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Unity in Diversity

Latin Eugenic Narratives in Europe, c. 1910s-1930s

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Unity in Diversity. Latin Eugenic Narratives in Europe, c. 1910s-1930s. This article discusses the development of Latin eugenics in Europe between 1910s and 1930s, with a special focus on France, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Romania. During this period, Latin eugenics offered a progressive programme of social and medical reform, alongside pronatalist campaigns to educate the population about the importance of large and healthy families. Latin eugenics was premised on a number of theories and ideas developed since the early 1900s, particularly in France and Italy, including *puériculture* and biotypology, and on its opposition to birth control, compulsory sterilization and Nazi racism. Considering the current revival in eugenic studies across Europe and elsewhere it is important to engage with other eugenic traditions than the ones recurrently invoked in the scholarship. The history of Latin eugenics in Europe provides a much needed revision of conventional interpretations of eugenics that focused predominantly on Anglo-American and German experiences.

Keywords: Latin eugenics – Catholicism – Biotypology – Anti-racism.

«The fundamental principle of eugenics is simple. Just think of the dominant idea put forward by Ferrero in his book on Latin culture»¹. For the Belgian doctor and biologist, Edouard Willems (1869-1949), an allegiance to Latinity – defined by the Italian historian Guglielmo Ferrero (1871-1942) as the «grand traditions of Latin culture»² – had a profound and reverberating influence on the principles of the modern eugenic policy, moulded equally by the science of heredity and the ancient

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¹ E. Willems, *La politique eugénique*, «Revue d'eugénique», 19, 1924. It is very likely that the book Willems refers here to is Guglielmo Ferrero, *Grandezza e Decadenza di Roma* (5 voll. 1901-1907), translated into English as *The Greatness and Decline of Rome*, 2 voll., New York, Putnam's Sons, 1907.

² G. Ferrero, *Characters and Events in Roman History: From Caesar to Nero. The Lowell Lectures of 1908*, New York, Putnam's Sons, 1909, p. 259.

Roman ideals of a healthy and numerous family. During the early 1920s, Willems' interpretation of eugenics may have seemed less scientific to some; he did highlight the affinities with Latin culture, but did not, however, devalue the major contribution made by science to the progress of eugenics. Eugenics, he claimed, was based on science but could be better explained to the general public as a theory of human improvement if it was also understood within its cultural and historical context.

This commitment to a universal Latin culture, based on the notion of a common historical and intellectual heritage, is crucial in understanding the profound impact of Latin eugenics in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century. Ancient Rome was not only a source for literary inspiration and cultural renewal, but also a model for racial harmony, thus providing a flattering precedent for the new Latin ecumenism promoted culturally by France and politically by Italy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries⁵. In this context, Latinity, as noted by W. Martin Bloomer, was «both the medium of culture and culture itself»⁴.

As an aspiring methodology devised to control heredity and the environment in such a way as to improve the biological and social quality of human populations, eugenics was an influential academic tradition in a number of Latin countries across Europe and the Americas during the first half of the twentieth century, leaving a lasting legacy on these countries' demographic and family policies, preventive medicine, social hygiene and public health. Yet, Latin eugenics in Europe remains poorly researched. In the early 1990s scholars, such as William W. Schneider and Nancy L. Stepan, had made precisely this historiographic claim, presenting in their work a much needed revision of conventional interpretations of eugenics that focused predominantly on Anglo-American and German experiences⁵.

Succeeding scholars, particularly those interested in the history of eugenics across countries in Latin America, have enriched Stepan's pioneering work, opening up new areas of research⁶. By contrast, much less attention, has been paid to Latin coun-

⁵ In his lecture on Roman history delivered at the Lowell Institute in Boston in 1908, Guglielmo Ferrero spoke of the «cosmopolitan universality of Roman history», which «the Latin races ought to defend with all their might». See G. Ferrero, *Characters and Events in Roman History*, cit., p. 257.

⁴ W. Martin Bloomer, *Latinity and Literary Society of Rome*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, p. 1.

⁵ W.H. Schneider, *Quality and Quantity. The Quest for Biological Regeneration in 20th Century France*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990 and N.L. Stepan, *"The Hour of Eugenics". Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America*, Ithaca-London, Cornell University Press, 1991. Another line of inquiry focussed on the Darwinist anthropologist G. Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1956), who popularised Francis Galton's eugenic theories in France at the end of the nineteenth century. See Pierre-André Taguieff, *L'introduction de l'eugénisme en France: du mot à l'idée*, «Mots», 1991, 26.

⁶ From a vast literature see A.G. González, R.Á. Peláez, *En busca de la raza perfecta. Eugenesia e higiene en Cuba, 1898-1958*, Madrid, CSIC, 1999; M. Miranda, G. Vallejo, *Darwinismo social y eugenesia en el mundo latino*, Buenos Aires, Siglo Veintiuno de Argentina Editores, 2005; A.H. Reggiani, *Dépopulation, fascisme et eugénisme "latin" dans l'Argentine des années trente*, «Le Mouvement Social», 2010, 1; G. Vallejo, M. Miranda, *Iglesia católica y eugenesia latina: un constructo teórico para el control social (Argentina, 1924-1958)*,

tries in Europe, notwithstanding a number of standard works published on French, Italian, Portuguese and Romanian eugenics⁷, alongside the first comparative history of Latin eugenics, published in 2014⁸. Moreover, there is growing recognition that Latin eugenicists, such as Nicola Pende, Gregorio Marañon, Agostino Gemelli and Corrado Gini, have something to offer to current debates on gender, sex, family and population⁹. Finally, there is a need also for a critical reassessment of certain key episodes in the history of Latin eugenics, such as the First Congress of Latin Eugenics, held in Paris in 1937, which is often misunderstood or poorly treated in existing scholarship on international eugenics¹⁰.

In this article I aim to contribute to this growing and innovative literature, by focussing on a number of Latin eugenic narratives, as they developed in Europe between 1910s and 1930s. During this period, eugenics emerged in Latin countries, such as France, Italy, Belgium, Romania, Spain and Portugal, as a composite movement, espousing the optimistic mentality of modern science, whilst at the same time underpinning ideas of renewal and nation-building¹¹. The realm of a shared Latin culture, in turn, provided a platform upon which some eugenicists, demographers, social hygienists and child welfare activists in these countries built their theories of a distinctive form of eugenics, serving the cultural and historical particularities of their own societies. For them, a Latin version of eugenics appeared to offer a progressive programme of social and medical reform, alongside pronatalist campaigns to educate the population about the importance of large and healthy families.

This is not to say, however, that Latin eugenics was a homogenous movement. It manifested itself in different ways in different Latin countries in Europe; nevertheless certain commonalities can be established between them. Firstly, Latin eugenics drew

«Asclepio», 2014, 2; E.G. Junior, *Gymnastics, Hygiene and Eugenics in Brazil at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*, «The International Journal of the History of Sport», 2014, 10; and S. Walsh, “One of the Most Uniform Races of the Entire World”: Creole Eugenics and the Myth of Chilean Racial Homogeneity, «Journal of the History of Biology», 2015, 4.

⁷ See, for example, F. Cassata, *Building the New Man. Eugenics, Racial Science and Genetics in Twentieth-Century Italy*, Budapest, CEU Press, 2011; R. Cleminson, *Catholicism, Race and Empire. Eugenics and Portugal, 1900-1950*, Budapest, CEU Press, 2014; M. Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002; and M. Turda, Romania, in M. Turda (ed.), *The History of East-Central European Eugenics, 1900-1945. Sources and Commentaries*, London, Bloomsbury, 2015.

