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**Biopolitics and Eugenics
The Roma in Romania
during the Interwar Period**

-SUMMARY-

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SUMMARY

The study of biopolitics and eugenics applied to the Roma in Romania in the interwar period is an essential approach for understanding the impact of these policies on the Roma minority. An approach that is also an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of the past. A critical analysis of these policies can provide us with valuable lessons precisely to prevent the repetition of past mistakes and can also be a tool for developing policies with a fair purpose.

As an ideological movement, eugenics had global proportions. Through its promotion by specialists in various fields, it managed to influence the decisions of the modern world. Eugenia was founded on the false premise that our genes dictate almost entirely who we are and what we do, ignoring the influence of the environment. Based on erroneous statements, without social or moral justifications, scientifically unfounded, including that human activity is determined by a series of hereditary factors or by the fact that modern society was under constant "threat" because of people with mental or physical disabilities or by people considered intellectually "inferior".

Eugenics propagated with great success in the academic environment but also in the political one, and in the name of "science", it supported a political project through which eugenicists brought together genetic theories such as those of biological determinism with a modern vision of a "new society" and "a new man", which would not be endangered by individuals, considered by eugenicists as "dysgenic", who would not make a contribution to the development of society, on the contrary, they would only contribute to the degeneration of the human race.

This scientific approach, materialized in the thesis entitled *"Biopolitics and eugenics: The Roma in Romania during the Interwar Period"*, had as its main objective the exploration and analysis of the implications of biopolitics and eugenics on the Roma in Romania during the interwar period, but also over time, because, as we will see, eugenics is an ideology with a versatile form, which, although it has been banned by various regulations, it has never ceased to exist.

Our research approach is based on well-structured analytical reasoning centralized in five chapters, each of which is completed with a series of conclusions.

In the first chapter, called "*Biopolitics and Eugenics*", the attention of the research is subject to the theoretical and conceptual framework and is divided into two subchapters, focused on two essential concepts with which we have operationalized throughout the research, namely "biopolitics" and "eugenics". In Subchapter 1, dedicated to biopolitics, the analysis was built as an invitation to reflect on the two concepts, the most essential theories issued by the most relevant authors in the field, starting with Hannah Arendt and ending with Roberto Esposito.

Biopolitics is not an old concept, on the contrary, it is a central one in contemporary political philosophy. Biopolitics is a ubiquitous manifestation in our modern societies, through various forms of public health management, birth control, biotechnologies, including security policies.

Over time, biopolitics has led to the development of definitions and theories regarding this field. For example, Maria Bucur considers that biopolitics represents the political power that is exercised over a population through direct measures that have the role of controlling and regulating both biological and life processes, through which the body becomes "*A ground for debates on rights, freedoms and obligations*"¹. Sociologist Ferenc Feher believes that biopolitics is a concept that is limited to the "*politicization of the body*" and that it does not constitute a political field in the traditional sense². Cristian Geyer mentions that biopolitics represents "*an ethical-socio-political reflection on the problems posed by biological technoscience*"³. Hannah Arendt is the one who attributes to biopolitics a meaning closely connected to the idea of totalitarian regimes (Fascism and Nazism) and state control over human life. Arendt defined as biopolitics the process by which human life is transformed into an object of control but also manipulation by the state. He argued that totalitarian regimes did not seek to control only what pertains to public law, but also the private right of the individual, subordinating aspects of human life to their interests and ideologies.

Arendt considered biopolitics a complex notion that assumes that individual life is subject to the interests of the state, so that the status has absolute control over its life, the individual being reduced to the status of a "component" of a system. Through biopolitics, totalitarian regimes⁴ it tries to bring individuals to a uniform table, which actually involves the

¹ Maria Bucur, „Eugenie și modernizare în România interbelică”, Ed. Polirom 2005

² Ferenc Feher, Agnes Heller, „Biopolitics” Ed. Avebury, European Center Vienna 1994.

³ Christian Geyer (coord.), Biopolitik (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2011), quoted in Viorrela Manolache, „Repere Teoretice în Biopolitică” Ed. Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale, 2013, București. p.16

⁴ „Originea totalitarismului”, eprinted by Humanitas Publishing in 1994, 2006, and 2014, is the work in which H. Arendt, explores the causes and characteristics of totalitarianism and researches how the Nazi and Stalinist regimes developed in Germany and the Soviet Union, discusses the political and social context in Europe of the

suppression of individuality and personal responsibility. Hannah Arendt is the one who attributes to biopolitics a meaning closely connected to the idea of totalitarian regimes (Fascism and Nazism) and state control over human life. Arendt defined biopolitics as the process by which human life is transformed into an object of control but also manipulation by the state. He argued that totalitarian regimes did not seek to control only what pertains to public law, but also the private right of the individual, subordinating aspects of human life to their interests and ideologies.

