came from Russia, Austria-Hungary and the Balkans.¹⁸ Their inflow, particularly at medicine faculties, was so considerable that in Germany as well as in Vienna voices were raised before 1914 requesting that the university be barred against aliens.¹⁹ Medicine graduates formed in the two interwar decades the largest contingent among the eugenics activists and racial anthropologists in East Central Europe. The alumni of German professors soon grew to dominate these milieus in terms of number and influence, outdistancing the students of Paul Broca and his Parisian anthropological school.

But not only anthropology students encountered the racist views of their German lecturers and colleagues, alongside the 'regular' nationalism and chauvinism. Such views and attitudes were no less prevalent among sociologists, ethnologists, archaeologists, historians, or physicians. Yet, although the nationalistic attitudes turned out to be pretty diffuse among German professors, the recollections of foreign

¹⁷ Richard von Hoff, 'Die Aufgabe der geschichtlichen Rassenkunde', in Michael Hesch and Günther Spannaus (eds.), *Kultur und Rasse. Otto Reche zum 60. Geburtstag gewidmet von Schülern und Freunden* (Munich, 1939), 109.

¹⁸ Witold Molik, *Polskie peregrynacje uniwersyteckie do Niemiec 1871–1914* (Poznan, 1989), 52–3.

¹⁹ Tadeusz Brzeziński, *Polskie peregrynacje po dyplomy lekarskie (od średniowiecza po odzyskanie niepodległości w 1918 r.)* (Warsaw, 1999), 94–5.

graduates would nowise suggest that their studies in a German university were for them wholly a sequence of humiliating and unpleasant situations. On the contrary, respect for the scholars' professionalism prevailed; in some cases, as in the Grigore Antipa's reminiscence of Ernst Haeckel – otherwise, a supporter of racial hierarchies and eugenics – outright admiration for the teachers was expressed.²⁰

The vehement rejection of German racial theories or the quite scientific racism, regardless of the national or ethnic taint, was not a frequent attitude among those students. There were several reasons for this. First, the liberal German educational system enabled uncomplicated switches between departments or universities, without breaking the continuity of studies. As a result, the particularly hated chauvinist or racist professors were rather easily avoidable.²¹ Second, German racists did not form a united front, nor did they close themselves off from foreign colleagues. When it was proposed in 1909 that the German-dominated international racial hygiene association finally drew practical conclusions from the ideas preached by its members and eliminated all the non-Nordic associates, the moderate opinions prevailed, stressing the affinity within the 'White race'.²² Also in the interwar period, regardless of the international tensions, the network of experts dealing with racial and hereditary issues, albeit it was the densest in Germany, was truly international.²³ The third reason why students from 'non-Nordic' East Central European countries mostly absorbed, rather than rejected, the ideas relayed to them by German professors, was the banal fact that many of them basically subscribed to the racist arguments. Even if they were not ready to accept the nationalist background with which these arguments were getting through to them, they absorbed their contents and logic, developing

²⁰ Gregor Antipa, in Heinrich Schmidt (ed.), *Was wir Ernst Haeckel verdanken. Ein Buch der Verehrung und Dankbarkeit*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1914), 408–10. Benedykt Dybowski was among the students and 'votaries' of Haeckel; cf. Magdalena Gawin, *Rasa i nowoczesność. Historia polskiego ruchu eugenicznego* (Warsaw, 2003), 51.

²¹ Molik, *Polskie peregrynacje*, 132.

²² Paul J. Weindling, 'Racial Expertise and German Eugenic Strategies for Southeastern Europe', in Christian Promitzer, Sevasti Trubeta, and Marius Turda (eds.), *Health, Hygiene and Eugenics in Southeastern Europe to 1945* (Budapest and New York, 2011), 37.

²³ *Ibidem*, 52–3.

for the need and use of their own nations the ideologies which Marius Turda aptly calls ‘nationalist Darwinism’.²⁴

The first example of elaboration of such an ideology in East Central Europe that the undersigned is aware of comes from Hungary. This is all the more interesting because the attempt at racially-grounded legitimisation of superiority of the Magyars based upon at least certain elements of the Nordic theory bordered on an intellectual juggling act. It was already apparent in the afore-quoted Ammon’s polemics with Tappeiner that an Asian origin was antithetic to Nordicity. The Magyars had arrived from Asia in a historical era – the fact no respectable anthropologist would call into question. In a Hungarian statehood millenary jubilee publication, issued in 1896 in several language versions, exponents of various human sciences solved this question in several, not necessarily mutually consistent, fashions. Historian Ignác Acsády maintained that what the Magyars encountered at the moment their ‘homeland’ was ‘seized’ was scattered remnants of the earlier local populations: the Avars, Slavic nomads, and Bulgarians. None of these groups generated a high culture, and their significance was so low that Acsády simply wrote of the Magyars ‘occupying the voids’.²⁵ Literature historian Zsolt Beóthy believed that the Hungarian territory had witnessed a considerable commixture of races, whilst the Magyars retained a dominant position both in anthropological and spiritual terms.²⁶ Consequently, the original people was probably numerous enough for the Magyars to blend with them at all. Anthropologist Antal Herrmann, another co-author of the volume, made a tiny step further; in his opinion, nationally, Hungarians were a yet-uncompleted project. In terms of race, however, individual elements have been fused into a whole – “a process that has made Hungarians a wholly European nation”.²⁷

The apparently trifling differences between the authors of the jubilee publication reflected a serious dilemma which turned out to be irreconcilable. Herrmann and, following him, the leading Hungarian race

²⁴ Marius Turda, ‘Race, Politics and Nationalist Darwinism in Hungary, 1880–1918’, *Ab Imperio*, 1 (2007), 141.