⁸ M. Turda, A. Gillette, *Latin Eugenics in Comparative Perspective*, London, Bloomsbury, 2014.

⁹ As illustrated by the on-going research of scholars such as Ramón Castejón Bolea, Kurt MacMillan, Chiara Beccalossi, Nora E. Jaffary and Luc Berlivet.

¹⁰ Nancy Stepan, for example, notes that the «Congress was hardly a Latin American affair. It was, in effect, the last gasp of a French tradition of eugenics». See N. Stepan, “The Hour of Eugenics”, cit., p. 192. For her, Latin eugenics is almost synonymous with Latin American eugenics; alas, Stepan does not discuss the contribution of other Latin eugenicists, such as the Romanians, for instance.

¹¹ As clearly documented by Maria Bucur in her *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002. The political context associated with Latin eugenics, namely fascism, is widely studied. See, for example, M.S. Quine, *Racial “Sterility” and “Hyperfecundity” in Fascist Italy: Biological Politics of Sex and Reproduction*, «Fascism», 2015, 2.

sustenance mostly from French, Spanish and Italian achievements in medical and social sciences. Secondly, it possessed a specific cultural identity, based on its appropriation of Latinity and, equally important, of the religious (Catholic) environment these countries had developed for centuries. Finally, there was unanimity amongst Latin eugenicists as to their criticism of compulsory sterilization, birth control, abortion and, last but not least, racism, particularly in the form embraced by German eugenicists after 1933.

Eugenicists in Latin countries engaged with these eugenic practices, whilst expressing concern with the alleged social and biological degeneration threatening their countries' future. Yet contrary to most eugenicists in Germany, the USA, Britain and the Scandinavian countries, Latin eugenicists generally described their work less in terms of limiting certain individuals from reproduction with the presumed aim of improving and strengthening the race and more as a medical programme affecting all individuals that constituted the nation based on interventionist policies of positive eugenics, social hygiene and public health¹². In writing about Latin eugenics, scientists in France, Italy, Spain or Romania tended to overemphasise the (Catholic) compassion and (ethnic) harmony of their cultures in stark contrast to the (Protestant) individualism and racial responsiveness prevalent in Anglo-Saxon and Nordic countries.

By the mid-1930s, Latin eugenic arguments took a firm hold in the international debate over the introduction of radical measures, such as compulsory sterilization, to regulate the health of individuals and nations¹³. While some of the scientific elements of this debate reinforced wider disagreements about genetic determinism, the role of the environment and education and the mechanisms of human heredity, others also reflected cultural differences, with religion – Catholicism especially – playing an important role. With the introduction of the Sterilization Law of 1933 in Nazi Germany, the deliberate pursuit of a racial utopia based on eugenic principles had become more explicit, as scientific experts and politicians around the world increasingly proclaimed the biological quality and quantity of the population as objectives of national politics¹⁴.

All eugenicists agreed on the need to restrain the reproduction of those with «undesirable hereditary traits», whilst simultaneously encouraging the reproduction of those with «superior hereditary traits». However, they disagreed over which eugenic measures were deemed practical, efficient and moral, from an ethical and religious point of view. As is known, most eugenicists in Germany, Britain, the USA and the Scandinavian countries promoted voluntary and compulsory sterilization as well as

¹² P.-A. Rosental, *Destins de l'eugénisme*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 2016.

¹³ M. Turda, A. Gillette, *Latin Eugenics*, cit., pp. 103-128 and N. Stepan, “*The Hour of Eugenics*”, cit., pp. 171-192.

¹⁴ S. Kühl, *For the Betterment of the Race. The Rise and Fall of the International Movement for Eugenics and Racial Hygiene*, trans. by L. Schofer, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 91-117.

segregation of those «hereditarily diseased». By contrast, eugenicists in Latin countries (with a few notable exceptions) argued mostly for introduction of premarital health certificates, health education, population growth, biotypological research of human constitutions, together with the establishment of medical and social institutions designed to encourage family and child protection. Thus, while sterilization emerged as a defining principle of the so-called Anglo-Saxon (particularly American) and Nordic (German and Scandinavian) eugenics, its public condemnation, conversely, became a prominent feature of Latin eugenics in Europe and elsewhere.

It is important to note, also, that, as a corollary to the rejection of sterilization, a eugenic ideal co-existed with the notion of a shared Latin culture based on the religious argument that a healthy society could be achieved as much through respecting the sanctity of human life as through positive improvements in the population's hereditary health and living conditions, public sanitation and education. As a result, Latin eugenic narratives were endowed from the outset with a double assignment: to promote the image of a foundational Latin culture and to create a unifying scientific movement whose content was an eclectic mixture of strategies, some qualitative and quantitative, devised to help improve the health of the population, both in current and future generations. In what follows, I discuss some of these narratives, hoping to provide sufficient arguments to illustrate the need for a reassessment of the importance of Latin eugenics within its European and global contexts.

«Nothing else» but Puériculture

It was the French obstetrician Adolphe Pinard and his notion of *puériculture* that first indicated the emergence of a complementary eugenic tradition to those established by Francis Galton and Charles Davenport in England and the USA, and by Alfred Ploetz and Jon Alfred Mjøen in Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Already in his 1899 article *De la conservation et de l'amélioration de l'espèce*, Pinard proposed an all-encompassing programme of medical eugenics based on «*puériculture* before procreation»¹⁵. The task of *puériculture* was to determine the means to conserve and improve the human species equally through parent selection prior to conception, and through proper maternal and childcare after birth¹⁶.

The combination of social protection and maternal and child care through improvements in living and working conditions remained a constant for much Latin eugenic activity, and not only in France where an *Institut de Puériculture* was inaugurated in 1911. The evolving concept of *puériculture* partly mirrored and partly

¹⁵ A. Pinard, *De la conservation et de l'amélioration de l'espèce*, «Bulletin Médical», 1899, 13.

¹⁶ A. Pinard, *De la puériculture*, Lyon, Imprimeries Réunies, 1908. See also W.H. Schneider, *Puériculture, and the Style of French Eugenics*, «History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences», 1986, 2 and M. Turda, A. Gillette, *Latin Eugenics*, cit., p. 33.

fashioned the increasing flexibility of Latin eugenics in other European countries, as it offered a more dynamic approach to individual health within social hygiene, preventive medicine and public health¹⁷. At the same time, *puériculture* offered a neo-Lamarckist philosophy of infant and maternal care. In concrete eugenic terms, this meant opposition to the hereditary determinism that fuelled most of the Anglo-American, German and Scandinavian rhetoric on human improvement¹⁸.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, many eugenicists across the world, particularly in Germany, Britain, the USA and the Scandinavian countries, became advocates of Mendelian genetics, which reinforced many of the suppositions about the hereditary determinants of social and biological degeneration. Yet, committed to their environmentalism and neo-Lamarckism most Latin eugenicists embraced this new scientific theory of inheritance with prudence. Some of them, Catholic-minded as they were, also chided intervention in and control of human heredity that most Mendelian eugenicists were keen to promote.

During the 1910s, however, these differences were less firmly grounded in distinct scientific arguments, as demonstrated by the First International Eugenics Congress held in London in July 1912. The time, the American biologist Raymond Pearl remarked after the congress, «was ripe for a full discussion of eugenic problems as they appear in different civilizations and communities»¹⁹. Latin countries (France, Belgium, Spain and Italy) were represented by a wide range of scientists, including zoologists such as Frédéric Houssay; demographers such as Lucien March and Corrado Gini; physicians such as Georges Schreiber, Eugène Apert, Norbert Ensch, Ignacio Valentí Vivó and Enrico Morselli; political economists such as Achille Loria; sociologists such as Alfredo Niceforo; and, finally, anthropologists such as Vincenzo Giuffrida-Ruggeri.

