

SUMMARY

Keywords: eugenics, biopolitics, hygiene, anthropology, race, doctors, social diseases.

This thesis is called "Medical movement and eugenics in Transylvania, 1918-1948" and focuses on issues related to medicine, eugenics, social and racial hygiene. It is divided in three parts and captures the way in which Romanian doctors in Transylvania sketched the construction of the nation, after 1918, based on eugenic precepts.

The history of Romanian eugenics in Transylvania is presented in the introductory part which offers, beforehand, information about the arguments behind this scientific approach. The eugenic movement in Romania was analyzed in terms of external influences, which ultimately contributed to the emergence of a local version that valued the improvement of racial qualities and the numerical growth of the population. To achieve these goals, Romanian eugenicists have criticized mixed marriages and tried, through various methods, to prevent the reproduction of blind, deaf-mute, epileptic, schizophrenic or mentally debilitated individuals.

The first part of the doctoral thesis is called "Eugenics and preventive medical discourse" and includes three chapters, which analyze the view of eugenicists in relation to health care and biological capital of the country.

The first chapter (Reform and modernity) captures the measures taken in health by Professor Iuliu Moldovan in order to improve the health of the population. He started from the premise that progress in society depended on the physical and mental condition of individuals. For this reason, during the Governing Council, he created a series of health institutions to combat infant mortality and social diseases, which affected a large part of the population. Iuliu Moldovan advocated, along with other doctors, for the establishment of a Ministry of Health, imposing unitary rules of recruitment, organization and management, since health care in Romania was divided, at the time, between several public or private entities.

The mentor of the Romanian eugenics in Transylvania tried to impose modern practices in the medical activity, as it was oriented exclusively towards the curative side. This explains why he promoted preventive medicine by various means: he founded the Institute of Nursing Sisters,

encouraged the specialization of doctors in hygiene and took measures for the application of eugenic ideas in model sanitary nets in Gilău (Cluj), Tomești (Iași) and Gurbănești (Ilfov).

The second chapter is called "National Biological Capital" and discusses the influence of factors on the biological evolution of the Romanian people. This part highlights the fact that eugenicists have emphasized the role of the healthy family in the process of qualitative and quantitative consolidation of the ethnic body. They wanted procreation to take place only within the family and to exclude people who were dysgenic or who came from other ethnic groups, such as the Roma, Hungarians, or Jews.

Romanian doctors in Transylvania maintained a cult of the large family and were concerned about reduced fertility in some areas, because they believed that Romania needed an increased birth rate in order to stay in biological competition with other people. The representatives of eugenics valued, in particular, the countryside family and took steps to spread the hygienic norms in the rural area, where most of the population lived.

The eugenic school in Transylvania brought to the center of attention the woman and her status within the bio-political state, where she had to be satisfied with the role of wife and mother. Doctors criticized the tendencies of social and political emancipation of women because they were convinced that they had an anti-biological effect on the family.

Iuliu Moldovan's disciples intended for women's access to education to be controlled and to be limited to the role of mother or employee of the health service or social assistance.

Eugenic antifeminism was accompanied by the biological inferiority of women and the support of the intense propaganda in favor of birth. The hostility towards women's professional aspirations was retrograde and contrasted visibly with the modern vision they promoted regarding health organization.

Assuming motherhood involves a number of risks for both mothers and children, after the Great Union of 1918, the birth rate was increasingly overshadowed by infant mortality, which placed Romania at the edge of the civilized world.

Eugenics were intrigued by the fact that infant mortality in Romania was caused, in many cases, by preventable lung or digestive diseases. For this reason, they encouraged the spread of knowledge of hygiene and childcare among the villagers, in order to prevent the degeneration of the national organism.

Also for this purpose, they aimed to reduce the exodus of the rural population to urban centers, where, they claimed, families with normal biological qualities became extinct after only three to five generations, due to living conditions. The aversion to urban civilization was motivated primarily by the depletion of workers in industry and the moral laxity of this environment, where there were many shortcomings in terms of sanitation and water supply.

The biological consolidation of the race involved, in the opinion of eugenicists, a sustained campaign against social diseases, which included alcoholism, tuberculosis and syphilis. Alcohol consumption increased significantly after the First World War, although doctors have repeatedly called on the state to intervene to stop this phenomenon. The authorities were not receptive to the alarmist message of the doctors for the simple reason that they could not afford to give up taxes in this sector, which came to dominate the food industry since the early 1930s.

Syphilis occupied an important position in the discourse of Romanian eugenicists because it triggered heart, liver, gastric or mental disorders, when sick people refused to consult a doctor or go through all stages of treatment. The deterioration of health was inevitably followed by a decrease in work capacity and the installation of an economic imbalance in the family. Doctors warned that syphilis altered the "germinal plasma" of individuals and caused miscarriages or premature births, which endangered the bio-political interests of the nation.

Venereal diseases were recurrent during the studied period due to favorable factors, such as war, poverty or immorality. Adherents of eugenics supported the anti-syphilitic campaigns of the 1920s and organized public conferences to avoid the spread of such diseases.

The second part -The Biologization of the Nation- includes three chapters with details on the attitude of eugenicists towards bio-politics, education and racial hygiene. The first chapter (Bio-politics) reveals that bio-political ideas became known in this province, thanks to Professor Iuliu Moldovan, who published articles, gave courses and initiated meetings with intellectuals in Cluj, to familiarize them with the topic.