²⁵ Ignác Acsády, ‘Die Geschichte Ungarns’, in József von Jekelfalussy (ed.), *Der tausendjährige ungarische Staat und sein Volk* (Budapest, 1896), 34.

²⁶ Zsolt Beóthy, ‘Entwicklung des geistigen Lebens der Ungarn’, in *ibidem*, 75–152.

²⁷ Antal Herrmann, ‘Ethnographie der Bevölkerung Ungarns’, in *ibidem*, 427.

expert Mihály Lenhossék, and others too, were of opinion that the originally Asian Magyars grew Europeanised, with time, race-wise. A positive evaluation of Europeanisation was not tantamount to the critique of the original Magyar characteristics. On the contrary: not only did Herrmann enrich his argument by including a vivid description of the appearance of typical Magyar (affording it, for instance, ‘elegance’, a trait not quite liable to objective appraisal), but he also ascribed to him the ability to dominate an alien anthropological heritage. In other words, although Hungarians formed an Europeanised blend, they inherited the foundation and the major characteristics of the newly-emerged type from Magyars.²⁸ The heritage of the nomadic past was identifiable to the anniversary book authors also in the spiritual sphere, linking with it the state-forming discipline and abilities which were otherwise absent with the aboriginal Slavic peoples of Pannonia. From the standpoint of the political interest of the Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy, it was a fully optimistic view. Once the racial assimilation became a fact, a linguistic and cultural Magyarisation was by all means expected to follow soon.

This stance was dominant in the Hungarian ‘nationalist Darwinism’ virtually as long as a multiethnic state existed. The first cracks appeared during the First World War. As part of broad-based anthropological examinations of Russia prisoners-of-war, managed by Viennese anthropologist Rudolf Pöch, Hungarian specialists focused on their ethnic kinsmen, the Volga nomads. It was Lenhossék himself who argued, in the Pan-Turanist periodical *Turán*, that the Votiak, Mordvin and Chuvash people lack the characteristics considered Asian or that they only formed an alien admixture.²⁹ While the Hungarian anthropologist stuck to the position that his compatriots were a typical European people, he ceased to relate this fact to the influence of the country’s original population. Inspired by the observation of the Russian POWs, he decided that Magyars had borne their ‘European’ characteristics long before they arrived in Pannonia. The Treaty of Trianon, perceived as a humiliating act, once again altered the way in which the racial character of Hungarians was seen. No less painfully

²⁸ Marius Turda, *The Idea of National Superiority in Central Europe, 1880–1918* (Lampeter, 2004), 96.

²⁹ Mihály v. Lenhossék, ‘Anthropologische Untersuchungen an russischen Kriegsgefangenen finnisch-ugrischer Nationalität’, *Turán*, i, 3 (1917), 145.

than obviously, the idea of assimilation of the other nations became outdated. Instead of trying to connect ethnicities, or nationalities, anthropology was used from then on to exclude 'aliens' from the national organism. This role was ascribed to Jews, the ethnicity that was accused of unpatriotic attitudes at the time Hungarian people were getting killed in the Great War.³⁰ In the first (1923) issue of a newly-established anthropological periodical Lajos Bartucz criticised theories that claimed the 'Europeanness' of Magyars. He considered Magyars an Asian people, which, by intermediation of the Avars, had the right of 'extended residence' in the area it populated. This author considered the possible 'Europeanisation' under Slavic influence to be an issue not worth of any discussion. He particularly virulently attacked those of his anthropologist colleagues who identified his fellow countrymen with the 'Central European' *homo alpinus*.³¹

The war and the following shakeup of the European order are treated by certain science historians as a breakthrough moment in the history of anthropology. Andrew D. Evans relates the change taking place in anthropology in the German-speaking countries after 1914 with a nationalist mobilisation, the breakup with the 'International' of racial experts, which had been active in the earlier period (as confirmed by our observations of East Central European developments) as well as with the research practice. Insofar as the Hungarian scientists found their encounter with their 'racial kinsmen' from the Russian Empire an invigorating and thoroughly positive experience, their German-speaking colleagues were driven, rather, by a negative motivation. The broad-based anthropometric research they conducted on Russian POWs focused on differences, rather than similarities. As noted by Evans, the 'Asiatisation' of the Russian enemy was to support mobilisation and unity of the Habsburg monarchy nations.³²

Yet, the war was not only a caesura in the history of the German-speaking physical anthropology. For many East Central European nations, it served as a catalyst of the vernacular 'nationalist Darwinisms'. It was, precisely, after 1914 that several factors paving the

³⁰ Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics* (Houndmills Basingstoke, 2010), 62–3.