French and Belgian participants approached eugenics through *puériculture*, hygiene education and neo-Lamarckian theories of heredity. Such a strategy reveals a prudent commitment to ideas of human eugenics through selection and the control of reproduction. Additionally, there was, particularly amongst the French delegation, hesitancy towards considering Francis Galton's work on eugenics as innovative and path-breaking as his supporters (and some scholars of eugenics²⁰) claimed it to be. In the paper submitted to the congress, Pinard, for instance, went as far as to describe Galton's definition of eugenics – namely «the science having for its object the study of the causes subject to social control which can improve or impair the racial qualities

¹⁷ G. Hardy, *Eugénie, puériculture*, «Le Néo-Malthusien», 1919, 5.

¹⁸ A. Carol, *Histoire de l'eugénisme en France. Les médecins et la procréation XIX-XX siècle*, Paris, Seuil, 1995.

¹⁹ R. Pearl, *The First International Eugenics Congress*, «Science», 926, 1912.

²⁰ See D. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics. Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*, New York, Knopf, 1985.

of future generations, whether physical or mental» – as «nothing else» but *puériculture*²¹.

Others were, however, more restrained. The Belgian sociologist Louis Querton spoke of «the eugenic ideal anticipated by Galton», although he interpreted it in neo-Lamarckist terms, asserting the importance of family education, child welfare and social environment. «[T]o be efficient and to really favour the perfecting of the individual, and the amelioration of the race», Querton believed, «the control of the development ought to be extended to all children and to be prolonged during the whole period of their development»²². Similarly, the Italian psychiatrist Antonio Marro, looked at social environment and the age of the parents in order to explain certain behavioural patterns in children²³, whilst the French biologist Frédéric Houssay use neo-Lamarckism to question the application of eugenic sterilization. What was needed he argued, was first «to enlighten ourselves on the origin and perpetuation of defects by heredity», and not to discount «the principles on which rest the Lamarckian doctrines»²⁴.

Such views were also expressed with respect to the much-debated causes of physical and mental degeneration. German eugenicists at the Congress, such as physicians Alfred Ploetz and Agnes Blum, discussed it in terms of racial hereditarianism, a perspective criticised by Italian and French eugenicists who emphasised the importance of social and economic factors. The Italian criminologist Alfredo Niceforo, for instance, suggested that it was poverty and social misfortune that contributed to the degeneration of the «lower classes» and not their genetic endowment²⁵. In accordance with this argument, the future leader of the Latin eugenic movement, the Italian demographer Corrado Gini used statistical investigations of differential fertility to demonstrate the importance of social and biological improvement. He too interpreted eugenics in neo-Lamarckist terms, defining it as «the improvement of the environment in which the reproducers live and their offspring develop undoubtedly has beneficial effects upon the human race»²⁶. Finally, the importance of neo-Lamarckism in relation to social worth, fertility and pronatalism was re-asserted by the French demographer Lucien March, who endeavoured to demonstrate «the influence on fertility of social status,

²¹ A. Pinard, *Considérations générales sur “la puériculture” avant la procréation*, in *Problems in Eugenics. Papers communicated to the First International Eugenics Congress, held at the University of London, July 24th to 30th, 1912*, London, The Eugenics Education Society, 1912, p. 458.

²² L. Querton, *The Practical Organisation of Eugenic Action*, *ibidem*, pp. 147-150.

²³ A. Marro, *The Influence of the Age of the Parents upon the Psycho-physical Characters of the Children*, *ibidem*, pp. 118-136.

²⁴ F. Houssay, *Eugenics Selection and the Origin of Defects*, *ibidem*, p. 160. See also M. Turda, A. Gillette, *Latin Eugenics*, cit., pp. 42-45.

²⁵ A. Niceforo, *The Cause of the Inferiority of Physical and Mental Characters in the Lower Social Classes*, *ibidem*, p. 194.

²⁶ C. Gini, *The Contributions of Demography to Eugenics*, *ibidem*, p. 296.

social surroundings, and income». Moreover, he keenly insisted on the eugenic study of «populations» rather than «races»²⁷.

It was during and after the First International Eugenics Congress in London that the Latin opposition to racial determinism and ideas of racial superiority first manifested itself. As pondered by Louis Simon in his doctoral dissertation in medicine published in 1913: «were the eugenic ideas put forward by the Anglo-Saxons [at the congress] incompatible with our Latin mentality?»²⁸. This question was to be asked repeatedly during the following two decades, but, at the time, «Anglo-Saxon» and «Latin» interpretations of eugenics were seen as complementary rather than opposing terms. The congress in London allowed for the formulation of an incipient Latin eugenic narrative based on *puériculture*, demography and social statistics, whilst at the same time encouraging the French, Italian and Belgian scientists to consider the establishment of their own national eugenic societies, following the British and German models. The first to be established was the French Eugenics Society (*Société française d'eugénique*) in December 1912 at the Faculty of Medicine in Paris. The neo-Lamarckist biologist Edmond Perrier, Director of the Museum of Natural History, was elected President, together with Vice-Presidents Frédéric Houssay, Adolphe Pinard and Charles Richet. Lucien March was appointed Secretary²⁹. Just a few months earlier, in neighbouring Belgium, sociologist Emile Waxweiler had formed a eugenic «working group» (*Cellule Eugénique*) at the Institut de Sociologie Solvay in Brussels. It included paediatrician Ovide Decroly, social hygienist Norbert Ensich and Louis Querton³⁰. And, finally, a short-lived Committee of Eugenic Studies (*Comitato Italiano per gli studi di Eugénica*) was established within the Roman Society for Anthropology in November 1913. Giuseppe Sergi was President, with psychiatrist Sante de Sanctis Vice-President and psychologist Francesco Umberto Saffiotti Secretary³¹.

The establishment of these societies highlighted the need for eugenic research on such topics as *puériculture*, social worth, the role of the environment, demographic growth and differential fertility of various social classes, all of which to receive further elaboration from Latin eugenicists in the following decade. At the time, for the majority of Latin eugenicists in Europe, preventive medicine and public health worked together with and not against eugenic ideas for human improvement. In the words of the Spanish eugenicist Ignacio Valentí y Vivó, eugenics involved an all-encompassing programme of «national health» («sanidad nacional»), based as much on an under-

²⁷ L. March, *The Fertility of Marriages According to Profession and Social Position*, *ibidem*, pp. 208-220.

²⁸ L. Simon, *L'eugénique. Ses rapports avec la psychiatrie. Thèse pour le doctorat en médecine*, Bordeaux, Imprimerie Moderne, 1913, p. 11.

²⁹ *Fondation d'une Société française d'Eugénique*, «La Presse Médicale», 1913, 44.

³⁰ M.-T. Nisot, *La question eugénique dans les divers pays*, vol. 2, Brussels, Librairie Falk fils, 1929, p. 117.

³¹ *Italians take up Eugenics*, «The Journal of Heredity», 1914, 138.

standing of environmental determinants of illness as on the education of doctors and the general public about the burden of disease⁵².