With a vision different from that of H. Arendt, both as a method and as a perspective, the one who consecrates the concept of biopolitics is the historian of ideas and philosopher Paul-Michel Foucault⁵. Influenced by the ideas of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx, he achieved what is called "*The Birth of Biopolitics*"⁶, which actually represents a cycle of 12 conferences held during an academic year ('78-'79) at the Collège de France. Foucault proposed for analysis the evolution of the concept of biopolitics in Western (German and American) political thought, trying to show how power and governance change with the development of capitalism and the free market society⁷.

Foucault introduced the concept of "biopolitics" referring to how power and governance expand to control and regulate the population as a "living and common organism."

According to Foucault, the main areas concerning the intervention of biopolitics are related to the processes of birth/mortality and those aimed at the relations between people and their living environment (social problems). He analyzed how liberalism contributed to the formation of a government based on the management and control of the population's lives through public health measures, birth control and social policies, and analyzed the shortcomings and limitations of liberalism. According to Foucault, biopolitics represents an accumulation of techniques and strategies for the exercise of power (bio-power), power exercised by people or groups through "episodic" or "sovereign" acts of domination or

20th century, the effects of the First World War and the economic crises of after, which offered the possibility of creating a favorable environment for the rise of totalitarian regimes.

Available on the website file:///C:/Users/lilia/OneDrive/Desktop/Cea_mai_remarcabila_carte_pe_tema_total.pdf accessed on September 5, 2024.

⁵ Paul-Michel Foucault, (1926-1984) a French philosopher, psychologist, historian, and theoretician, whose works have made significant waves in the history of science and continue to influence fields such as philosophy, political and social sciences, history, and cultural studies. One of Foucault's most renowned works is "*Surveiller et punir*" ("*Discipline and Punish*") in which he analyzes the history of punitive systems and the ways in which society controls individuals through various institutions, particularly prisons.

⁶ Michel Foucault „The Birth of Biopolitics” originally published in 1979, also reprinted by Idea, Design & Print Publishing, Cluj, in 2007.

⁷See Michel Foucault "The Birth of Biopolitics" op. cit. p. 32, in which he motivates the need to approach liberalism that he called "*the problem of truth, of economic truth within governmental reason*" so that only later can students understand what biopolitics is.

coercion) through which the state is directly invested with the right to "discipline" and "normalize" the body. In other words, with the power to control the "quality" and proliferation of a population's life through various security methods and mechanisms.

Contrary to Arendt, who was concerned with the negative effects of limiting politics to biopolitics, Foucault believed that power is not merely reactive or oppressive, but pervasive and productive, in the sense that it produces knowledge and can issue measures with the aim of shaping behaviors and social life, a fundamental difference between the two opinion makers.

In addition, Foucault analyzes the way in which the modern state exercises its power not only through the elaboration of laws or constraints, but also through the creation of disciplinary mechanisms (institutions) with the role of controlling the biological life of the population⁸.

Both H. Arendt and M. Foucault approach the relationship between life and power, but from different perspectives. Arendt clearly distinguishes between "active life" (including the political part) and mere survival from a biological point of view, and criticizes biopolitics for reducing politics to the mere administration of life. Foucault, on the other hand, does not make a distinction between the two, he is interested in how biopolitics organizes and governs biological life and political life.

One of those who respond to the ideas of H. Arendt and M. Foucault about totalitarianism and biopolitics is the Italian philosopher, Giorgio Agamben⁹. If Foucault is the one who conceived the term biopolitics and analyzes it in the context of the development of the modern state, Agamben is the one who took it up and expanded it in new directions, emphasizing, above all, the connecting aspects of the relationship between power and life.

Agamben in turn introduces new philosophical concepts, such as "*bare life*" as a product of biopolitics and "homo sacer" as the one who leads a "bare life". In the deep philosophy work "*Homo Sacer. Sovereign power and naked life*"¹⁰ Agamben explores the relationship between "*sovereign power*" and the concept of "*bare life*". Through his analytical approach, he develops

⁸ Michel Foucault, „*Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*” Ed. Random House, Inc., New York, 1997, available on the website https://monoskop.org/images/4/43/Foucault_Michel_Discipline_and_Punish_The_Birth_of_the_Prison_1977_1995.pdf accessed on September 5, 2024

⁹ Giorgio Agamben (b.1942), philosopher of Italian origin, with works exploring the concepts of the "State of exception" and "Homo sacer". Among his most relevant works are: "Homo Sacer" „Sovereign Power and Bare Life (1995)", "State of Exception. Homo Sacer II, (2003)", "Stasis: Civil War as a Political Paradigm. Homo Sacer II" (2015), "Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive. Homo Sacer III" (1998), "The Use of Bodies. Homo Sacer IV", (2016) etc..

