

IS IT SAFE TO MOCK THE KING? FERDINAND I OF BULGARIA CARICATURED

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Abstract: In 1874, the French satirical newspaper *L'Eclipse* declared that an accurate history of freedom could be written by tracing the history of caricatures. Indeed, the “dance” of the cartoonists with the power has never been easy. At the beginning of the 20th century, many famous Bulgarian politicians had clearly constructed images and constantly appeared depicted on the pages of humorous newspapers. But still, cartoonists had their favourites and among them the Bulgarian head of state stands out clearly: King Ferdinand I of Bulgaria was a target of numerous attacks, both visual and verbal. Yet ridiculing the head of state was not always safe. This text seeks to present and analyse a few examples of how the critical attitude towards political power provoked political aggression against the cartoonists and humorous newspapers. The discussion of the Bulgarian case is introduced against the background of the contemporary European context.

Keywords: Ferdinand I of Bulgaria; mockery; political caricature; political pressure

The desire to poke fun at public figures is probably at least as old as satirical poetry. Political caricature, however, is a modern phenomenon – insofar as “[It] cannot be disseminated orally” but needs ink and paper, as well as the cooperation of the press¹. No one would deny the impact which visual images have upon our imagination, but any faith in the immediate intelligibility of caricatures might be misguided. Caricature is unthinkable without an organised society, according to the prominent Bulgarian cartoonist Iliya Beshkov². Society usually has its own established concepts, values, and ideas, and any violation of them provides fodder for caricature. The Bulgarian

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¹ Arthur Maurice and Frederik Cooper, *The History of the Nineteenth Century in Caricature* (Grant Richards, London, 1904), p. 1 (available via The Project Gutenberg e-Book: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/37603/37603-h/37603-h.htm#page1> – accessed 21.01.2026).

² Илия Бешков, *Слово и образ* (Захари Стоянов, София, 2008), p. 169.

Beshkov started publishing caricatures in the 1910s but was active mainly after the First World War.

political scene at the beginning of the 20th century was ugly, the bureaucracy was flourishing in thousands of new positions aimed at satisfying the huge number of supporters of each successive ruling party, since the system of party patronage existed, Bulgarian people were often misused in their capacity of voters and taxpayers³. Such a reality cannot but be mirrored in the contemporary political caricature.

Caricature usually offers interpretations of the political events and political figures and these visual interpretations accompany the presentation of the news. On the one hand, scholars underline the importance of the social environment in which caricature appears⁴ as well as the understanding about politics from which results the understanding of the political jokes, including caricature images⁵. On the other hand, it is extremely important how well the cartoonist knows its audience because this affects the way s/he tries to influence it. In addition to the professional experience, cartoonists must also have a keen sense of any change and lack of balance, and it is precisely this sense that leads them to the event, “just as a hunting dog is completely driven by the instinct to catch the rabbit. It does not think twice, it does not prefer personal gain or loss – as long as the chain around its neck is broken⁶!” In this text I seek to answer the question – raised already in the title – whether acting with a “broken chain” was safe enough at the beginning of the 20th century, by focusing my attention on the mocking the Bulgarian monarch, Ferdinand I⁷.

³ Many references could be listed here, yet I will pick up just a few: Румен Даскалов, *Българското общество 1878-1939*. Vol. 1 and 2 (Гутенберг, София, 2005); Стойчо Грънчаров, *Балканският свят. Идеи за държавност, национализми и развития от началото на XIX век до края на Първата световна война. Сравнителен анализ* (Дамян Яков, София, 2001), Ch. 12, pp. 579-611 – particularly pages on the personal rule of Ferdinand I of Bulgaria; Richard Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005).

I myself offered a short presentation of the main characteristics of the political life in Bulgaria at the time in my book Добринка Парушева, *“Долу правителството! Да живее карикатурата!!” Политика, култура и карикатура в България в началото на XX век* (Университетско издателство „Пайсий Хиленраски“, Пловдив, 2023), pp. 198-202.