A Latin eugenic narrative was gradually taking shape in Europe by the mid-1910s, based equally on scientific networks, and on a particularly distinct form of cultural and linguistic internationalism, with France and Italy in leading positions. Latin eugenics was yet to be defined in opposition to other theories of human improvement which stressed the immutability of heredity and afforded little to the role of the environment in reversing social and biological degeneration. It was World War I that changed eugenic rhetoric and practice dramatically, both nationally and internationally, accentuating scientific differences and emphasising cultural incompatibility between nations⁵³. During and especially after 1918, deep-seated concerns with the quality of the population would become pivotal instruments for those scientists in Latin countries who attempted to protect the nation's health not through negative but through positive eugenics and the adoption of projects of public health, social hygiene and preventive medicine.

Maternity and Demographic Growth

Latin eugenics benefitted immensely from the victory of the Entente Powers in World War I. All Latin countries fought together against a common enemy (Germany and Austro-Hungary), and this shared experience deepened their existing cultural, linguistic and religious affinities. A sense of collective historical destiny was widely felt as the Latin countries embarked on post-war reconstruction and nation-building (as in the case of Italy and Romania).

As before the war, French and Italian eugenicists were at the forefront of Latin internationalism in science and politics, but during the 1920s eugenicists in other Latin countries in Europe, such as Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and Romania, began to enjoy a growing reputation, both nationally and internationally. The Italian Society of Genetics and Eugenics (*Società Italiana di Genetica ed Eugénica*) was established immediately after the war, in March 1919, with Ernesto Pestalozza, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Rome, as President and demographer Corrado Gini as Vice-President. Zoologist Cesare Artom served as Secretary and statistician Marcello Boldrini as Vice-Secretary. It was followed by the creation of the Belgian Society of Eugenics (*Société Belge d'Eugénique*), in September 1919 with zoologist George Albert Boulenger as President and physician Albert Govaerts as Secretary. Other prominent members included social hygienist and founder of the Belgian Association of Social Medicine (*Association Belge de Médecine Sociale*)

⁵² I.V. y Vivó, *La sanidad nacional: eugenesia y biometría*, Barcelona, La Neotopia, 1910.

⁵³ M. Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 40-63.

René Sand and criminologist Louis Vervaeck. Emulating its French counterpart, the Belgian Society of Eugenics endeavoured to combine education and research with a practical program, centred on the «physiological, intellectual and moral amelioration of the human race and more especially [of] the Belgian nation»⁵⁴. Indeed, a National Eugenics Office (*Office National d'Eugénique*) opened in June 1922 in Brussels, focussing on education, social hygiene, family and puériculture⁵⁵. When the Belgian Society for Preventive Medicine and Eugenics (*Société Belge de Médecine Préventive et d'Eugénique*) was established in August 1929, it re-asserted the importance of hygiene and public health⁵⁶.

The growing internationalism of Latin eugenics after World War I was confirmed by the presence of French, Belgian, Italian and Spanish participants at the Second International Congress of Eugenics held in New York between 22 and 28 September 1921. Albert Govaerts was appointed Secretary of the Permanent International Eugenics Committee at the congress (renamed The International Federation of Eugenic Organizations in 1925). It was he who subsequently arranged for the next meeting of the Committee to be held in Brussels in October 1922⁵⁷. Concomitantly, the Belgian Society of Eugenics organized a series of public meetings and lectures under the name of «international eugenic days» (7-11 October), with the French eugenicists Lucien March, Eugène Apert and Adolphe Pinard as speakers⁵⁸. Another occasion was the meeting of the Belgian Eugenics Society held in February 1926, which was attended by Georges Schreiber. Belgian eugenicists René Sand and Albert Govaerts returned the favour by participating at the French Eugenics Society's public conferences organised at the Social Museum (*Musée Social*) in Paris in May and June 1926. The French leadership during the 1920s, augmented by the prestige enjoyed by French culture and science in the Latin countries of Europe, was gradually coupled with a new political vocabulary in the form of a fascist discourse of renewal and health that emerged at the time in Italy. Therefore, when the First Congress of Social Eugenics (*Primo Congresso Italiano di Eugenetica Sociale*) was organised in September 1924 in Milan⁵⁹, the aim was to draw attention to the Italian scientists' contribution to the burgeoning science of heredity and eugenics but, equally important, to emphasize the role played by the Latin and Catholic cultures in shaping the emerging pronatalist agenda of the newly instituted fascism regime of Benito Mussolini⁴⁰.

⁵⁴ *Belgian Society of Eugenics*, «Eugenical News», 1920, 5. See also M. Turda, A. Gillette, *Latin Eugenics*, cit., pp. 68-69.

⁵⁵ *National Office of Eugenics in Belgium*, «Eugenical News», 1922, 7.

⁵⁶ *Society for Preventive Medicine and Eugenics*, «Eugenical News», 1929, 14.

⁵⁷ *International Commission of Eugenics*, «Eugenical News», 1922, 7.

⁵⁸ E. Apert, *Les Journées Eugéniques Internationales de Bruxelles et la fondation de la Ligue Nationale Belge contre le Péril Vénérien*, «Paris Médical», 1922, 322-325.

⁵⁹ For a detailed discussion of the Congress see F. Cassata, *Building the New Man*, cit., pp. 147-58.

⁴⁰ See R. Maiocchi, *Scienza italiana e razzismo fascista*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1999.

A number of prominent non-Latin eugenicists attended the congress, including Leonard Darwin, President of the Eugenics Education Society; Jon Alfred Mjøen, Director of the Winderen Laboratory in Oslo; Nikolai K. Koltsov, President of the Russian Eugenics Society; and Søren Hansen, a Danish anthropologist. Italian participants such as Agostino Gemelli argued against interventionist practices to control and manage human reproduction, pointing out the lack of scientific consensus about the nature of hereditary traits and the causes of physical and mental defects. There was also disagreement over the practical use of eugenic sterilization, with American, Scandinavian and British eugenicists, such as Leonard Darwin and Cora B. S. Hodson, General Secretary of the International Federation of Eugenics Organizations, insisting on it as a means to reduce the number of those deemed «dysgenic». Italian eugenicists, in turn, argued that such a measure was medically ineffective and morally problematic. Gynaecologist Ernesto Pestalozzi was one of those who had serious reservations about the efficacy of eugenic sterilization for the improvement of the race. There was no doubt, he argued, that if sterilization enabled eugenicists «to cancel out, or at least to limit, the hereditary transmission of hereditary diseases that threatened the race, then its adoption would be justified». Instead, Pestalozza proposed a «Latin» approach to human improvement, combining preventive medicine, «the new science of eugenics», and social hygiene, so that the «benefits of hygiene that we are able to offer to the individual and society are extended to the race»⁴¹.

Building on social hygiene, moral education, sanitation and preventive medicine, Belgian and Italian eugenicists provided a model that eugenicists in other Latin countries in Europe, such as the Romanians, found inspiring. The creation of Greater Romania in 1918 prompted Romanian health officials, medical and social experts to engage in an unprecedented program of institutionalization in the field of eugenics, social hygiene, and public health. Pinard's programme of *puériculture*, for instance, was considered one successful eugenic strategy of «racial protection and improvement»⁴². For advocates of *puériculture*, such as paediatrician Gheorghe Popovici, the application of eugenics in Romania necessitated not only the adoption of a new biopolitical governing philosophy, but also a national welfare programme centred on the protection of the family⁴³. To this effect, in 1925 a Medical and Biopolitical Section (*Secția medicală și biopolitică*) was established in Cluj, affiliated to the Institute of Hygiene and Social Hygiene. Iuliu Hațieganu, Professor of Medicine at the University of Cluj,

⁴¹ E. Pestalozza, *Le operazioni operatorie in rapporto all'eugenica*, in *Atti del Primo Congresso italiano di Eugenetica Sociale, Milano, 20-23 settembre 1924 Roma*, Roma, Stabilimento Poligrafico per l'Amministrazione dello Stato, 1927, pp. 81, 85. See also M. Turda, A. Gillette, *Latin Eugenics*, cit., p. 88 and F. Cassata, *Building the New Man*, cit., pp. 155-156.