³¹ Lajos Bartucz, 'Über die Anthropologie der Ungaren aus der Umgebung des Balaton-Sees', *Antropológiai Füzetek*, i (1923), 61–80.

³² Andrew D. Evans, *Anthropology at War: World War I and the Science of Race in Germany* (Chicago and London, 2010).

way to racial theories legitimising national movements and post-war statehoods converged at a single moment. Their development would not have been as fast without a sufficiently sizeable body of experts, most of whom were educated at some of the German or Austro-Hungarian university hubs. Shortly before the war broke out, these milieus had grown significant and numerous enough to commence the institutionalisation of racial anthropology regionally. In as early as 1904, the Bohemian university of Prague started its endeavours to set up a chair of anthropology (to be taken by Jindřich Matiegka). Professorship was granted in 1913 to Julian Talko-Hrynecwicz in Cracow, and to Jan Czekanowski in Lvov.³³ The contingent of racial experts was obviously not limited to appointed professors; it was much larger and much more interdisciplinary, while the institutional changes testified to the milieu's powerful position in the region of our interest.

A no less important factor of the development of 'nationalist Darwinisms' was political in nature. Ever since the warfare began, political representations of the ethnicities in the Russian and Habsburg Empires became active. They initially did not play a fully autonomous part, but were rather used by the empires to mobilise their own subjects and incite to revolt those on the other side of the borderline.

In the first years of the Great War, the initiative remained definitely on Germany's side.³⁴ It was only after 1916 – in particular, after U.S. President Thomas Woodrow Wilson declared his country's long-term war objectives in January 1918 – that political organisations of nationalities became gaining in importance and striving for a change in the balance of power in East Central Europe.³⁵ It was already in 1914 that emancipation of new political forces was accompanied by publications legitimising the nationalities' postulates with use

³³ Jan Surman, *Habsburg Universities 1848–1918. Biography of a Space* (Vienna, 2012; a PhD thesis submitted at the University of Vienna), 238–9, 314.

³⁴ Maciej Górny, 'Die polnisch-ukrainische Rivalität in Ostgalizien. Anthropologie, Geografie, Geschichtswissenschaft', in *Der Erste Weltkrieg und der Vielvölkerstaat* (Symposium im Heeresgeschichtlichen Museum; Acta Austro-Polonica, 2, Vienna, 2012), 55–68 (includes reference literature).

³⁵ Henryk Batowski, *Rozpad Austro-Węgier 1914–1918 (sprawy narodowościowe i działania dyplomatyczne)* (Cracow, 1982). (A study comprising a selection of documents on nationality issues and diplomatic actions related to the declining Austria-Hungary).

of ethno-psychological and racial arguments. Characteristic of this type of thinking was the dictum of Serbian ethnographer Milivoj S. Stanojević (1919):

Most modern states are organized and practically homogeneous nations. They are inhabited by men of the same race ...³⁶

Increased importance of those representations gave the programmes or manifestos they proclaimed an adequate strength and dynamism. The post-war tangle and, above all, the not-quite-conflict-free process of emergence of new states petrified the racial-characterological discourse, virtually, throughout the interwar period.

The utterances which used the category of race, in one way or another, appeared quite a great deal during the war and in the interwar years. There also were theories completely out of touch with the dominant discourse, drifting unrestrainedly across the historical-biological waters, driven by the instinct of their crank author. There also appeared, though not as frequently, theories that drew critical conclusions with respect to their own nation from the ideas prevalent in the pre-war Europe. For instance, in the late 1920s – that is, from the standpoint of Bulgaria's defeats in the Second Balkan War and in the First World War), Kiril Hristov associated his country's failures with its racial bastardisation, and saw perfection of race as a hope for the nation's future.³⁷ Yet, the main current of racial characterology ran elsewhere. Seemingly, a characteristic testimony of ripeness and professionalism of the regional reflexion on race was, in particular, the ability to reconcile a positive image of one's own nation with the dominant Nordic theory. In other words, it was a question of finding for one's own nation a worthy place within Europe's racial hierarchy – in a manner that would have made the old German professors accept the concept.

The concept of a 'Dinaric race' came, still in the First World War years, as an instrument that enabled to achieve this goal. Introduced into anthropology a few years before the war, the term was used to describe a part of the highlands residents of the Alps and the

³⁶ Milivoj S. Stanojevich, 'What Serbia Wants', *The Journal of Race Development*, ix (1919), 142.

³⁷ Balázs Trencsényi, *The Politics of 'National Character'. A Study in Interwar East European Thought* (London and New York, 2012), 148–9.