⁴ Hans Speier, The Social Determination of Ideas, *Social Research*, 5 (1938), 182–205; Dagnosław Demski and Kamila Baraniecka-Olszewska, “Introduction. Encountering Images of the Other”, in Dagnosław Demski and Kamila Baraniecka-Olszewska (eds.). *Images of the Other in Ethnic Caricatures of Central and Eastern Europe*. (Warsaw), p. 17-18.

⁵ Hans Speier, “Wit and Politics: An Essay on Laughter and Power”, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 103 (1998), Issue 5, p. 1354.

⁶ Бешков, *Слово и образ*, p. 169–170, the quote is from p. 170.

⁷ Ferdinand I (26 February 1861 – 10 September 1948) was Prince of Bulgaria from 1887 to 1908 and Tsar (King) of Bulgaria from 1908 until his abdication in 1918.

“Dance” with the Power under the rhythm of laws

In the 19th century, satirical visual imagery developed rapidly throughout Europe. There are authors such as Ursula Koch who call the period from the last decades of the 19th century until 1914 “golden age” of the illustrated satirical press⁸. It was at this time that Bulgarian political caricature was born. In May 1898, the first issue of *Смях и сълзи* (*Laughter and tears*), a “newspaper for satire and humour”, edited by Radi Radev, was published in Sofia⁹. According to Yassen Borisлавov, a media scholar, this publication “bears the marks of a modern humorous newspaper” and the credit for this goes to Alexander Bozhinov¹⁰. Bozhinov is considered the father of the Bulgarian cartooning, although still a student at the Drawing School at the time¹¹. He played a major role also in the establishment of the leading Bulgarian humoristic newspaper *Българин* (*Balgarian*) in 1904¹².

Смях и сълзи was the first Bulgarian newspaper in which the caricature was given a leading place – it appeared on the front page. In addition, it was also the first newspaper against which attempts to censor satirical drawing for caricatures of Prince Ferdinand are documented. The editor Radi Radev recalls a case of a lawsuit filed against Bozhinov, who was sentenced to four months in prison, but was pardoned only a week later on the occasion of the death of Princess Marie-Louise of Bulgaria¹³.

In the early 20th century Bulgaria, the cartoonists had to overcome various obstacles. On paper, the 1879 constitution guaranteed freedom of speech and the press. In practice, however, laws against insulting the monarch,

⁸ She writes about “das ‘goldene Zeitalter’ der illustrierten satirischen Presse vor 1914”. See Ursula Koch, „Paris – München – Berlin: Illustrierte humoristisch-satirische Journale im Wandel des Zeitgeistes (1871-2005)”, in

Clemens Zimmermann und Manfred Schmeling (Hg.), *Die Zeitschrift – Medium der Moderne / La Presse magazine – un média de l’époque modern. Deutschland und Frankreich im Vergleich / Etude comparative France-Allemagne* (transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2006), pp. 157–184.

⁹ *Смях и сълзи* was published between May 1898 and February 1899. See *Български периодичен печат 1844-1944. Анотиран библиографски указател*. Vol. 2 (Наука и изкуство, София, 1966), p. 320-321.

¹⁰ Ясен Бориславов, *Естествена история на българския смях* (ИК Труд, София, 2014), p. 166-167.

¹¹ See Атанас Стойков, *Българската карикатура. Кратък очерк за нейния път и за творчеството на Александър Божинов, Илия Бешиков, Александър Жендов, Борис Ангелушев и Стоян Венев* (Български художник, София, 1970), p. 14-15.

¹² The name *Българин* is similar to “Bulgarian”, both in its sound and its meaning, and impossible to translate it in English, hence I only transliterate it. The newspaper was published in two series, from 1904 to 1909 and from 1916 to 1924. See *Български периодичен печат 1844-1944. Анотиран библиографски указател*. Vol. 1 (Наука и изкуство, София, 1962), p. 115.