⁴² A. Voinea, *Aspecte demografice*, «Societate de Măine», luglio, 1924.

⁴³ G. Popoviciu, *Biopolitica, puericultura și schimbarea de sistem în conducerea statului*, «Societate de Măine», 15 dicembre 1928.

was President, with Iuliu Moldovan, Professor of Hygiene and Social Hygiene at the same university, as Vice-President and dermatologist Aurel Voina as Secretary. This section had, in turn, created a «sub-section for eugenics and biopolitics», Romania's first eugenic society. It promoted the protection of mothers and infants, family morality, and the spread of hygienic education⁴⁴. There was now an official eugenic movement in Romania, advocating a commitment to a modern scientific ethos imposed onto an otherwise nationalist philosophy obsessed with ethnic specificity and Latinity⁴⁵.

Science and nationalism are, often, complementary; in some cases, religion dominated both. During the 1920s, the Roman Catholic Church in Spain, together with Miguel Primo de Rivera's conservative authoritarian regime, made official endorsement of eugenics difficult, if not impossible, as demonstrated by the unexpected termination of the first public conference on eugenics, the «Primer Curso Eugénico Español» convened in Madrid in 1928. Organized on *Gaceta Médica Española* (*Spanish Medical Journal*)'s initiative, the conference's theme was fittingly called «The Defence of the Race in Children» («La defensa de la raza en el niño»), and most papers dealt with infant health, *maternidad consciente* (conscious maternity) and various Catholic eugenic issues⁴⁶. As the eugenic movement progressed in Spain, it became clear that the real factor in shaping Latin eugenics was not the science of heredity, which complemented it, but Catholicism⁴⁷.

As we shall see below, the rise of an aggressive demand for the control of reproduction in the form of birth control and the introduction of compulsory sterilization, which was to contribute significantly to the schism between Latin and Nordic eugenicists, was met by the Catholic Church with deep anxiety, culminating in the rejection of state interference in the life of the individual. The limits on government action in the name of the sanctity of the family became synonymous with an extensive set of Catholic eugenic principles for the sacredness of procreation that sat uncomfortably with eugenics theories of human improvement which, even in their most positive interpretations, accepted the importance of biological selection and Malthusian arguments in favour of reducing fertility⁴⁸.

⁴⁴ A. Voina, *Activitatea Secției Medicale și Biopolitice a "Astrei"*, «Transilvania», 1926, 37-39.

⁴⁵ See M. Turda, *Romania*, in M. Turda (ed.), *The History of East-Central European Eugenics*, cit.

⁴⁶ J. Noguera, L. Huerta, (eds.), *Libro de las primeras jornadas eugénicas españolas: genética, eugenesia y pedagogía sexual*, 2 voll., Madrid, Javier Morata, 1934.

⁴⁷ J. Noguera, *Moral, eugenesia y derecho*, Madrid, Javier Morata, 1930. See also Francisca Juárez González, *La eugenesia en España, entre la ciencia y la doctrina sociopolítica*, «Asclepio», 1999, 2.

⁴⁸ See, for example, the work of the Commission Catholique du Congrès de la natalité, which met in Rennes on 27 September 1929, published under the title *Eugénisme, stérilisation: leur valeur morale*, Paris, Association du Mariage Chrétien, 1930. It included contributions from historian Édouard Jourdan, Jean Viollet, Secretary General of Association du Mariage Chrétien and Pierre Tiberghien, Professor of Theology at the Catholic Faculty in Lille.

During the 1920s, a compromise was found in the proposal for the introduction of premarital health certificates, which were seen by some Latin eugenicists as a more radical measure to bolster health improvement and biological strength. Internationally, this coincided with a second phase in the history of Latin eugenics, when the traditional components of eugenics in Latin countries – namely *puériculture* and neo-Lamarckist interpretations of social and biological improvement – were augmented by growing political concerns with autochthonism and organicity, coupled with the wide dissemination of fascist ideals in Europe as elsewhere. As was made clear by the Portuguese anthropologist António Mendes Correia in his 1927 lecture, *O problema eugénico em Portugal* (*The Eugenic Problem in Portugal*), the application and observance of eugenic principles could offer the country's much-needed racial regeneration⁴⁹. Other Portuguese eugenicists, such as paediatrician António de Almeida Garrett, placed the country's national renewal within a much broader Latin context, which – taking its inspiration from Fascist Italy – extolled the family and the youth⁵⁰.

It was this commitment to demographic regeneration and pronatalism that Latin eugenicists across Europe shared during the 1920s, and which prevailed over attempts to regulate and control the fertility of the population⁵¹. The contrast between their version of eugenics and the one promoted by the British, American and the German eugenicists, in particular, was seen equally as the debate between over quantitative and qualitative demographic policies. Making sense of this debate requires recognising that Latin eugenics in countries, such as France, Italy or Romania, was premised more on quantitative measures to improve the demographic health of the nation than on qualitative methods of fertility restriction, as advocated by the birth control movement, for example⁵².

Health, Marriage and Biotypology

Eugenicists had long advocated the introduction of compulsory medical certificates before marriage⁵³. Many Latin eugenicists assumed that, in the absence of more drastic measures, such as compulsory sterilization, premarital health certificates

⁴⁹ A.M. Correia, *O problema eugénico em Portugal*, Porto, Tip. Enciclopedia Portuguesa, 1928.

⁵⁰ A.A. Garrett, *A puericultura na Itália*, Lisboa, Imprensa Médica, 1958.

⁵¹ For the French context, see Margaret Cook Andersen, *Regeneration through Empire. French Pronatalists and Colonial Settlement in the Third Republic*, Lincoln-London, University of Nebraska Press, 2015.

⁵² See M. Sanger, *The Pivot of Civilization*, New York, Brentano's Publishers, 1922 and M. C. Stopes, *Contraception (Birth Control): Its Theory, History and Practice*, London, J. Bale, Sons & Danielsson, 1925. See also M. Sanger (ed.), *Medical and Eugenic Aspects of Birth Control*, vol. 3, New York, The American Birth Control League, 1926.

⁵³ See F. Galton, *Eugenics: I. Restrictions of Marriage; II. Studies in national Eugenics*, «Sociological Papers», 1906, 2. See also M. Turda, A. Gillette, *Latin Eugenics*, cit., pp. 78-79.

were an efficient means of dealing with a number of social and medical problems associated with the protection of the family, particularly the spread of venereal diseases⁵⁴. To some extent, the Latin eugenicists' advocacy of premarital health certificates expressed their attempt to reconcile a theory of human improvement based on heredity with their views on social worth, degenerative environments, family welfare and child care. In other respects, it reflected the particular cultural, religious and economic conditions of their respective countries. In Romania, for instance, it was argued that eugenic responsibility toward the nation required not only the protection of mothers and children, and social assistance for larger families; it also entailed sexual education and marital hygiene, coupled with a rational decision about whom to marry⁵⁵.

In Italy, for example, the eugenic importance of marriage was regularly discussed during the early 1920s, as exemplified by the Congress for Family Education (*Congresso per l'Educazione in Famiglia*) convened in Rome in 1923⁵⁶. Some Romanian eugenicists voiced similar opinions. For example, in 1921 the British medical journal *The Lancet* noted that «largely due to the war, the number of registered cases of insanity» was «steadily increasing year by year in all the Balkan states». Highlighting the case of Romania, *The Lancet* referred to a medical report that concluded «the science of eugenics must play a very important role in the prophylaxis of insanity, and should be carefully studied. When national eugenics becomes practical politics the problem of the prevention of insanity will have been largely solved»⁵⁷.