¹⁰ Giorgio Agamben, "Homo sacer. Sovereign Power and Naked Life" Idea Design & Print Publishing House, 2006, Cluj, originally published in 1995, translated into English in 1998, an edition that we will use in this endeavor.

a critique of modern politics that finds its foundation, he argues, in the ability to control human life from a biological perspective. Giorgio Agamben explores the relationship between sovereign power and life and, above all, the fact that sovereign power invests itself with the right of life and death over what he defines as "*bare life*", a life excluded from the protection of the law.

While Foucault and Agamben offer valuable insights into biopolitics, Roberto Esposito goes further and develops a more complex version of biopolitics. Esposito, through the work "*Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*"¹¹ launches a new perspective on the relationship between politics and biology, develops what is called "biophilosophy", a model of contemporary biopolitics¹², which questions two terms "bios" (life) and "thanatos" (death). Esposito introduces two concepts "*immunitas*" (coming from the biomedical sphere) and "*communitas*" which he uses in his theory of biopolitics. According to Esposito, "*immunitas*" represents the tendency of modern societies to protect themselves through barriers and exclusion mechanisms¹³ (as a principle of self-defence), while "*communitas*"¹⁴ (meaning giving up individual protections for the common good), highlights the idea of open community, which implies collaboration and mutual dependence, but also sharing vulnerability and exposure to otherness.

The model of biopolitics, proposed by Esposito, marks a form of constant opposition between these two concepts/forces: the desire for security (the individual plane) and the need to live together (the common plan). Esposito proposes a politics of life, a politics that is open and at the same time supportive, instead of being subject to the idea of fear, contamination or even destruction¹⁵ (Nazi biopolitics).

In conclusion, biopolitics is a fundamental concept in contemporary political philosophy that also proves to be a complex, multidimensional and controversial one. Biopolitics has been subjected to exploration and analysis by important thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, Roberto Esposito and others, and each of them has made contributions to the development of this concept, providing unique perspectives on how political power engages in life and exercises some form of control.

Regardless of the complex and multidimensional challenges of modern society, biopolitics needs a continuous public debate, which allows us to critically assess both the

¹¹Roberto Esposito „Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy”, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2008

¹² Idem, „The Enigma of Biopolitics” . p. 56

¹³ Roberto Esposito, op. cit. „The paradigm of Immunization”p. 59-69

¹⁴ Roberto Esposito, "Communitas: Origine e destino della comunità", Turin, Einaudi, 1998

¹⁵ Roberto Esposito, op. cit. „ The philosophy of bios” p 154

benefits and the risks associated with biopolitics, precisely in order to find a balance between the need to protect public health and respect for individual rights.

In subchapter 2, dedicated to eugenics, the main definitions are addressed and especially, in a comparative manner, we follow the evolutionary process from concept to ideology that has influenced eugenic policies in various states of the world.

The one who issued the first theories on eugenics was the anthropologist and explorer Sir Francis Galton. In 1883 he published the book *"Inquiries Into Human Faculty And Its Development"*,¹⁶ a collection of evolutionary and anthropometric essays in which the word "eugenics" and the explanation of this concept, was first mentioned in a footnote. He specified that the most appropriate term with which to express the science of breeding descent was that of "eugenics" to the detriment of the one used up to that moment, namely, that of "viriculture". In other words, Galton defines eugenics as *"(...) the science that deals with factors that can alter for better or worse the race, mental, or physical qualities of future generations."*¹⁷. Galton considered eugenics to be social control aimed not only at ameliorating certain current problems, but, more than that, he advocated the improvement of future generations in terms of racial quality both physically and intellectually, which had to be introduced, Galton considered, at the level of national consciousness, as a national creed, a religion.

Through International Eugenics Congresses, held in London and later in the USA, on such a large scale, with hundreds of guests and with financial support both publicly and privately, Fr. Galton's ideas spread not only in eugenics schools (the academic space) but throughout the world, while keeping as a common element the desire to separate human society with the help of science into the "superior" social layers considered "worthy of reproduction" compared to the rest of society considered "inferior" layers.

The main conclusion issued by us is the fact that eugenics, as a global phenomenon, has embraced a diversity of ideas, has formed a spectrum of eugenic theories, because the supporters of this movement came from various intellectual backgrounds, (doctors, biologists, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, politicians, as well as artists and people of culture) from various corners of the world, who developed various discriminatory policies and legislation that allowed the legitimization of discrimination, segregation, sterilization and even genocide.

¹⁶ Francis Galton „Inquiries Into Human Faculty And Its Development” MACMILLAN, London, 1883 p.17, available on the website <https://galton.org/books/human-faculty/text/galton-1883-human-faculty-v4.pdf> accessed on September 5, 2024

¹⁷ Definition given by Francis Galton, quoted in the Eugenic and Biopolitical Bulletin, Eugenics - The Hygiene of the Nation, 1927

Eugenics has been implemented in different ways as a state policy in many countries, easily integrating into various political systems and cultures, which has given it a country-specific character. However, as a common element agreed by all eugenic programs was the permanent tendency to separate society into „superior” and „inferior” social layers. Reproduction control is in fact the basic eugenic ideology and its implementation was aimed at creating societies of valuable and powerful people both biologically and intellectually.