¹³ Бориславов, *Естествена история*, p. 175.

undermining the state, and disrespecting authority existed and fines, confiscations, and trials were quite common¹⁴. Nevertheless mockery existed. Yet, the mockery of Prince Ferdinand could result in newspaper closure, arrests of journalists, and legal harassment. The reason: a particular Law about the crimes against the head of the state and members of his family was introduced at the end of the 19th century, which was famous among the Bulgarian people under the name 'The Persona's Law' (where "Persona" referred specifically to Ferdinand). This law was renewed in 1904 under the name "Law on Crimes Committed by Means of the Press against the Head of State and Members of His Family"¹⁵, that is, the focus was already on media in particular. It provided for severe criminal sanctions (up to 10 years in prison), but also economic repression (fines up to 5000 gold leva) against offenders and was often applied not only against the journalists but also against the authors of caricatures.

Not only the Persona's Law, but also the need to comply with the Law about the Press, i.e. with the restrictions of censorship, prevented the regular publication of humorous newspapers, including the most popular among them – *Българан*. The newspaper carried out numerous attacks against the Bulgarian Head of State, both visual and verbal. It is obvious, for example, that there is a long time period between its no. 80 (11 December 1905) and no. 81 (15 January 1906) for a weekly newspaper. The probable cause for this missing on the market was the presence of Ferdinand on the pages of *Българан* again, which provoked an anticipated response of the political authorities. Such an opinion is supported by Petar Paspalev's cartoon published in no. 81: "The birth of the little Българан: The three wise men present him with 'confiscation', 'investigation' and 'sentence' as a sign of endless reverence"¹⁶. Curiously enough, the struggle to protect the authority of the Bulgarian head of state was waged not only on the Bulgarian stage, but also had international aspects. Thus, after 1906, a lawsuit was filed against the Athenian newspapers *Chronos*, *Patris*, and *Skrip*, which published caricatures of Prince Ferdinand in connection with the anti-Greek movement. It is hardly surprising that this case ended ingloriously, given that relations between Athens and Sofia at that time had reached a freezing point¹⁷.

¹⁴ More on the topic in Василка Танкова (ed.), *Свободата на печата в България 1879-1944. Документален сборник* (Университетско издателство „Св. Климент Охридски“, София, 1992).

¹⁵ *Държавен вестник*, 16.01.1904.

¹⁶ *Българан*, 1906, no. 81, p. 1.

It is impossible to show all caricatures discussed but this seems acceptable because of the presence of a very close relationship between the visual image and the text accompanying it at the beginning of the 20th century: the texts usually explained the drawings and, moreover, in some cases exactly they were bringing satire and joke.

¹⁷ Юра Константинова, *България и Гърция в лабиринт от монолози* (Институт за балканистика с Център по тракология – БАН, София, 2022), p. 40.

The cartoonists did not limit themselves to ridiculing the prince alone, but also criticized the activities of politicians (ministers, members of parliament). The critical attitude towards political power often provoked political aggression against the newspaper: thus, in January 1907, when Prince Ferdinand was booed by students at the opening of the National Theatre, the result was not only a decree to close the university for half a year, but also the confiscation of the issue of *Българин* from 22 January due to the openly declared support for the students. This became the reason for the following text to appear in the next issue of the newspaper instead of a cartoon: “We love Him, we love Him!” accompanied by a vertical inscription “Forbidden by the censorship”¹⁸.

After the assassination of the Prime Minister Dimitar Petkov on 11 March 1907, censorship was tightened, and society witnessed a crackdown on cartoonists. In 1907–1908, due to censorship, i.e. under the Law about the Press only 100 copies of *Българин* were published¹⁹. The newspaper’s team explained this to their readers:

Last year at this time, *Българин*, weighed down by two laws—one on the Persona and one on the press—was forced to shut down. [...] Despite the strictness of the law, we will never miss an opportunity to express our opinion on the malice of the week, using the tone and techniques that have been part of the newspaper’s program since its inception²⁰.

Yet the “dance” with the power under the rhythm of the laws was difficult. And in 1909 the publication of the newspaper ceased and it disappeared from the media arena for several years, until the appearance of its second series in 1916.

The closure of *Българин* was not an exception – neither in Bulgaria, nor in the wider European context. Since the 19th century, similar measures had been taken in most European countries as regimes attempted to control public opinion in general and, above all, to control the display of opposition imagery, especially caricatures²¹. As Robert Goldstein points out, in 1874, the French satirical newspaper *L'Eclipse* declared that an accurate history of freedom could be written by tracing the history of caricatures²². This opinion actually reflected the fact that both the existence and the nature of French censorship of caricatures in the 19th century were the result of the changing nature of political

¹⁸ *Българин*, 1907, no. 121, p. 6.

