

Marius Turda; Maria Sophia Quine - *Historizing Race (Ideea de rasă de la Iluminism la Donald Trump)* Polirom, Iași, 2019; ISBN: 978-973-46-7189-2, 244 pages

Review by Irina POP

1. Who are the authors of the book *Historizing Race. A Global History*

The Romanian version of *Historizing Race. A Global History* (translated by Marius Hazapu), is issued in 2019, at the Printer House Polirom, Iași, under the title *Istorie și rasism. Ideea de rasă de la Iluminism la Donald Trump*.

The author Marius Turda - according to the Publishing House' presentation, - is an academic at University Brookes in Oxford. He got professionalized in the University of Bucharest (B.A. History); CEU (Budapest-in those times - M.A. in Race and Ethnicity), University of Oxford. He founded the Institute Cantemir at Oxford University, and after the founder of the Working Group on the History of Eugenics and Race (HRE), established in 2006. Between 2010 and 2014 he was Deputy Director, The Centre for Health, Medicine, and Society. He got an important experience in studying – in the archives - the literature on race, eugenics, and ethno-policies in Central and Eastern Europe. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and Fellow of the Galton Institute.

Sophia Maria Quine – according to the same sources - has been a senior lecturer in the European Modern History, at the College Queen Mary at the University of London. Currently, she is a fellow senior researcher in the institute lead by Marius Turda.

2. What is the book about?

As the title speaks up it is about the race, as it appeared in the various fields of research, from the factual history to biology.

The book is dedicated to the public at large, not to the scholars, as the

authors announced. It likes to let the public know that the outdated (scientifically) and confusing idea of race is the most commonly used criterion of classification of human beings. And not only of classification but also of the unfair repartition of "prestige", of stigma, of rights and benefices and so one. It deserves to be studied and revealed in its reality.

The methodology of analyzing is an "interdisciplinary and integrative" one (p.5.) and the perspective is denying any parochial approach, trying to be global.

The book is organized in five main chapters, preceded by an Introduction, and finalized in a Conclusion. (The classical receipt for an academic content organization! It fully respects the Miller number - 7+/- 2 – in structuring the work.) The book's Chapters – non sub-divided according to the Content – are: 1: History, (meaning: the idea of race in the modern and contemporary factual history of humanity, history indebted to its intellectual traditions and ways of thinking on the Others, that emphasizes Our culture superiority vs. Others' inferiority); 2. Culture (with the same meaning, but explored now in the field of culture); 3. Nation (on the relationship between the idea of race and that of nation in the same epochs); 4. Genealogies (on the idea of races in genealogies); 5. Sciences (on the idea of race in the positive sciences). Each chapter is proposed under a motto, some of them selected from the racist literature, the others from the literature that is apologizing the nations. To exemplify the tenet, let's quote some Motto-s. Chapter 1. "We must admit that the human beings are divided into races." W. E. B. Du Bois ; Chapter 2. "Europe, you must have in mind, that you will master over nations" Chapter 4. "The creators of the Aryan civilization were of the type of Uncle Sam, or to use the most adequate from an anthropological point of view, they were H[omo] Europaeus." the authors that provided such Conclusion: "The race life is more large, deep, and rich that the life of any man, or men." Joseph P. Widney .

The suggestion of the selections, operated by the authors, is that such ideas were "globally" embraced in the times when the WWI was ideologically prepared, in the minds of the future leaders in Europe and America.

In the text, some subdivisions ease the reader's orientation in the chapter's text. (It, in spite the public communication' intentions announced, is an academic text with a lot of concepts involved; with an academic structure meant to explore systematically each part of the subject in its genuine connections – factual and theoretical; and with a difficult language. It also imposes a lecture with an eye on the Endnotes and Index, and some time with a request to refresh the reader's knowledge

on the authors quoted. In brief, it is not a text for common people and public communication.).

The instructive endnotes accompany each chapter, a useful Index of approx. 500 terms are available and an extensive bibliography is also provided.

It is quite impossible to discriminate which chapter /part is authored by who. (At least, the Romanian version does not indicate the parts' author.)

The Introduction is the methodological part of the book. It starts with some attempts in contouring the concept of race; exposing the results of the researches previously done; precisising the universe of researches deplored by the authors (named explicitly as global); suggesting the aim and the expected effects of the research materialized in the text and in identifying the socio-political problem connected with the race. It describes to us the topic's stages in the academic literature. Finally, it proposes a subdivision under the name Structure and Organization, where a summary is provided by the authors.

One of the most consistent chapters of the book is Chapter III. Nation divided as : (Nation, an introductory part, not named by the authors); A secular religion (de facto, [Nationalism as] a secular religion?); Individuality; People as a nation; Ethnical Nations; "National Races". The chapter is trying to clarify the relations between the concepts on race and nation, in their complexity, taking as bases the real facts, factual history, and the concepts dynamic in the history of ideas.

The chapter is finalized in a short conclusion. (It is right – as the introductory part to the chapter – it remains un-distinguished as a specific part of the text.) The conclusion drowned by the authors is: the nationalists create nationalistic mythologies (ideologies) on the eternal national character – consisting of the traditions' invention, or in the suffocation of the alternative public discourses – with specific political purposes. Such political goals are people mobilization for the nation state's defense, liberation, modernization, renaissance or domination over other nations; or some ethnic groups' autonomy and secessions. It is enduring because it got the support in some humanities.

3. Which is the conclusion of the book's authors?

The authors, Marius Turda and Sophia Maria Quine, in the book *Historicizing Race. A Global History in an innovative perspective on the effects of the racist ideas – in different fields – plead for learning from history conceived as a history of the*

entire humanity. Their illustrations are invitations to think globally, to take into account what happened near us and far from us. Explicitly, they assume the conclusion, that the exploration in the factual history of racism as well as in that of the history of ideas around the globe, the nationalisms should be replaced by the humanistic inclusive perspectives.

4. Final words in a review done from the perspective of public communication

The text is far from being assumable for the public communication, but the ideas argued – with proves taken from factual history and the history of ideas; the insertion of the Bibliography done in the Romanian language in the international circuit of ideas; the global perspective embraced gland the conclusion achieved; is extremely valuable for the public communication in Romania and its ambitions.

More than it, the authors challenge the contents of public communication training! They call to focus also on the ideas, not mainly on the forms. That is why, for us, the book will be constantly on our recommendations' list, both in the topics on fighting xenophobia, both in political communication.