Carpathians area, characteristic of whom were brachycephaly and tallness, among other features. The German racial discourse ascribed to this race mostly positive characteristics, albeit it appeared, of course, much deficient compared to Nordics. This was not quite astonishing, as inhabitants of Switzerland and Tyroleans were often included in this race, while the racial identity of these groups posed a serious problem already to the earlier scholars. The fact that Serbia, also gallantly standing up to the Austro-Hungarian invasion, was located in the 'Dinaric' area, encouraged the stressing of the race's special courage (which probably echoed a stereotypical profile of local mountaineers). In the concept proposed by Niko Županić, the most outstanding exponent of 'nationalist Darwinism' in the Balkans, Dinarides constituted a particularly successful outcome of the racial blend between the Slavic Nordic type (bright-eyed long-headed blond people) and the Ancient Illyrians, the remainder of whom in the Balkans were Albanians.³⁸ An almost unique case, the 'racially worthy' Serbs were predestined to carry the European civilisation to "the intelligent, doughty, but profoundly uneducated and cruel tribe of the Albanians."³⁹

The outline of such ideological construct remained unchanged in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and in Yugoslavia. The fascination with the numerous advantages of the Dinaric race, which was in most cases identified with Serbs – the ethnical *primus inter pares* – were apparent in the anthropological studies of Mijo Radošević and Milivoj Stanojević as well as in the late remarks of the eminent anthropogeographer Jovan Cvijić, who in his earlier works preferred to refer to characterological, rather than racial, types.⁴⁰ In parallel, the Yugoslav 'nationalist Darwinism' retained its inclusivism, which was characteristic of Županić's pre-war argument. The Yugoslavian 'state race' would emerge at a later date, a result of the mixture of the finest Dinaric elements with Nordic Slovenes; primarily, with the South Slavic and Albanian 'Illyrians'. The Yugoslav ideologues

³⁸ Niko Županić, *Altserbien und die albanesische Frage* (Vienna, 1912).

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 35.

⁴⁰ Rory Yeomans, 'Of "Yugoslav Barbarians" and Croatian Gentlemen Scholars. Nationalist Ideology and Racial Anthropology in Interwar Yugoslavia', in Marius Turda and Paul J. Weindling (eds.), *'Blood and Homeland': Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900–1940* (Budapest and New York, 2007), 91–2.

perceived patriarchalism, exuberant energy and vitality as the binding factor of the new race. Stanojević thus wrote of the typical representative of the group:

These people usually follow their inspirations, caring little for material considerations. An appeal made to their sense of honor or their ideal of liberty and justice brings a quick response. They manifest a vivid desire to live, to develop, to make a success of their careers, and to be worthy representatives of their race.⁴¹

Quite easy to notice, in connection with the traits of Albanian highlanders as observed by Županić, such a profile of the Yugoslav race came close to the ideal of ‘new man’, which was evoked at the time by fascist as well as communist ideologues. This trend in the racial reflexion had its renaissance in the 1980s and 1990s.⁴² Vladimir Dvorniković’s ethnopsychological work *Karakterologija Jugoslovena*, which perceives the ‘Illyrian’ Albanian as a reservoir of ‘good’ blood, however ‘savage’ it might be⁴³, has remained popular till this day. Dvorniković’s pretty voluminous characterology treatise, running a thousand pages, was published on the eve of the Second World War. The Croatian ethnopsychologist looked at his country with a sense of fulfilment: the Yugoslav race had become a fact, in his opinion. He nonetheless admitted that, as it the case everywhere, the Yugoslavian population was a racial mixture, “up to less than seventy percent; thus, most Yugoslavians form a relatively homogeneous group”.⁴⁴

Rather unexpectedly, apart from Serbs, Ukrainians came forward as the other nation identifying itself with the Dinaric race. This identification was much less legitimate, since European anthropology only approved of rather small groups of Dinaric people, inhabiting the East Carpathians. There was no considerable dissent about the limited appearance of this population, in quantity and territory terms, and Russian anthropologists agreed in this respect with their West European colleagues. After all, the best Russian expert on the subject

⁴¹ Milivoy S. Stanoyevich, ‘The Ethnography of the Yugo-Slavs’, *Geographical Review*, vii, 2 (1919), 91–7.

⁴² See Aleksandar Bošković, ‘Distinguishing “Self” and “Other”: Anthropology and National Identity in Former Yugoslavia’, *Anthropology Today*, xxi, 2 (2005), 8–13.

⁴³ Quoted after Yeomans, ‘Of “Yugoslav Barbarians”’, 95.

⁴⁴ Vladimir Dvorniković, *Karakterologija Jugoslovena* (Belgrade, 2000²), 165.

was Khvedir Vovk, a Ukrainian student of the French anthropological school. As a professor with the St. Petersburg university (and, shortly before his death in 1918, the Kiev university), he considered the Dinaric race to be the closest to the original type of Ukraine's residents, but also highlighted an anthropological closeness of the three East Slavic nations.⁴⁵

Lvov-based geographer Stepan Rudnyts'kyi was the main generator of the turnaround. This enterprising political activist acted as a geographical expert of the Ukrainian representation in the Viennese parliament and collaborated with the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, the organisation representing Ukrainians in Russia. Owing to his dual affiliation, Rudnyts'kyi ranked during the First World War among the most frequently published European scientists; his popular brochures and broader studies defending Ukrainian territorial aspirations were issued in several languages, selling millions of copies.⁴⁶ The interests of this scholar were not confined to geography, but extended to a racial profile of Ukrainian people. What Rudnyts'kyi did with the Dinaric race much resembled the German ideologues' handling of Nordics: using out-of-context radicalised theses appearing in the science of his time, he built a nationalistic ideology. To trace his style of argumentation, I will use a book he wrote with a wide public (rather than learned anthropologists) in mind. The book was first published in 1916 in Vienna and was republished in Lvov in the 1990s, the time Dvorniković (and other like ideas) experienced a renaissance.⁴⁷

Rudnyts'kyi starts by ascertaining that the proper content of history is struggle for survival:

Behold, every tree, racing against the other trees, ascends toward the sun, putting down its roots under the ground, never pondering whether there is any room left for the others.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Хведір Вовк, *Студії з української етнографії та антропології* (Prague, 1916), 427–54.