¹⁹ Бориславов, *Естествена история*, p. 184.

²⁰ *Българин*, vol. IV, 1908, no. 79, p. 2.

²¹ Robert Goldstein, “Nineteenth-Century French Political Censorship of Caricature in Comparative European Perspective”, *Law and Humanities*, 2009, 3/1, p. 25.

²² Robert Goldstein, “Censorship of Caricature and the Theater in Nineteenth-Century France: An Overview”. In *Les Censures Dans Le Monde*, edited by Laurent Martin (Presses universitaires de Rennes, Rennes, 2016), p. 31.

regimes in the country²³. The situation was very similar in other European countries, especially at the beginning of the 20th century²⁴.

Dangerous Flies around Ferdinand's Nose Are Not Always Safe

Despite all difficulties the publishers in Bulgaria faced at the beginning of the 20th century, the political cartoon was a constant presence on the pages of humorous newspapers. This is hardly surprising, since their main task was to present events through the prism of humour and satire, i.e., they were “opposition” by default. As Iliya Beshkov points out, “[P]eople with small heads and big bodies were already born and ruled the young state. They ruled it as best as they could²⁵.” Precisely these people were the prototypes of the cartoons created by Alexander Bozhinov and his colleagues.

The most famous politicians had clearly constructed images. But still, cartoonists had their favourites and among them the Bulgarian head of state stood out clearly. “Like dangerous flies flew through the pages the mockery, satire and bold words – they circled around Ferdinand’s big nose²⁶”, wrote Beshkov years later. The Bulgarian ruler was the main protagonist in many texts and even more caricatures, over a thousand. He was ridiculed usually for his love of all luxuries, for his propensity for celebrations, for his travels around Europe – far more often than it was considered acceptable for a head of state. For example, in 1905 *Българин* published images of Ferdinand on its front page: once it was a caricature of the Prince (with his big nose) standing in front of a map: “Sofia?... Yes, I have been there...”²⁷ [Fig. 1]; and a second time, his drawing under the title “Guests of the Capital. Prince Ferdinand I (On the occasion of his stay in Sofia)”²⁸.

Another object of ridicule was his vanity and his great desire to replace the princely title with a royal one. Here are some suitable examples: a caricature by Vidyu “Project-monuments: All the Time He [in Russian – note D. P.]”²⁹ [Fig. 2], then “In Return” by Alexander Bozhinov, in which Europe holds the baby “Macedonian Question” and looks meaningfully after Ferdinand, who is leaving with the crown under his arm³⁰, or another one – “Mask” by Peter

²³ Goldstein, “Nineteenth-Century French Political Censorship”, p. 26.

²⁴ For the general European context see Robert Goldstein and Andrew Nedd (eds.), *Political Censorship of the Visual Arts in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2015).

²⁵ Бешков, *Слово и образ*, p. 127.

²⁶ Бешков, *Слово и образ*, p. 128.

²⁷ *Българин*, 1905, no. 45, p. 1.

²⁸ *Българин*, 1905, no. 78, p. 1.

²⁹ *Българин*, 1905, no. 52, p. 3.

³⁰ *Българин*, 1905, no. 53, p. 1.

Paspalev, where Ferdinand repeats the famous words of the French King Louis XIV “L’état – c’est moi”³¹ [Fig. 3].

Particularly often displayed and discussed in the research is a caricature by Ivan Slavov entitled “Phrenological Study”. I prefer using words to “draw” this caricature for the readers: it depicts Ferdinand’s profile with an open skull, which the cartoonist examines with a magnifying glass and sees areas labeled ‘vanity’, ‘glory-seeking’, ‘parades’, ‘hunting’, ‘sports’, ‘loans’, etc.³² Slavov published many caricatures of the Bulgarian monarch under his own name but also using the pseudonym Glory³³. To his pen belongs another very famous caricature too, “A ritual in month of March” [Fig. 4], in which Prince Ferdinand shears a donkey representing the Bulgarian people while saying: “There is nothing left to shear on this donkey, so we will start shaving it now”³⁴. This caricature, along with some others which also depicted Ferdinand, led to physical attack on Ivan Slavov and his injury by the people of the Prince and the Prime Minister – as reported by the newspaper *Балканска трибуна* (*Balkan Tribune*) – and to his conviction under the Persona’s Law³⁵.