From a relational point of view, biopolitics and eugenics are two interconnected concepts, both exploring the relationship between power and life. While biopolitics deals with the management of life, on a large scale, through political and social mechanisms, eugenics focuses on the genetic control of the population, using specific techniques of genetic engineering and artificial selection. Eugenics can thus be considered a specific application of biopolitical principles.

If the old eugenics were based on coercive and brutal methods (forced sterilizations, segregation and euthanasia), used to prevent the reproduction of those considered genetically "undesirable" (people with physical and moral disabilities, ethnic minorities), the new forms of eugenics use various advanced gene editing technologies.

In the second chapter, called "The Roma Movement in Interwar Romania", the analysis is directed at the issue of the Roma in Romania, trying to identify the emergence and establishment of Roma organizations and leaders, relevant characters, who through sustained efforts managed to create what is called the Roma movement in the interwar period of Greater Romania. We considered it essential to approach the interwar period in this process of analysis, because it is an extremely relevant stage of the Roma minority precisely because we are talking about forms of socio-political organization. In this chapter, articles from the Roma press and non-Roma publications were used to reflect on the situation of Roma in the modern Romanian state, both from a socio-economic and political point of view.

Roma organizations have been both a mirror and a catalyst for the elites' discourse, they have provided a space for Roma expression, although there have also been many Roma leaders who have developed autonomous visions. The organization of the Roma played a crucial role in building a strong Roma identity and in promoting the rights of the community, which brought visibility to the Roma, attracted the attention of both the general public and the small one of eugenicists.

The Roma elites had a type of discourse that did not create ethnic difficulties for Romanians, they relied a lot on loyalty to the homeland, the king and the church, or in other words, being fully loyal to Romania. There were several occasions when they claimed *"we are*

not a minority and we do not seek to make a state within a state. Romania is our country, the country where we and our ancestors were born, the Orthodox religion is our religion. We fight for the needs, pains and desires of Romanians (...) We don't make anyone's policy and we don't pursue occasional goals."¹⁸

In the speech, the leaders of the Roma organizations did not use the term minority to designate themselves, but rather the term nation or people was used, but most of the time they described themselves as "good Romanians", and the assimilation into the Romanian society was seen positively, at least at the level of discourse. At the declarative level, the discourse of the Roma elites highlighted problems of a social nature, such as illiteracy, precarious material status (poverty), economic inadaptation of the Roma to the needs of the time, the difficulties encountered by the Roma fiddlers with the advent of jazz music and radio, as well as the competition between factory products vs. those manufactured by the Roma craftsmen. Rarely, however, the speech also mentioned the fact that the Roma are despised, blasphemed and considered "*pariahs of society, deprived of equal rights as people and citizens*"¹⁹.

The second target group targeted was the large mass of Roma, whom the elites wanted to attract to the movement in the idea of what today, we would say in other terms, ethnicity. In this case, the discourse was of an identity type, as an alternative to assimilation into the majority population. The messages conveyed through the elites' discourse tried to be as mobilizing and attractive as possible, in order to succeed in uniting the Roma among the Roma movement, but also to cultivate in individuals the pride of being Roma.

In conclusion, over time, the role of Roma organizations in political representation has evolved. If initially they focused on social aspects, they gradually expanded the agenda, addressing other dimensions of community life, including political ones, discrimination. In this context, Roma elites played an important role in formulating innovative visions and adapting political discourse to new realities. The problems reported by the Roma elites were mainly social problems, with two exceptions, but they were pointed out by two Roma leaders (G. A. Lăzurică-Lăzureanu and Gh. Niculescu) problems in which the Roma were despised, blasphemed and mocked for their origin, which served as an argument for many authors who approached the study of the Roma movement in the first part of the interwar period, to argue that the Roma were only a social problem for Romanian society.

¹⁸ Niculescu G. (March 15, 1937) "Our Creed", The Voice of the Roma II (3) p. 1.

¹⁹ See Hioara G. (October 22, 1934) "Towards victory", O Rom. Organ of Cultural Guidance and Social Claims of the Roma in Romania, I(2) p. 1

The phenomenon by which Roma mobilize and organize themselves in various associations and have the power to negotiate with political parties for the capital of votes they had, and to collaborate with certain authorities, inevitably brings with it what is called visibility.