⁴⁶ Ihor Stebelsky, 'Putting Ukraine on the Map: The Contribution of Stepan Rudnyts'kyi to Ukrainian Nation-Building', *Nationalities Papers*, xxxix, 4 (2011), 599.

⁴⁷ Степан Рудницький, *Чому ми хочемо самостійної України* (Lvov, 1994).

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, 37.

Races are the contestants in this Darwinian competition. The White, Yellow, and Black ones contend against one another throughout the whole world; in Europe, though, the situation is more complex. European nations do not, as a rule, coincide with the races, but form a racial blend instead. Yet, there is one exception, a significant one. In Rudnyts'kyi's view, owing to its strongly outlined ethnic borders, East Central Europe is distinctive with its racial purity across the continent. This circumstance enabled this author to refer to a 'Ukrainian race', being a formation utterly contrary to the anthropological rule he had previously referred to (although very close to Vladimir Dvorniković' views, for a change). In his opinion, purity of Ukrainian race was rooted in its sedentary character. Through its attachment to the land, the local populace managed to separate itself from the nomadic or migrant herds overflowing through the Ukrainian lands, and preserve their racial purity. The case was different with the Ukrainians' neighbours – that is, Poles and Russians, the latter being strongly Mongolised. Similarly as with the German adherents of racial hygiene, Rudnyts'kyi's apotheosis of the vernacular race was connected with eugenic postulates. He namely claimed that Ukrainians should only enter into relationships with any of the races that may improve their anthropological profile. Nordic Germans, Dinaric Southern Slavs, and Czechs who appeared as a blend of these two races, were the demanded partners, according to this scholar. The nation's tragedy resulted, apparently, from the fact that the choices made in real life by Ukrainian men and women ignored scientific recommendations:

... all these alien nations with which the Ukrainian intelligentsia crosses with so passionately, are less valuable racially. As far as physical force and beauty are concerned, neither Muscovites nor Poles, or Magyars, or Jews, can compare to Ukrainians; the same holds true for fertility. As for the intellectual assets, no mixture with any of these nations can give us anything positive.⁴⁹

Serb and Ukrainian racial anthropologists shared a rather comfortable situation in that they could, without excessive effort, reconcile their theories with the prevailing German racial discourse. The Dinaric race had its place within it: not a central one but exposed enough to

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, 308.

satisfy the ambitions of the relatively young and weak national movements. First symptoms suggesting that the transplant was successfully accomplished appeared in the First World War years. The romantic image of Serbs and Montenegrins as well as Rudnyts'kyi's theories were accepted by German and Austro-Hungarian racial anthropologists, and included in the then-emerging larger schemes of racial division of Europe.⁵⁰

The researchers who had first to compete for a proper place for their nation, as relevant with their ambition and sense of justice, found themselves in a tougher position. The difficulty was not about detaching oneself from the Nordic theory and contrasting one's own constructs against it. By doing so, they would condemn themselves to marginalisation. The art was to reinterpret the legacy dogmas in a manner preventing the demanded outcome from conflicting with the basic assumptions of dominant racial theories.

This difficult problem was solved by Polish anthropologist so brilliantly that they found many supporters in other East Central European countries, and were commended in Germany.⁵¹ The success was fathered by Jan Czekanowski. It was before 1914 that this Lvov anthropologist proposed that the theory of three main racial types (i.e. Nordic, Mediterranean and Alpine) be rejected with respect to East Central Europe. Otherwise, he argued, the skull indices would never be reconcilable with the pigmentation observed in the local people. In lieu of the classical division, Czekanowski proposed three types: Dinaric, pre-Slavic, and Sarmatian.⁵² The first fitted the known pattern, posing no major interpretative problem. The other two, describing the peoples inhabiting a wide strip of Polish, Belarusian and Russian lands, were novel concepts. Where, and how exactly, the lines would be set across the territory's map, remained to be decided. Czekanowski's Viennese colleague Rudolf Pösch, who supported his efforts to assume the Chair of Anthropology in Lvov, came to the

⁵⁰ For more on the anthropological image of Serbs and Montenegrins, see Ursula Reber, 'The Experience of Borders: Montenegrin Tribesmen at War', in Reinhard Johler, Christian Marchetti, and Monique Scheer (eds.), *Doing Anthropology in Wartime and War Zones. World War I and the Cultural Sciences in Europe* (Bielefeld, 2010), 191–206.

⁵¹ See Eugen Oberhummer, 'Die Rassenforschung in Polen', in *Zeitschrift für Rassenkunde*, 1 (1935), 80–3.

⁵² Jan Czekanowski, *Beiträge zur Anthropologie von Polen* (Braunschweig, 1911).

conclusion, based on his investigation of Russian POWs, that many of them – Russian, Belarusian and Baltic people – belonged to a so-called Eastern race.⁵³ The Eastern race included elements typical of Nordics and Asian ones. The question how evenly blended, and in what proportions, was pretty important to the mood of anthropologists coming from that particular region.