French eugenicists, in particular, considered compulsory premarital eugenic certification as an efficient way of preventing the transmission of hereditary diseases to future generations. Adolphe Pinard even claimed that he had only entered politics as a representative of the French Parliament's Chamber of Deputies, to promote the introduction of «premarital examination», which he proposed as a law in 1920⁵⁸. That same year, the French Eugenics Society organized a series of public lectures in Paris devoted to examining the eugenic consequences of war. They brought together the main French eugenicists at the time: Eugène Apert, Lucien Cuénot, Frédéric Hous-say, Lucien March, Georges Papillaut, Edmond Perrier, Charles Richet and Georges Schreiber. The papers were then collected and published as a book entitled *Eugénique et selection (Eugenics and Selection)* in 1922.

⁵⁴ M. Sermet, *Un problème d'eugénisme. L'examen ou le certificate pré-nuptial*, Montauban, Georges Forestié, 1933.

⁵⁵ G. Banu, *Medicina socială ca știință. Eugenia. Demografia*, Bucharest, Casa Școalelor, 1944, pp. 143-150.

⁵⁶ F. Cassata, *Building the New Man*, cit., pp. 92-98.

⁵⁷ *Insanity in the Balkan States*, «The Lancet», 1921, 5079.

⁵⁸ J.-P. Gaudillière, *Le syndrome nataliste: hérédité, médecine et eugénisme en France et en Grande-Bretagne*, in G. Gayon, D. Jacobi (eds.), *L'éternel retour de l'eugénisme*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 2006, p. 199.

Most of the papers dwelt on the neo-Lamarckian effects of the environment on national health, pronatalism, social hygiene and preventive medicine, all of which were regarded as essential to the biological regeneration of the nation. The condemnation of eugenic sterilization was another important theme, notwithstanding contributions from Charles Richet and Georges Schreiber, who argued for the prevention of those with hereditary diseases from reproducing⁵⁹. Significantly, those speakers opposed to compulsory sterilization framed their arguments in terms of «our French mentality», «generosity», and «our moral traditions» – all deemed incompatible with negative eugenics⁶⁰. Lucien March, in fact, admitted that eugenicists were «powerless to change the innate qualities of the individual», highlighting instead the social and biological regenerative significance of the environment.

While French eugenicists invoked the connection between social hygiene and public health as essential to biological regeneration, they also remained committed to the introduction of health certificates before marriage. For instance, the purpose of the above mentioned public conferences organised by the French Eugenics Society at the Social Museum (*Musée Social*) in Paris in May and June 1926 was to inform «the French public of the [eugenic] work and legislative measures taken in different countries»⁶¹. The debate occurred within the larger context that preoccupied Latin eugenicists during the late 1920s, namely the appropriate practical application of eugenics. Georges Schreiber acknowledged, for example, that it was «premature» to demand that existing matrimonial laws be rewritten according to eugenic principles, but he was adamant that if introduced, «the medical examination before marriage could reduce the number of innocent victims and improve the future generations»⁶². Albert Govaerts took a middle position, arguing that there were alternatives to premarital eugenic certification that possibly had a similar effect. He claimed that preventive medical examinations served a similar purpose, such as those practiced by the Clinique du Parc Léopold in Brussels, which registered the patient's complete hereditary history⁶³. Henri Vignes, on the other hand, took a stronger stance against pre-nuptial certification. He cited Alphonse Guérin, a French Senator and physician, who considered marriage certificates not only «unacceptable but also abhorrent». Guérin insisted that the French, as a Latin people, resisted such radical eugenic measures since acquiescence meant «surrender without reservation to the fiercest statism» and reduction «to the level of breeding animals»⁶⁴.

⁵⁹ C. Richet, *La sélection humaine*, in E. Apert, *Eugénique et sélection*, Paris, Alcan, 1922, pp. 33-57 and G. Schreiber, *Eugénique et mariage*, *ibidem*, pp. 159-189.

⁶⁰ F. Houssay, *Eugénique et régimes alimentaires*, *ibidem*, p. 21.

⁶¹ R. Sand, *et al.*, *L'examen médical en vue du mariage*, Paris, Flammarion, 1927, p. 6.

⁶² G. Schreiber, *Examen médical pré-nuptial dans les différents pays*, *ibidem*, p. 29.

⁶³ A. Govaerts, *La pratique de l'examen médical avant le mariage en Belgique*, *ibidem*, pp. 177-184.

⁶⁴ H. Vignes, *Certificat de mariage ou vulgarisation des notions d'eugénique*, *ibidem*, p. 199. See also M. Turda, A. Gillette, *Latin Eugenics*, *cit.*, p. 82.

Such criticism notwithstanding, the public debate on the introduction of premarital health examination continued in both France and Belgium, as illustrated by a series of articles published in June 1929 by the *Revue Belge* (*Belgian Journal*). Louis Vervaeck, Director of the Penal Anthropology Service (*Service d'Anthropologie Pénitentiaire*), was one of the Belgian eugenicists invited to discuss the topic. As a practicing Catholic and a neo-Lamarckist, Vervaeck suggested that it be better to first educate Belgians about the premarital health certificate – «this essential eugenic method» – through a nation-wide government and private advocacy propaganda campaign. To adopt radical eugenic ideas of human selection, Vervaeck argued, would mean a return to «pagan barbarism». To care for «the sick and the abnormal», he continued, did not mean ignoring «the protection of the race»; in fact, there was no conflict between «the human treatment of those [who were] infirm and defective» and a «healthy social prophylaxis»⁶⁵. It remained desirable, he further argued, that eugenicists would explain properly «the great benefits for individuals, families and the race» that premarital health certificates would bring about, if introduced⁶⁶.

Other medical experts invited by the *Revue Belge* to discuss the issue were less accommodating. Theologian Jacques Leclercq discussed the question of medical examination before marriage from a Catholic and ethical point of view, professing the «profound respect for the integrity of human life»⁶⁷. In the same spirit, Valère Fallon questioned the eugenic definition of such imperatives as «biological» and «social responsibility», and placed conjugal life and family above the needs of the state⁶⁸.

In its formal expressions, the Latin eugenicists' preoccupation with premarital health certificates and the sanctity of marriage represents a transitional narrative, to some extent resembling certain interventionist eugenic methods put forward across Europe and the world, but in other respects diverging from them in terms of its subordination to Christian ethics and voluntarism. Complementing these eugenic arguments about morality, individual liberty and Catholicism was another feature that became associated with Latin eugenics during the early 1930s: its holistic interpretation of individual improvement through scientific organisation, regulation and management. This was best epitomised by Nicola Pende's theories of biotypology and orthogenesis⁶⁹. Pende developed a biotypological theory based on constitutional medicine, pathology and endocrinology, one that was also Latin, humanistic and Catholic, treating the individual as a whole⁷⁰. He claimed that every individual had its own

⁶⁵ L. Vervaeck, *Une enquête de la Revue Belge. L'examen prénuptial doit-il être obligatoire? Exposé général par le Docteur Louis Vervaeck*, «Revue Belge», 1929, pp. 410, 413.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 422-432.

⁶⁷ J. Leclercq, *L'examen prénuptial être obligatoire*, «Revue Belge», 1929, pp. 53-55.