In the third chapter of the work, entitled "**The Romanian Eugenic and Biopolitical Movement. The Racist Discourse on the Roma Minority**", the attention is focused on the eugenic movement in the Romanian space in the interwar period and analyzes from a discursive point of view the language and arguments used in articles that have been published in a series of specialized journals. In order to obtain a clearer picture of the eugenics movement, the work tries to portray the most radical Romanian eugenicists of the interwar period, through the prism of publications and articles signed by them, which contain deep racist influences and considerations discovered through the documentary research of various archival funds.

To understand how eugenics rewrote social relations in biological terms, we would consider it essential to analyze the professional path and ideas of its main promoters. Thus, in the first part of this analytical approach, the attention was focused on the one who theorized and laid the foundations of the Romanian biopolitical and eugenic movement, namely the doctor Iuliu Moldovan, who through his fundamental works, "Hygiene of the Nation: "Eugenics" (1925) and "Biopolitics" (1926), outlined a holistic vision of the Romanian state, in which it had the role of coordinating the efforts to improve the health of the population. We set out to evaluate the impact of Iuliu Moldovan's ideas on the evolution of public health policy in interwar Romania.

In the second part of this chapter, the research was oriented on the Romanian eugenics movement in the interwar period and analyzes from the discourse point of view the arguments used in various articles that were published in a series of specialized journals. Such as *the "Buletinul Eugenic și Biopolitic", "Revista de Igienă Socială"*, but also popularization magazines or interwar press, such as "Societatea de Măine" or "Cuvântul", which contain explicit racist mentions of the Roma. In order to obtain a clearer picture of the eugenics movement, the work tried to portray the most radical Romanian eugenicists of the interwar period, through the prism of the publications and articles signed by them. The articles containing deep racist influences and considerations identified through the documentary research of the various archival funds within the Directorate of the Central National Historical Archives, the Bucharest County Service of the National Archives, the Library of the Romanian Academy and the National Council for the Study of the Security Archives were followed.

We considered that this chapter should be placed immediately after the one dedicated to the Roma movement, since this sequence allows us to analyze in contrast two diametrically

opposed approaches to modernization: a movement of modernization of the Roma through integration into the majority society and the movement of modernization, of forming a national state by eliminating elements considered "inferior" or "dysgenic".

Thus, we have tried to highlight the tensions and contradictions inherent in the social and eugenic policies of the time, a research approach used in this form to identify an answer to the question; *What kind of relationship is there between the two movements?* The second question to which our research approach tried to find an answer was: *whether the eugenic movement in the interwar period influenced in any way the decisions taken by the Antonescu regime to deport the Roma to the Transnistrian space located between the two rivers Nistru and Bug?*

The eugenics movement in the Romanian space was an intellectual movement that involved not only the involvement of specialists in the medical field. On the contrary, personalities from various fields such as sociology, statistics, demography, anthropology, philology and culture were involved, as well as actors from the political class, who promoted modern policies for building national identity. The ideas of Romanian eugenics were similar to those of other countries (such as the ideas of sterilization) because the vast majority of Romanian eugenicists had completed university studies and specialized in foreign countries with various grants and scholarships. The difference is that they had their own program to improve the "body of the nation", by introducing what is called biopolitics, an essential characteristic of nationalist eugenics specific to Romania.

For the Romanian eugenics movement, eugenics was the solution to the problems facing the Romanian population, such as: family protection, population decline, and ethnic and racial mixing. And so, the transformation of humanities such as medicine, sociology and anthropology into "national" sciences was aimed at supporting the state in its program to improve the health of the population but also to draw biological and cultural boundaries, in the idea of separating those considered Romanians by blood "*ius sanguinis*" - (the right of blood) from the "foreign" or even "enemy" elements of the Romanian nation.

Sabin Manuilă/ Manoilă (1894-1964), who shared the political views of the National Peasants' Party, doctor of medicine and demographer, specialized in statistics in the United States of America, for two years with a scholarship from the Rochefeller Institute, was also one of the most radical and virulent "*prophets*"²⁰ of the "threat" represented by the Roma for *the*

²⁰ M. Benjamin Thorne: Assimilation, invisibility, and the eugenic turn in the "Gypsy question" in Romanian society, 1938–1942, *Romani Studies* 5, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2011), p. 177–206

"*Romanian blood*" and the most influential in Antonescu's circle of advisors. He was the Director General of the Central Institute of Statistics and the coordinator of the first general census in 1930²¹ concerned with the "most acute racial problem" of Romania.

Another relevant eugenicist, but much more prolific in publications, was the anthropologist Iordache Făcăoaru (1897-1984), considered an important disciple of Iuliu Moldovan. He was a member of the Iron Guard²², with a doctorate in sociology from the University of Munich in 1933²³. Starting in 1934, he published works on racial superiority, impressed by the measures taken by the United States against black people, considered dysgenic. He also published in Dimitrie Gusti's magazine "*Romanian Sociology*", studies in which he showed his interest in the Roma, being the author of a eugenics course under the aegis of the Institute of Social Hygiene. In 1935, he published in the Eugenic and Bipolitical Bulletin, the article „*Criteriile pentru diagnoza rasială*”²⁴, where he defines the term race as a "biological notion" with reference to physical appearance. The author, based on measurements of the cephalic index and the shape of the skull, he classifies the European races into two main and secondary categories, the latter also including *the Indica race* in which the Roma had fallen.