Sometimes the openly demonstrated opinion of Slavov is analysed as a manifestation of his anti-monarchist ideas³⁶. However, I am inclined to share Yassen Borislavov’s opinion that “[to] necessarily look for some anti-monarchical pathos in these works would be exaggerated”³⁷. In most cases the laughter is directed at Ferdinand’s personality and not at the institution of the monarchy: “It is precisely this man with a big nose, fanfaron behaviour, and limited statesmanship abilities who is ridiculous in the role that fate has predetermined for him”³⁸.

Yet, the personal qualities and shortcomings of Ferdinand I of Bulgaria represent only one aspect of the situation. Another one is related to the dominance of monarchism over parliamentarism, or the so called *personal regime*. In fact, the personality of Ferdinand is indivisible from the institution of monarchy during his time of reign (1887–1918). It is wise yet to underline his personal characteristics and shortcomings separately (what I have tried to do),

³¹ *Българан*, 1906, no. 85, p. 1.

³² *Балканска трибуна*, 1907, no. 9.

Балканска трибуна is a daily newspaper published between December 1906 and January 1908. See *Български периодичен печат*, vol. 1, p. 73.

³³ Some information about Slavov provides Владимир Топенчаров, “Сериозната функция на хумора”, in Владимир Топенчаров, *Българската журналистика 1903-1917* (Наука и изкуство, София, 1981), p. 49-55. See also Галина Цонева, “Иван Славов – карикатурист, журналист и живописец”, *Изкуство*, 1982, no 10, pp. 22-27.

³⁴ *Българан*, 1906, no. 89, p. 7.

³⁵ After Цонева, “Иван Славов”, p. 24.

³⁶ Стойков, *Българската карикатура*, p. 18-19; Цонева, “Иван Славов”, p. 24.

³⁷ Бориславов, *Естествена история*, p. 218.

³⁸ Бориславов, *Естествена история*, p. 219.

while comment all that is related to the imposition of the dominance of monarchism over parliamentarism apart.

The beginning of the 20th century was a time when, on a European scale, a change in the interaction between politics and the media was observed³⁹, and the Bulgarian press was also an arena for a similar transformation⁴⁰. One of the favourite clichés in the press at the time was Prince Ferdinand's "personal regime"⁴¹. A personal regime is usually described as an attempt to establish the dominance of one individual in political life. However, unlike Prince Alexander Battenberg and Stefan Stambolov, Prince (and later King) Ferdinand did not directly attack the foundations of parliamentary democracy. Instead, he used very "refined techniques" in order to play the main role in Bulgarian politics: he established control by manipulating the formation of governments, i.e. by compromising democracy and by morally degrading the political elite.

The dominance of the monarch in Bulgarian political life and the neglect of the legislature both by him and by the governments – formed according to his "design" – were often the object of criticism by cartoonists. Thus, in 1911, in the newspapers *Барабан* (*Drum*) and *Смях* (*Laughter*), visual comments appeared several times on the work of the Fifth Grand National Assembly (GNA), which approved changes in the constitution leading to an expansion of the monarch's prerogatives. In "Finita la comedia", for example, the cartoonist (and writer) Chudomir showed the Constitution just amended by the GNA as a young woman tied to one of the columns of the National Assembly and guarded by two guards, while Ferdinand walked away saying "Thus, I do not allow, as the old Bulgarian kings did not, women to rule my kingdom!"⁴² [Fig. 5] Another caricature by the same cartoonist visualized the pyramid of power in Bulgaria at that time. Ivan Geshov and Stoyan Danev, the leaders of the two parties forming the coalition government in March 1911, had their backs rolled, on which Ferdinand was standing full-length; Geshov was holding out his hand to the Sultan Mehmed V, and Danev to the Russian Emperor Nicholas II; they both did not take the offered hands, however, but

³⁹ Actually, the scholars define the last two decades of the 19th and first three decades of the 20th century as a period of transformation but the beginning of the 20th century definitely falls into it. Cf. Betto van Waarden and Martin Kohlrausch, "The Mediatization of Political personae, 1880s-1930s", *Media History*, vol. 28 (2022), no. 1, pp. 1-12.