⁶⁸ V. Fallon, *L'examen prénuptial être obligatoire*, «Revue Belge», 1929, pp. 52-54.

⁶⁹ M. Barbara, G. Vidoni, *L'Istituto biotipologico ortogenetico di Genova. Centro di studi della crescita e della costituzione individuale, diretto da N. Pende*, Genova, Badiali, 1955.

⁷⁰ N. Pende, *Le debolezze di costituzione. Introduzione alla patologia costituzionale*, Roma, Bardi, 1922.

nutritional and environmental needs, required its own distinct endocrine balance, and followed its own biological «constitution»⁷¹.

In contrast to those eugenicists who repeatedly emphasized the health of the collective and of the race, Pende described his theory of constitutional medicine as «the prophylactic care of the individual». He recommended a theory of eugenic improvement, as it applied «to each individual, after a thorough preliminary study of his somatic and psychic personality»⁷². Since individuals were best adjusted and most productive if they lived in an environment appropriate to their biotype, Pende complemented biotypology with orthogenesis, that is the correction of any deviations from the biotypic norm with a life-long program of exercise, nutrition, medicine, and behavioural adjustments⁷³.

Orthogenesis' emphasis on improving an individual through environmental modification appealed to many Latin eugenicists, and not only in Europe⁷⁴. They promoted biological improvement through a nation-wide biotypological screening of each person's physiological and psychological profile, thus aiding government efforts in managing its citizens for the well-being of the nation. In Romania, for example, followers of Pende incorporated his ideas into an all-encompassing national programme, aimed to guide political elites, and bring about the much-anticipated national renewal⁷⁵. Less problematic than the premarital health certificates was the introduction of the biotypological cards, which noticeably captured the imagination of Latin eugenicists during the 1930s⁷⁶, at the same time with an increased awareness of the proliferation of arguments, both political and scientific, for the adoption of compulsory sterilization in countries such as Germany, Sweden and Britain. At the same time it needs stressing that this biotypological approach to human improvement was closely seen as an intrinsic element of broader cultural and scientific unity amongst the Latin nations, one that Pende was keen to highlight in his public lectures in places as diverse as Buenos Aires and Bucharest throughout the 1930s⁷⁷.

See also M. Turda, A. Gillette, *Latin Eugenics*, cit., pp. 91-92 and F. Cassata, *Building the New Man*, cit., pp. 197-200.

⁷¹ N. Pende, *Constitutional Inadequacies: An Introduction to the Study of Abnormal Constitutions*, Philadelphia, Lea & Febiger, 1928, p. 25.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 236.

⁷³ N. Pende, *Bonifica umana razionale e biologia politica*, Bologna, Cappelli, 1933.

⁷⁴ See, for example, E. Schreider, *L'école biotypologique italienne*, «Biotypologie», 1933, 2 and G. Marinescu, *Constituția umană după lucrările școlii italiene*, «Academia Română. Memoriile Secțiunii Științifice», 1934, 9, 1-34.

⁷⁵ For example, after visiting Pende's Biotypological Institute in Genoa in 1937, physician Liviu Câmpeanu appealed to the Romanian King, Carol II, urging him to adopt biotypology as national politics. See fond Casa Regală, dos. 11, 1937, Arhivele Naționale ale României, Bucharest.

⁷⁶ See D. Paulian, J. Cantacuzène, *Note préliminaire sur une 'fiche' pour l'étude de la constitution humaine*, «Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Sciences de Roumanie», 1938, 2.

⁷⁷ N. Pende, *Biología de las razas y unidad espiritual mediterránea*, «Anales de Biotipología, Eugenesia y Medicina Social», 1935, 40.

However, this is not to suggest that there was a linear Latin eugenic narrative, from *puériculture* to premarital health certificates and biotypology. The brief discussion offered above was meant, above all, to illustrate the eclectic nature of Latin eugenics. As understood by leading Latin eugenicists at the time, such as Pende, there was always a balanced way of achieving social and biological improvement. As such, these theories of human improvement epitomize not only important episodes in each Latin country's story of modernization, but they also express the sensibility of a specific moment in European history, during the 1930s, combining the rejection of Nazi racial hygiene and racism with the effort to project an assured image of national salvation amidst increasingly radical political projects. With this in mind, let us now turn briefly to a discussion of compulsory sterilization, as this provides an overview of the major religious, ethical and scientific issues raised by the Latin eugenicists as well as a framework through which they could fully articulate their distinct perspective on the issue of population management.

«vera fautrix Eugenicae»

The role of the Catholic Church in opposing eugenic sterilization, as evidenced in the Encyclical *Casti Connubii* (*On Christian Marriage*) promulgated on 31 December 1930 is well known and needs no detailed treatment here. It is, however, important to note that the Catholic Church's proactive struggle against the increasingly aggressive attempts to control reproduction ultimately gave Latin eugenics a totalizing narrative of morality and human values ideally placed to oppose sterilization⁷⁸. The goals of Latin eugenics – the reformation and improvement of the nation and society according to modern ideas of *puériculture*, social hygiene and public health – were, in fact, consistent with the Catholic Church's views on modern medicine and education⁷⁹. As Henri Le Floch, an advisor the Holy Office, remarked in 1931, only the Catholic Church was «the true promoter of eugenics» («vera fautrix *Eugenicae*»)⁸⁰.

In a time of accelerated political change, when the significance of the national community and race were actively integrated into the practical politics of many countries in Europe, eugenic arguments about a healthy national body were used to enhance the significance of population control and management as a principle of ethnic cohesion. By 1937, eugenicists had succeeded in enshrining compulsory eugenic sterilization laws in a dozen countries in Western and Northern Europe, including

⁷⁸ R. Maiocchi, *Agostino Gemelli, critico dell'eugenica tedesca*, «Vita e Pensiero», 2000, 2.

⁷⁹ M. Löscher, *...der gesunden Vernunft nicht zuwider ...? Katholische Eugenik in Österreich vor 1938*, Innsbruck, StudienVerlag, 2009.

⁸⁰ Quoted in E. Betta, *Note sull'eugenica cattolica*, in D. Bredi, L. Capezzone, W. Dahmash, L. Rostagno, *Scritti in onore di Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti*, vol. 1, Roma, Università La Sapienza, 2008, p. 142.

Germany, Sweden and Norway⁸¹. However, as eugenically-inspired legislation to prevent the physically and mentally «unfit» from reproducing proliferated across the world, biological theories of human improvement gradually came into open conflict with religious dogma advocated by Christianity, especially Catholicism.

Moreover, in some Latin countries, such as Romania, in which Catholicism was less influential, the opposition to compulsory sterilization did not involve religious but economic and social arguments. At the time, the Romanian peasantry was valued as an untainted source of the nation's racial vitality, and most Romanian eugenicists argued that the Romanian peasants' alleged «inferiority» was due to the lack of medical care, modern hygiene and social welfare, and not biological degeneration. Physician Iosif Leonida was one of many who phrased the discussion of eugenic sterilization in Romania in these terms. Much like some French and Italian eugenicists, Leonida also highlighted the incompatibility of sterilization with Romanians' «Latin mentality», in contrast with the «Anglo-Saxon mentality of countries where sterilization had been introduced»⁸².

Grigore Odobescu, a psychiatrist at the Central Hospital in Bucharest, further articulated scepticism about the introduction of eugenic sterilization in Romania. In *Eugenie pentru neamul românesc (Eugenics for the Romanian Nation)*, Odobescu argued that in Romania «neither the voluntary sterilization practiced in Switzerland, nor the social prophylactic sterilization practiced in the USA will be received favourably»⁸³. Employing the same neo-Lamarckist vocabulary used by Leonida, Odobescu argued that «degenerates» in Romania were largely the result of ruinous economic, sanitary and hygienic conditions. For Odobescu, «the [eugenic] education of the population» was what Romania needed most⁸⁴.