In his opinion, the Roma had to be sterilized because they were "*dysgenic*", there were too many of them, they hid their ethnic origin and over time they "corrupted" with almost all European nations²⁵. Făcăoaru repeatedly proposed the forced sterilization of Roma, giving as an example the model already followed by other European states such as Czechoslovakia, Finland, Germany, including Japan, and recommended the adoption of sterilization legislation according to the Czechoslovak model. Through the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Biological Capital of the Nation, which included Iuliu Moldovan, Sabin Manuilă, Petru Râmneanțu and Gheorghe Banu, he succeeded in proposing „*Decretul lege pentru ocrotirea familiei*”, which provided for the mandatory sterilization of people with mental problems, in order to be adopted. Fortunately, the law was not published in the Official Gazette, given the decline of the Antonescu regime during World War II.

²¹ General Census of Population of 1930, Vol. II Nation, Mother Tongue, Religion, Part I. available at <https://ia801600.us.archive.org/1/items/recensamntulgene02inst/recensamntulgene02inst.pdf>, accessed on September 5, 2024

²² Vladimir Solonari, *The Purification of the Nation, Forced Population Dislocations and Ethnic Cleansing in Ion Antonescu's Romania, 1940-1944*. Ed. Polirom, 2015

²³ Marius Turda, *Eugenism and Modernity...*, p. 129-130.

²⁴ Iordache Făcăoaru, *Criteriile pentru diagnoza rasială*, *Buletinul eugenic și biopolitic*, vol. VI, nr. 10-11-12, 1935,

²⁵ Iordache Făcăoaru, „Înmulțirea disgenicilor și costul lor pentru societate și stat, în *Buletinul eugenic și Biopolitic*, vol. VI, nr. 4- 6, 1935, p. 182

Another eugenicist was the sociologist and anthropologist Gheorghe Făcăoaru, in the article *"The National State and the Minorities in Romania"*, published in 1938, in *Heroic Romania*²⁶, he described the Jews as a *"hotbed of corruption"* and the Roma as a *"hotbed of moral and sanitary infection"* in 1941, in an entire chapter called *"Pericolul asimilării țiganilor"*, published in the article *„Câteva date despre familie și statul biopolitic"* from *Buletinul eugenic și biopolitic din 1941*, clearly points out that the Roma are dysgenic and considers that it is necessary to destroy them.

Another supporter of negative eugenics, of the idea of sterilization was Traian Herseni (1907-1980) - sociologist, anthropologist, representative of the first generation of Dimitrie Gusti's Sociological School in Bucharest and secretary general at the Ministry of National Education, during the legionary government. He supported the idea of mandatory sterilization of the "inferior races" as Jews and Roma were considered and clearly mentioned this aspect in many published articles. For example, in *„Mitul sângelui"*²⁷, Herseni underlined the inequality of races and explained to the Romanian public that: *"science proves that people are not equal, that their qualities vary according to the race to which they belong. Some races are incapable of culture, others barely succeed in taking advantage of the culture of others, and very few are able to create a culture."*

Gheorghe Banu (1889-1957) hygienist and former Minister of Health in the Goga Government, he also edited a magazine, in fact, the main Romanian journal of medicine and social hygiene, *Revista de Igienă Socială* It operated from 1931 to 1944 and dealt with topics such as social diseases, venereal diseases, prostitution and alcoholism, demography and statistics, but also topics such as heredity and race, propaganda and education.

After these lines, three questions are answered: *Was the Romanian interwar eugenics movement an elitist and isolated one? Did the racist theories of eugenicists influence the decisions taken by the Antonescu regime against the Roma during the Second World War? Did the eugenics movement produce reverberations in the Romanian collective mind, contributing to the creation of a racist and hyperbolized image about the Roma?*

The Romanian eugenics movement developed in an intellectual, academic environment, but it was certainly not an isolated one. The specialists involved knew how to popularize their ideas through publications, debates in Parliament, magazines, brochures,

²⁶ Gheorghe Făcăoaru, *„Statul național și minoritățile din România"*, în *România Eroică*, Anul II, Nr. 2, June 1938

²⁷ Traian Herseni, *„Mitul sângelui"*, Cuvântul 17-1940

academic and public conferences, being perfectly aware of the penetrating force of what the press meant in the social sphere and the particularly important role in shaping public opinion.