⁴⁰ I have written on this topic elsewhere: Dobrinka Parusheva, "Visual Representation of Politics in Bulgaria, End of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century". In Cosmin-Ştefan Dogaru (ed.), *Communicators, Audiences, and Strategies: Past Experiences and Contemporary Perspectives* (Peter Lang, Berlin, 2023), pp. 23-52.

⁴¹ Various contemporaries offered analyses and critiques of this regime. I agree with Rumen Daskalov that among the best critiques are those of the members of the Radical Party Todor Vlaykov, Stoyan Kosturkov, and Ilia Georgov. See Даскалов, *Българското общество*, vol. 1, p. 167.

⁴² *Барабан*, 1911, no. 127, p. 1.

had crossed their arms in front of their chests⁴³. [Fig. 6] In this case the attempts for bilateral agreements with the Ottoman and the Russian Empires were considered.

Indeed, the Fifth Grand National Assembly voted in favour of what King Ferdinand desired: primarily, a change in his title (reasonable change after the recognition of Bulgaria's independence), but also an expansion of his prerogatives at the expense of the National Assembly, especially in the sphere of foreign policy. He was granted the right to conclude international agreements through the government without consulting parliament, i.e., the executive power escaped the control of the legislative power. It was precisely these changes in the monarch's power that were often discussed by the press at the time, and later by researchers, as one of the reasons for the subsequent diplomatic failures of the Bulgarian state during the war decade.

* * *

The image of politics and the political that cartoonists create through their visualizations gives us an idea of how the people see what is happening around them and think about it, on the one hand. On the other hand, cartoonists can be and indeed are active actors in the creation of this image and especially of its representations⁴⁴, not only because the political is dynamic, but also because of the power of the tools with which the print media provides them. One can think of these tools as weapons. Shooting with them was not always safe. Sometimes people were punished, some other times newspapers were affected.

At the beginning of the 20th century, mocking King Ferdinand I of Bulgaria was neither wholly forbidden nor genuinely safe. While constitutional guarantees nominally protected free expression, legal restrictions and political pressure functioned in practice. Mockery functioned less as a right than as a calculated risk, revealing the fragile balance between constitutionalism and personal rule in Ferdinand's Bulgaria. Ridiculing the King could affect both people and newspapers seriously. What happened to the cartoonist Ivan Slavov was discussed above but he was not the only person to suffer because of his work. Aleksander Bozhinov was also tried several times for depicting the Persona in his caricatures, and was sometimes convicted, once to a year in prison "for violating the honour of the Head of State" with the sentence № 6214 of the Sofia Court of Appeal from 14 July 1907⁴⁵. Perhaps this was indeed,

⁴³ Барабан, 1911, no. 150, p. 8.

⁴⁴ The distinction between image and picture – or between the ideal and the material – is defined in W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory. Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1994).

⁴⁵ Александър Божинов, *Александър Божинов разказва* (Изток-Запад, София, 2015), p. 77.

as Iliya Beshkov thought, one of the reasons why he often revealed many dangerous truths through his “sceptical and cautionary character Pizho: tall, thin-legged like wit, poor and wise like a proverb”⁴⁶. Bozhinov used the figure of Pizho to poke fun not only at Ferdinand but also at other politicians, or to comment on ill-considered political issues. This character proved to be a very useful tool for commentary⁴⁷, and perhaps saved its author from legal and political harassment a few times.