Iuliu Moldovan synthesized his bio-political thinking in a book from 1926, in which he supported the organization of the layer on biological principles. He believed this was the only way for the genetic potential of each person to be capitalized.

The exponents of the eugenic movement realized that bio-political ideas could be applied in society only with the help of the state, so they sought to maintain close relations with the Carlist,

Antonescian and Communist regimes. At the same time, they looked to collaborate with the Church and other institutions- "Astra" or the Romanian Women's Union- as they could provide important support in the fight against alcoholism, infectious diseases and infant mortality.

Astra's activity focused, in the interwar period, on the cultural and moral "raising" of the masses, the spread of hygiene knowledge and the improvement of the economic situation of rural households. The contact with the village was made through the divisions, which used the language of science to create a rapprochement between intellectuals and locals.

The second chapter is called "Education and Society in the Biological Dimension" and includes two subchapters on the role of education and physical culture in building a healthy nation.

The eugenics movement can be seen as a form of education of human groups, since it has placed an emphasis on the responsibility of individuals in matters of sex and reproduction. The members of the eugenics school from Cluj thought that a person's intellectual acquisitions were not transmitted from one generation to another, but only created predispositions, which could be updated and capitalized on by the descendants through formal education.

Eugenicists were convinced that education entailed an improvement in living conditions and an increase in the degree of responsibility towards the biological interests of the Romanian people. Therefore, they criticized the education system and proposed that it be organized on biopolitical principles.

The eugenic discourse in Transylvania illustrated a constant concern for issues related to heredity and the environment. Eugenicists expressed the opinion that the evolution of a person, biologically and socially, was inevitably influenced by the interaction of the two factors.

In the subchapter "Physical culture and national vigor" I explained the concept of "integral education", which was insistently promoted by eugenicists. Iuliu Moldovan's relatives proposed physical exercises and sports to improve on the one hand the physical and moral qualities of Romanians, and on the other hand to contribute to the birth of strong descendants.

Proponents of eugenics have proposed that exercise and outdoor games be extended to the school environment, to compensate for the lack of classroom conditions. To help the physiological recovery of some young people, the authorities decided to experiment with the

therapeutic effect of physical education in school "colonies", which housed weak, lymphatic or children with tuberculosis.

Dr. Iuliu Moldovan advocated the introduction of sport in early education, in order to stimulate children's nervous systems. He created (together with Iuliu Hațieganu) an organization, called "Carpathian Falcons", which promoted a program of physical and moral rebirth of the nation.

The third chapter is entitled "Negative Eugenics", and examines how doctors have tried to impose a control on reproduction, in order to avoid the multiplication of people with inferior biological characters. Eugenic sterilization has been seen by some exponents of the medical profession as a viable solution for strengthening the breed. Their arguments did not resonate among the political class and therefore they could not apply such a program in Romania. Eugenics, on the other hand, managed to obtain eugenics and medical abortion legislation in 1936, although they met the opposition of the Parliament.

The third part of the doctoral thesis is titled-"Eugenics and racial anthropology" and includes three subchapters on the idea of race, the myth of skull and the myth of blood.

The first subchapter (Racial Imagology) demonstrates that race has often been used in the writings of anthropologists or physicians, from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to establish a hierarchy between human groups.

The development of anthropology in Romania was closely linked to the university centers in Bucharest, Cluj and Iasi, where personalities such as Francisc Rainer, Victor Papilian or Olga Necrasov were active members.

Romanian physicians resorted to the support of anthropology to combat the claims of the Hungarians over Transylvania. The eugenicists around Iuliu Moldovan translated the Romanian-Hungarian disputes on the biological field, believing these arguments could not be contested.

The second subchapter (The Myth of Skull) describes how craniology was used by anthropologists to determine the bio-racial value of individuals. Thus, some anthropologists claimed that people with elongated skulls (dolichocephalus) were biologically superior to those with almost round skulls (brachycephalic). This detail was primarily important to supporters of scientific racism, who claimed that there was a correlation between race and the cephalic index.

Craniological research was used for political purposes by eugenicists from Transylvania, who tried to prove that the Szeklers were, in fact, of Romanian origin. Through such steps, they aimed to make them feel connected to the Romanian state and not to adhere to the revisionist policy of the Hungarians.

The last subchapter is entitled "The Myth of Blood" and makes an x-ray of sero-anthropological research in Transylvania, where Romanian doctors tried to discover the racial origin of the majority population and national minorities.

Advocates of scientific racism promoted the idea that the bio-racial value of a people depended on the frequency of blood group A, which was associated with the European continent and the civilization created by its inhabitants.

The medical-social school in Cluj used sero-anthropology to support the continuity of Romanians in Transylvania and their biological superiority over Roma or Hungarians. This attitude was dictated by eugenic or bio-political reasons, and overlapped with the intention to peacefully assimilate the Szeklers and the Csangos.

Sero-anthropological research in Romania was under the sign of biological nationalism and was interrupted by political changes that occurred after the coup d'etat of August 23rd, 1944. The eugenic experiment in Romania ended in 1948, but some ideas circulated by followers of this social movement survived the new Soviet-inspired regime.