The center of Romanian eugenics ideas was the family, which involved the creation of a program for the improvement of the nation (through marriage, reproduction and family) and a national program of social assistance. How is it more effective to protect and educate the family? By involving women, starting from the premise that if you educate a woman, you educate an entire family. The creation of the feminist biopolitics section within ASTRA allowed the family to be the embodiment of national vigor²⁸, for "*good mothers create superior human races*"²⁹.

We cannot fail to express the fact that personalities who at some point had a political activity were involved in the biopolitical and eugenics movement, both in the Council of Ministers and in ministries. Moreover, King Carol II proposed to the scientific and political elites to bring their contribution to what was intended to be the biological and social rebirth of the Romanian nation³⁰. The highest scientific society of the Royal Superior Council included none other than eugenicists Iuliu Moldovan, Dimitrie Gusti and Iuliu Hațieganu.

In a series of conclusions, we specify that the interwar public discourse, deeply loaded with racial, eugenic and biopolitical terms, which popularized theories regarding the physical, psychological and biological differences between human races and especially racial hierarchies (superior vs. inferior, eugenic vs. dysgenic), discourse that discouraged racial mixing by removing elements considered harmful and dysgenic. Obviously, this type of discourse was discriminatory against ethnic groups, which did not allow the existence of a homogeneous Romanian population, of a purely Romanian race, as was desired in the modern state, because the Jews were considered a "hotbed of corruption" and the Roma a "hotbed of moral and sanitary infection".

In the specific case of the Roma, although freed from a long slavery and with concerns for emancipation, these aspects were not enough for them to be part of the "body of the nation", on the contrary racial mixing was condemned, the Roma did not fit into what eugenicists called the "eugenic family". The Roma were despised, considered sub-humans, worthless for the modern Romanian state, seen as a real threat to the social order, in other words a "plague", an internal enemy.

²⁸ Turda Marius, Science and Ethnicity II Ed. Bucharest Municipality Museum, 2019

²⁹ See „Sănătatea și viața fericită”,(1937), în Știință și etnicitate II, Turda Marius, Ed. Muzeul Municipiului București, 2019, p.58

³⁰ See Fundația Culturală de Literatură și Artă Carol al II lea, which, through the Royal Foundations Magazine (1934-1947), also spread ideas about biopolitics, physical education, population growth, etc."

The interwar eugenics movement, through a systematic discourse, targeted the concepts of race, eugenics, biopolitics, a discourse delivered through publications and conferences, on several levels and through the involvement of specialists in various fields, found power and political support to influence the measures of deportation of Roma to Transnistria. What happened to the Roma after they became visible to the Romanian society? They became a target of the radical eugenicists of the eugenics movement. Moreover, the eugenic discourse had a profound impact on the imaginary, on the collective mind of the Romanian society, which transgressed time.

Thus, even in today's society, Roma are not considered as Romanians, or as belonging to the Romanian nation, they are still seen as "foreigners from within", they are still attributed a pathological racial specificity that contaminates Romanian society either biologically or culturally, an aspect that is extremely visible through the differentiated treatment they received during the recent Coronavirus pandemic.

In the fourth chapter of the paper is included a terminological analysis in the journals „Buletin Eugenic și Biopolitic” (1927-1947) și „Revista de igienă socială” (1931-1944) through tabular and graphical representations with the help of numerical data processing techniques. The terms analyzed were: "eugenics, social hygiene, race, gypsies, Jews, sterilization, biopolitics". In order to classify the analyzed terms, the hierarchical agglomerative grouping method (Minkowski Method and Bray-Curtis Difference) was applied. The data were presented as the frequency of these terms over the period 1927-1947. The terminological analysis through the numerical data processing technique allowed us to elaborate a series of conclusions: The first conclusion is that in „Buletinul eugenic și biopolitic”, The data show that between 1927 and 1947, there was significant interest in topics related to eugenics, social hygiene, race, and sterilization. Frequent mentions of Jews and Roma at certain times also indicate periods of scrutiny and intensified discrimination against these groups. The term "race" was the most frequently mentioned in the years under review, reflecting society's interest and concerns about racial classifications and their implications for public and scientific policy. Each cluster provides insight into how certain ideas have been used to justify discriminatory social interventions and policies, having profound consequences for different ethnic and social groups.

The second conclusion is that in Revista de igienă socială, the data showed that during the period 1931 - 1944, There was significant interest in topics related to eugenics, social hygiene, race, and sterilization. These trends reflect broader social and scientific concerns for public health, racial theories, and population control in the first half of the twentieth century.

Frequent mentions of Jews and Roma at certain times also indicate periods of scrutiny and intensified discrimination against these groups.

The third conclusion is that the clusters presented reflect the complex associations between social and biological terms and concepts, highlighting how racial and eugenic ideologies influenced the policies and discourses of the period 1931-1944. Cluster 1 emphasizes the intersection of race, social hygiene, and eugenics, showing how these ideas have been used to justify interventions on populations. Cluster 2 emphasizes the importance of social hygiene as a distinct area of public policy, essential for protecting the health and well-being of the population.