Czekanowski's reply consisted in skilful merging and separating of anthropological types. Where the Austrian and German colleagues were prone to see a great mass of a Mongolised *Ostrasse*, he defined three clearly discernible types. The first was Nordics; contrary to a popular view, they did not form a trace of Germanic invasions but a legacy of an indigenous Slavic type. As Czekanowski liked to remark, this populace group was no less numerous in Poland than in Germany.⁵⁴ He regarded the expansion of Slavs as yet-another wave, following the Germanic one, springing from the same North European anthropological province.⁵⁵

Nordic Slavs co-occurred in Polish lands with a racial type Czekanowski called Sarmatian, or sub-Nordic. The first mentioned name nowise referred to the type's Asian background: the Polish scholar primarily sought to highlight the link between this racial type and the Polish 'Sarmatian' ideology and culture. The second name aptly rendered the anthropologist's intention, which was to situate this particular population group, which he found predominant among Second Republic citizens of Polish nationality, the closest to Nordics. As Gizela Lempertówna, a student of Czekanowski's, argued, the Polish situation was a standard rather than an exception. Nordics had blended with members of the Alpine and Laponoidal types also in the territory of France and Germany, but with a much larger admixture of the Dinaric and pre-Slavic types.⁵⁶ Consequently, the Polish sub-Nordic type proved more Nordic than its West European counterparts.

⁵³ Michael Hesch, *Letten, Litauer, Weißrussen. Ein Beitrag zur Anthropologie des Ostbaltikums mit Berücksichtigung der siedlungs- und stammesgeschichtlichen Grundlagen* (Vienna, 1933), p. i.

⁵⁴ Jan Czekanowski, *Zarys antropologii Polski* (Lvov, 1930), 432.

⁵⁵ *Idem*, *Anthropologische Beiträge zum Problem der slawisch-finnischen Beziehungen* (Helsinki, 1925), 13.

⁵⁶ Gizela Lempertówna, 'Przyczynki lwowskie do antropologii Żydów', and 'Studenci Uniwersytetu Jana Kazimierza', *Kosmos*, 52 (1927), 814–5.

The third element to which Czekanowski divided the Ostrasse was named pre-Slavic type. It was in this type that comprised all the negative characteristics which the German anthropologists and race theorist associated with the notions of the East and Mongolisation. In its physical aspects, the type in question disguised itself with shortness and short legs, snub nose, and brachycephaly. None of these traits was given a positive valuation in the anthropological descriptions. Mentally, the 'pre-Slavs' were situated at the very bottom of the social hierarchy. The anthropological-psychological examinations of junior-high school students, which were popular in the interwar Poland, indicated that the percent share of the analysed group decreased with upper education levels; as Czekanowski himself observed, university-level studies "are only achievable ... for the pre-Slavic type in some exceptional cases, a result of their poorer abilities".⁵⁷

The role Czekanowski's racial types played in the Polish 'nationalist Darwinism' appeared in full view at the moments when Polish researchers neared the determination of these types' correlations with the respective territory and its populace. Broad-based biometric research conducted by Jan Mydlarski's team on a representation of soldiers, called the Military Anthropological Photograph, demonstrated that the Dinaric type was predominant in the south-eastern borderland, the Sarmatian type prevailing in Masovia, Nordic in Pomerania and Wielkopolska (Greater Poland), and pre-Slavic in the country's east.⁵⁸ Such interpretation of the outcome of an investigation carried out with a herd of 80,000 called for no further explanation. Virtually, all the Second Republic's ethnic or national groups was afforded its respective racial type: Dinaric for Ukrainians; Nordic/sub-Nordic for Poles; and, pre-Slavic for Belarusians. In parallel, the adverse racial characteristics which West European racists willingly connected with an Asian descent, were 'channelled' by Polish anthropologists into the pre-Slavic type. In comparing their position with the collaterally developing ideas of Yugoslav racial unity, the difference between an exclusive character of the former and an inclusive nature of the latter becomes apparent. Polish racial anthropologists only supplied their

⁵⁷ Jan Czekanowski, *Metoda podobieństwa w zastosowaniu do badań psychometrycznych* (Lvov, 1926), 37.

⁵⁸ Jan Mydlarski, 'Sprawozdanie z wojskowego zdjęcia antropologicznego Polski', *Kosmos*, 50 (1925), 530–83. Also, see Gawin, *Rasa i nowoczesność*, 167–70.

countrymen nationalists with useful arguments, whilst their ideas never encouraged integration of the Republic's other ethnicities into a larger whole.