Newspapers also suffered in the hostile Bulgarian political environment in the early 20th century. *Българан*, as already mentioned, was often a victim of censorship, and was suspended for a while in 1908. The revival of the newspaper in October 1908 was short-lived. Moreover, as Vladimir Topencharov writes, *Българан* was no longer *Българан*: “Its anti-Ferdinand masculinity was castrated. Attacks against the monarch disappeared from its pages”⁴⁸. The disappearance of *Българан* for several years after 1909 allowed other newspapers to take its place in the Bulgarian humorous landscape. *Барабан (Drum)* (1908–1912) took Alexander Bozhinov under its wing for a while before he moved on to the team of *Шантеклер (Chanteclair)* (1910–1911), published by Ivan Slavov, and then to *Смях (Laughter)* (1911–1915)⁴⁹. Among these newspapers, *Смях*, with Bozhinov again as an editor-in-chief, can be seen as an attempt to “resurrect” the *Българан* team, although its criticism of the authorities (including the King) was more moderate and restrained, and politics was only a small part of everything that was caricatured.

In 1916, *Българан* was revived for its second series. The war time raised additional problems for journalists and cartoonists: along with the legal restrictions and political pressure which continued playing a significant role, nationalist sentiments of the society should be added as a factor that sharply limited acceptable criticism. Like any other time, it was “open” to humorous interpretations yet, concurrently, it was a time that was about to change the entire value system of Europe and the European way of thinking.

⁴⁶ Бешков, *Слово и образ*, p. 128.

⁴⁷ Александър Божинев *разказва*, p. 86-87.

⁴⁸ Топенчаров, “Сериозната функция на хумора”, 450.

⁴⁹ See respectively: *Български периодичен печат*, vol. 1, p. 78 (for *Барабан*); *Български периодичен печат*, vol. 2, p. 502 (for *Шантеклер*); *Български периодичен печат*, vol. 2, p. 320 (for *Смях*).

Смях was actually a continuation of *Шантеклер*, even the numbering of the issues was preserved: after no. 37 of *Шантеклер* the no. 38 of *Смях* came.

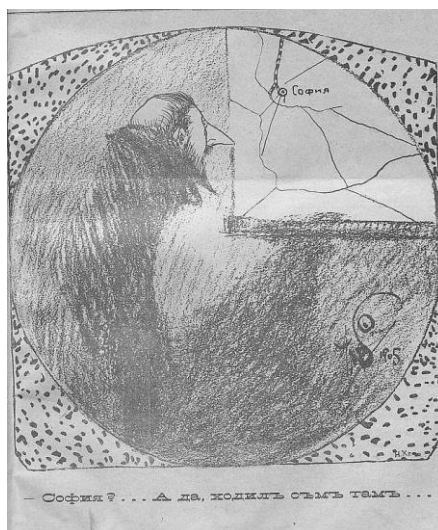


Fig. 1: *Balgaran*, 1905, no. 45, p. 1
“Sofia?... Yes, I have been there...”



Fig. 2: *Balgaran*, 1905, no. 52, p. 3
Project-monuments, no. 1: “All the Time He”



Fig. 3 : *Balgaran*, 1906, no. 85, p. 1
Mask: “L’état – c’est moi”



Fig. 4: *Balgaran*, 1906, no. 89, p. 7
A ritual in month of March: “There is nothing left to shear on this donkey, so we will start shaving it now”



Fig. 5: *Drum*, 1911, no. 127, p. 1
Finita la comedia: “Thus, I do not allow, as the old Bulgarian kings did not, women to rule my kingdom!”

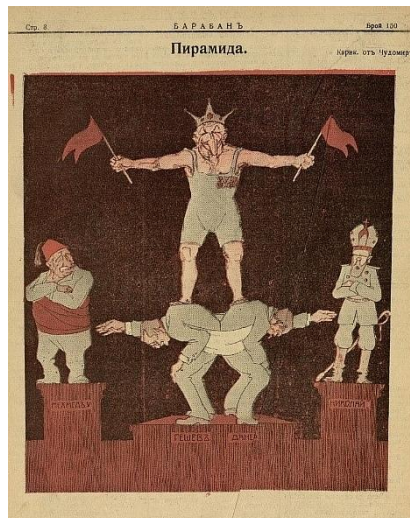


Fig. 6: *Drum*, 1911, no. 150, p. 8
Pyramid