In the fifth chapter, called "Anti-Roma Racism", which concludes our research approach, there is a chapter dedicated to racism against Roma in the present day, trying to identify reverberations of the eugenics movement in the Romanian space. For this approach, European reports and studies focused on discrimination, racism and inequalities, court decisions and decisions of the National Council for Combating Discrimination in cases of discrimination on ethnic grounds were used. For this work we thought that an insider perspective is also necessary, so that the voices of the Roma themselves are heard, through the problems they encounter, through the description of some experiences of people who are not exactly pleasant (traumatic even), lived only because they bear the "guilt" of being born Roma and we have chosen to conclude this chapter with a series of 11 semi-structured (qualitative) interviews on a randomly chosen sample from the Roma ethnicity.

In conclusion, we can say that over time a multitude of definitions of these concepts have been written, but if we still try to define what racism or race is, we can say that it is evil that opposes good, an ideology, a doctrine, a belief³¹ which is based on the consideration that some individuals belong to so-called "superior" races (the white race) and other individuals are considered to be part of races seen as "inferior" (the black race). Starting from this consideration, through the racialization of the Other (Different) through power/political relations and inhumanization³², the latter are placed in a relationship of inequality, socially, economically, culturally disadvantaged, etc.

Racism is one of the most serious consequences of biopolitics/biopower, a phenomenon that goes beyond the legal concept of discrimination, and discrimination (a contravention that can be sanctioned/fined!) as a visible effect of racism, is in itself a special form of affront to human dignity.

In our approach, we tried to find answers to the questions from which we started this research approach, either through archival documents, reports, studies developed by European institutions, research by authors of great notoriety and even through testimonies of people belonging to the Roma community, reported in the series of interviews.

In our journey through history, but also following the answers received during the interviews, we were able to observe the fact that the Roma were subjected to different and multiple forms of oppression and injustice.

³¹ See the definition provided by the *American Heritage College Dictionary*.

³² See Leyens, Jacques-Philippe; Cortes, Brezo; Demoulin, Stéphanie; Dovidio, John F .; Fiske, Susan T .; Gaunt, Ruth; Paladino, Maria-Paola; Rodriguez-Perez, Armando; Rodriguez-Torres, Ramon; Vaes, Jeroen (noiembrie 2003). „Prejudicată emoțională, esențialism și naționalism *Lectura Tajfel din 2002*”, *European Journal of Social Psychology*.. 33 (6): 703–717. doi:10.1002 / ejsp.170

Thus, the most frequent manifestations of anti-Roma racism, regardless of how it is called AntiGypsyism/Romaphobia are: prejudices and stereotypes, hate speech, discrimination at all levels (individual, institutional), forced evictions, abuses and violence by the police and law enforcement bodies against Roma, school and residential segregation, forced sterilization of Roma women, assimilation policies (prohibition of the use of traditional costumes, of language, etc.), the policies of ethnic cleansing, the deportations and extermination of the Roma, the Holocaust and its subsequent denial, the lack of information on literature, culture and history in the educational curriculum, the lack of institutions representing the Roma in art, culture, research and the list can remain open and last but not least the daily micro-aggressions of subtle racism.

In the special case of the Roma, a European national minority, an argument for which this analysis pleads is an urgent correction of public policies for the Roma, with the idea of including real measures to firmly combat anti-Roma racism. Combating prejudice against Roma requires a multidimensional approach. In addition to education, public policies are needed to promote social inclusion and provide Roma with equal access to resources. The media and civic organisations also have a crucial role to play in promoting a positive image of the Roma community.

What could the Roma themselves do? How to fight the injustices they face in their daily lives? Well, the answers formulated by the interviewees underlined mostly the same directions and means of work in combating discrimination and racism: the educational field (by introducing the study of the subjects covered in class and the elements on the Holocaust and Roma Slavery, studied by all students, not just by the Roma), the cultural field through artistic and literary creations with the role of information-awareness as well as militant, and the political field, the active involvement of the Roma nation in representation and political approaches that directly concern it, because the creation of a political nation also means a responsible nation.

The deep wounds inflicted by a century and a half of eugenics demand urgent healing. This implies not only the public recognition of those wronged in the past, but also the firm condemnation of discriminatory practices that persist today. Eugenic thinking, although hidden, continues to influence us, fueling racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination. To build a more equitable society, it is crucial to continuously educate about the dark legacies of eugenics and fight for real change.

This study can be a first step towards creating a lobby that supports the introduction and study of new subjects such as the study of the history of eugenics in schools and the legacies

of eugenics, an essential step to prevent the repetition of such atrocities and to form a generation with critical thinking and aware of the dangers of extremist ideologies that publicly condemn even the finest slippages of political powers that can undermine human dignity and fundamental human rights.

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