While the deeper sense of Czekanowski's effort would not act as a reference model in the integration of newly-emerged countries, his very idea of integrating into the Nordic theory, as well as the research techniques applied in the Anthropological Photograph, soon encouraged follow-ups. The Finnish were positioned close to Slavs, if not lower than them, in certain aspects of the racial hierarchy; in the case of Finnish people, the statement that they originally represented a Nordic type was non-demonstrable. Aira Kemiläinen, a Finnish historian of racism, quotes the image of his fellow countrymen that was popular in the Swedish and German authors in the early decades of the twentieth century. Their comments were not approving; stereotypical Finns were described in terms of Asian physique and character features: lack of talents or activity, passiveness, tardiness and melancholy, and deficient creative abilities. Swedes – including (or, perhaps, primarily) those who lived in Finland – were positioned at the other end of the scale. Worse still, a short-timed civil war between Finnish Bolsheviks and the 'Whites' furnished the ideas of the like sort with historical arguments. The Communists were the strongest in the east of the country, where the population of Swedish origin was the smallest. This circumstance prompted a racial interpretation of the civil war.⁵⁹ For the young Finnish state, the whole collection of ideas and stereotypes was unpleasant and, moreover, minatory, as it undermined the state's cohesiveness, driving a wedge between the allegedly biologically dissimilar groups of populace.

This threat was addressed by mass biometric measurements of the country's population, carried out in 1924 by the team led by Yrjö Kajava of the Helsinki university; a few years later, one of Kajava's students presented the results to English-speaking professional public.⁶⁰ The Finnish findings appeared counter, in multiple respects, to the previous ones, especially wherever the popular image of the racial composition and characteristic traits of the country's population

⁵⁹ Aira Kemiläinen, *Finns in the Shadow of the "Aryans": Race Theories and Racism* (Helsinki, 1998), 146–50.

⁶⁰ Yrjö K. Suominen, 'Physical Anthropology in Suomi (Finland)', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 59 (1929), 207–30.

was not complimentary. Yrjö Suominen started by resolutely rejecting the statement that Russian settlement had at all appeared within the country, regardless of the area; consequently, no Finnish-Russian ethnic blend could have appeared (the appearance of local Bolsheviks was connoted by some with such a blend). He subsequently abolished the fundamental thesis of racial division of Finland, claiming instead that the difference between the Finns and the Swedes inhabiting the country was linguistic only, nothing to do with racial. He also affirmed that there was no affinity or consanguinity between Finns and Mongols. He attributed the traits of the latter to the Lapps instead, stressing their anthropological dissimilarity to Finns. Suominen drew his arguments from, inter alia, the serological tests carried out on the basis of the research done by Hanna and Ludwik Hirszfeld (as was the case with the Polish Anthropological Photograph project). All these observations led this author to a conclusion that vividly resembled the stance of Czekanowski. Finns constituted a separate race, without a counterpart in any of the typical classifications, whilst displaying a close resemblance to Nordics. In relation to Kajava's findings, Suominen named this newly-described group an East Baltic race. While the concept was fully appreciated only by scientists of independent Finland, Suominen declared:

We Finns are convinced that it will not last long before Europe realizes that the Finns are not only one of the strongest people in the world, but also one of the most gifted races of the world.⁶¹

Hungarians, Serbs, Ukrainians, Poles, and Finns obviously do not exhaust the list of the nations whose political strivings were legitimised with use of racial arguments. A number of analogies to the ideas described above can be found in Latvia, where the Finnish conception of race was used in determining the racial definition of the ruling nation: the Nordics, with admixture of East Baltic blood.⁶² The conception was even more markedly influential in Estonia, where the racial anthropology, developing locally in the 1920s,

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 227.

⁶² Björn M. Felder, "God Forgives – but Nature Never Will" – Racial Identity, Racial Anthropology, and Eugenics in Latvia 1918–1940", in *idem* and Paul J. Weindling (eds.), *Baltic Eugenics: Bio-Politics, Race and Nation in Interwar Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania 1918-1940* (Amsterdam and New York, 2013), 115–46.

focused on combating the argument advocating a Mongolian descent of Finno-Ugric peoples.⁶³ Quite thoroughly examined was the role of racial anthropology, with particular focus on serological testing, in giving grounds for the racial unity theory applicable with the enlarged Romania.⁶⁴ Elsewhere, ideas of the like sort manifested themselves less powerfully, but were always present. In Czechoslovakia, the leading Prague anthropologist Jindřich Matiegka argued that his fellow countrymen represented a Celtic-Slavic type, which he found related the closest to Western Romance peoples. The Czechs' innate courage was, apparently, proven by the warfare deeds of the Legionnaires; intelligence – by the Bohemian lineage of Jan Hus and (somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, to a Polish or German reader) Nicolaus Copernicus.⁶⁵ Voices were also raised in defence of anthropological quality of Belarusians, whom Czekanowski identified – not flatteringly at all – with the pre-Slavic type. Konstancja Skirmuntt, an activist in the Polish Eastern Borderland (and a pretty aged woman then), did not cease fighting in her latest years for acknowledgement of racial distinctiveness of Belarusians from her hated 'Muscovites', whom she afforded with 'pre-Slavic' traits.⁶⁶

This inevitable presence of racial ideas ensued from the strife to legitimise either of the states or national movements concerned – an incentive that was shared by many users of these ideas. Characteristically (and understandably, in a sense), professional anthropologists were reluctant to admit this point-blank. Czekanowski, who at several occasions showed the practical benefits of this science (such as tailoring the uniform's cut to the average size of conscript), made a reference to the really essential part almost coincidentally:

⁶³ Ken Kalling and Leiu Heapost, 'Racial Identity and Physical Anthropology in Estonia 1800–1945', in *ibidem*, 83–114.

⁶⁴ See Marius Turda, 'In Search of Racial Types: Soldiers and the Anthropological Mapping of the Romanian Nation, 1914–44', *Patterns of Prejudice*, xlvii, 1 (2013), 1–21.

⁶⁵ Jindřich J. Matiegka, *Vznik a tělesný stav národa československého* (Prague, 1920), 9–10. The argument whereby Copernicus was of Bohemian origin was not Matiegka's original concept, as it dates back to the nineteenth century.

⁶⁶ Konstancja Skirmuntt, *Fascynacja nazwy i potęga litery* (Vilnius, 1928), reed. in Jerzy Garbiński (ed.), *Mysł białoruska XX wieku. Filozofia, religia, kultura (antologia)* (Warsaw, 1998), 236–40. For more on K. Skirmuntt, see Dariusz Szpoper, *Gente Lithuana, natione Lithuana. Mysł polityczna i działalność Konstancji Skirmuntt (1851–1934)* (Gdansk, 2009).

The practical significance of anthropology does not rest in its direct applications The central significance of anthropology consists in how it indirectly influences pedagogy, medicine, social sciences, or even military sciences. ... It enables ... to adjust, in a manner appropriate with the state of the art, for the outdated view whereby all people are identical.⁶⁷

Indeed, the common denominator for all the varieties of 'nationalist Darwinism' was the desire to stand out, to demonstrate and prove one's singularity. Being a thoroughly modern science, racial anthropology seemed right fit for being instrumental in this mission. The conjunction of the idea of singularity, or peculiarity, and the educational background and professional formation shared by most of the authors herein quoted generated, in effect, an appreciable cluster of strikingly similar racial theories.

No less important than the political incentives seem the scientific ambitions, including those awakened in the scholars during their studies at German universities at the century's turn. It was the strife for professionalism that incited the anthropologists (and, because of them, the young and not-quite-rich countries) to conducting far-flung biometrical studies. This same motive played the crucial part in the shaping of new racial theories. It would have been rather easy to overturn the racial hierarchies recognised in Europe and to establish, in lieu of them, ones offering the top position to 'our people'. Reconciliation of the legacy theories, conceptions and ideas with the actual needs of the East Central European national movements and the local researchers' sense of patriotism called for real craftsmanship. And, only an operation of this kind would have allowed one to count on international success. The incoherence and logical contradictions within the Nordic theory (or, perhaps, the differences between the apostles of Nordic theories) excellently facilitated this hard effort. Still, the exercise was not easy at all.

And yet, a galaxy of East Central European scientists did, well, an extremely good job about it. The measure of their success was the glittering careers they pursued and their international recognition, including (primarily, one should rather say) among their German-speaking colleagues. In the interwar period, the endeavours to join the racial discourse moulded in the West doubtlessly ranked among the most

⁶⁷ Jan Czekanowski, *Wstęp do historii Słowian. Perspektywy antropologiczne, etnograficzne, prehistoryczne i językoznawcze* (Lvov, 1927), 31.

successful modernisation projects in East Central Europe. Racial ideas reoccurred in the region, mainly through publications in the congress languages – no more as patriotically motivated hypotheses but as internationally recognised science. Czekanowski is one such case in point: his studies published in German have been regarded by Dvorniković as the final say in racial anthropology. A late testimony of Czekanowski's, and the other authors', success is the studies on scientific racism, bio-politics, and the eugenics movement issued in the last dozen-or-so years. Many of these publications neglect the typical categorisation into a 'more advanced' Western Europe and a (more or less efficiently) benchmark-chasing Eastern Europe, since it would be beyond any justification.

The finals of the race appeared tragic – primarily, though not only, because racism became the state ideology of the Third Reich, supplying this country's criminal policies with a pseudoscientific sub-structure. Another – less important, beyond any compare – tragedy of racial anthropology took place in the shadow of that greatest-tragedy-ever. At first, the German *Rassenkunde*, in its Nazi version, broke off its relations with a part of the international anthropologist milieu (which painfully affected the former colleagues from Poland and Yugoslavia). Subsequently, after 1945, the international condemnation of the concept (and ideology) invalidated the discourse that had been joined shortly before then by East Central European researchers. The reversal was not noticed by everyone at once. Volodymyr Yaniv, the long-standing chancellor of the Ukrainian university in Munich, approvingly quoted the theory of Ukrainian racial singularity in a concise history of Ukrainian ethnopsychology he wrote in his very late years. In his opinion, the Polish Anthropological Photograph conceded Rudnyts'kyi's point, in spite of the Poles' overt hostility toward the Ukrainian cause. So many years afterwards, he still named that ascertainment an instance of 'triumphant Ukrainian science'.⁶⁸ In the 1990s, when his book was published posthumously, the triumph was very bitter. It turned out that what Yaniv and his elder colleagues considered a civilisational standard was, merely, a blind offshoot of the German *Sonderweg*. Modernity, which they once were so eager to seek and attain, must be sought elsewhere.

⁶⁸ Володимир Янів, *Нариси до історії української етнопсихології* (Munich, 1993), 131.

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