Latin eugenicists in other countries similarly emphasized their distinct cultural and religious environment, when discussing the topic of eugenic sterilization. In the same vein as Leonida, Italian neurologist Augusto Carelli appealed to the virtues of Latin eugenics as opposed to the «inhumanity» of eugenics practiced in the USA, a country he described as being driven by «a mechanical brain and a mechanical heart». In contrast,

Latin gentleness, a consequence of the race's ancient genius, intuitively rebuffs this useless brutality. It feels that the remedy for human ills is not to be found in barbaric crudities, but in divine piety, in solidarity, and in faith in ideals as opposed to blind materialism⁸⁵.

⁸¹ See G. Broberg, N. Roll-Hansen (eds.), *Eugenics and the Welfare State. Sterilization Policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland*, East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 2005 [1996].

⁸² I. Leonida, *Ce poate realiza practic eugenia la noi*, «Mișcarea Medicală Română», 1955.

⁸³ G. Odobescu, *Eugenie pentru neamul românesc*, Bucharest, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, 1936, p. 12.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 15. See also M. Turda, A. Gillette, *Latin Eugenics*, cit., pp. 105-106.

⁸⁵ A. Carelli, *Valore della sterilizzazione eugenica nel miglioramento della razza umana*, «Difesa Sociale» 1928, 10.

Prominent members of the Italian Society for Genetics and Eugenics, such as Cesare Artom, also denounced negative eugenic ideas based on Mendelian genetics, which «fortunately» had not found «a hospitable climate [...] in our country»⁸⁶. Marcello Boldrini concurred. Italy, he argued, would achieve the improvement of its population through much more humane eugenic means, «entirely Roman and Catholic» and not Protestant individualism. Italy's eugenic programme, he continued, focussed on *increasing* the population not *decreasing* it⁸⁷. Similar preoccupations and disputes about eugenic sterilization existed in Portugal and Spain, where those dedicated to Latin cultural traditions, as well Catholics, joined in the rejection of negative eugenic measures⁸⁸.

Such was the prevailing attitude at the Eighth National Congress of the Association of Christian Marriage (*VIIIe Congrès National de l'Association du Mariage Chrétien*), held in Marseilles in April 1930, under the chairmanship of Monsignors Maurice-Louis Dubourg, Archbishop of Marseilles, and Emmanuel-Anatole Chaptal, Assistant to the Archbishop of Paris. The main theme of the congress was «Church and Eugenics» («L'église et l'eugénisme»), and the participants aimed to uncouple the latter from its association with sterilization and racism. For instance, speaking of «True Eugenics» («Le véritable eugénisme»), Dubourg insisted on the necessity for biological awareness in preserving the race as long as it did not contradict Christian morality and reasoning⁸⁹. It was argued, by other participants, that Latin eugenics was more than just a shared religious, cultural and linguistic heritage; it also represented a distinct type of «humanitarian» internationalism, reflected clearly in its opposition to sterilization and codified in Pope Pius XI's Encyclical *Casti Connubii*.

«Eugenica rinnovatrice»

Another development that deserves attention in this context was the contribution of Corrado Gini, the renowned Italian statistician. In his inaugural speech to the Second Italian Congress of Eugenics and Genetics in 1929, Corrado Gini made a clear distinction between the version of eugenics promoted in «the Latin countries» and that in the «Anglo-Saxon world». According to Gini, Anglo-Saxon eugenics was dominated by three interrelated theories: a) «the primacy of heredity over the environment»; b) «the superiority of the Nordic race»; and, finally, c) «the progressive degeneration of modern nations due to the increased fertility of the lower classes»⁹⁰.

⁸⁶ C. Artom, *La teoria dell'evoluzione e gli studi di genetica*, Milan, Istituto Editoriale Scientifico, 1926, p. 48.

⁸⁷ M. Boldrini, *Il movimento eugenico in alcuni paesi*, «*Difesa sociale*», 1928, 10.

⁸⁸ R. Cleminson, *Catholicism, Race and Empire*, cit., pp. 35-40.

⁸⁹ S.C. Mgr., *Le véritable eugénisme*, in *L'église et l'eugénisme*, Paris, Marriage et Famille, 1930, pp. 224-247.

⁹⁰ C. Gini, *Discorso inaugurale del Presidente della S.I.G.E.*, in *Atti del Secondo Congresso Italiano di Genetica ed Eugenica*, Roma, 30 settembre-2 ottobre 1929, Roma, Tipografia Failli, 1932, pp. 18-19.

Despite what some Anglo-Saxon and Nordic eugenicists alleged, the sterilization of those considered to be «defective» and racially «inferior» could not eradicate social and biological degeneration. Instead, Gini proposed his version of eugenics, one he aptly named «eugenica rinnovatrice» («regenerative eugenics»), premised on an ongoing relationship between heredity and the environment, the regenerative effects of racial crossing, and the predictability of demographic changes in the population.

Officially, Gini continued with his criticism of Anglo-Saxon and Nordic interpretations of eugenics at the Third International Congress of Eugenics held in New York in August 1932. On this occasion, Gini adapted Francis Galton's definition of eugenics to emphasize the genetically restorative power of a healthy environment in a neo-Lamarckian context, and the importance of statistics, demography and medicine in relation to genetics. He argued that it was a mistake to consider eugenics only from «a narrow point of view as a chapter of Genetics applied to man, or worse still, of experimental Genetics applied to man». Such a line of reasoning only led to a regrettable neglect of «all the other problems, so vast, complex and delicate», which could influence human improvement. Next, Gini propounded that the aim of eugenics was to study

through series of successive generations, how new stocks arise, what circumstances determine their formation in the midst of the obscure mass of the population – a formation which can hardly be explained by the heredity of superior factors heretofore non-extant⁹¹.

By understanding the complex relationship of natural selection, mutual adaptation, and «the change of environment caused by emigration», eugenicists could offer a better understanding of how modern societies and cultures evolved and why they were different. Moreover, Gini declared the hereditarian and racial outlook of the Anglo-Saxon and Nordic eugenicists to be based on faulty assumptions about human improvement that grew out of their ideological worldview, particularly racism, rather than scientific research.

In the early 1930s, Gini's «regenerative eugenics» complemented Pinard's *puériculture* and Pende's biotypology to form a distinct narrative of human improvement. There was now enough of a well-formulated set of arguments that Gini strategically placed at the centre of his international efforts to bring eugenicists from Latin countries together into one organization, named appropriately the Federation of Latin Eugenic Societies. In November 1934, at the Second Pan-American Congress on Eugenics and Homiculture in Buenos Aires, the Argentinian eugenicist Josué A. Beruti had already announced the creation of such an organization to be based in Rome and to include the Argentinian Eugenics Society, the Belgian Society of Eugenics and

⁹¹ C. Gini, *Response to the Presidential Address*, in *A Decade of Progress in Eugenics. Scientific Papers of the Third International Congress of Eugenics*, Baltimore, Williams & Wilkins, 1934, p. 27.

Preventive Medicine, and the Italian Society of Genetics and Eugenics⁹². A preliminary meeting was convened at the Seventh Pan American Congress of the Child (*VII Congreso Panamericano del Niño*), in Mexico City in October 1935. The president of the Mexican Eugenics Society, Adrián Correa, organized it, with the assistance from the eugenic societies of Argentina and Peru, and the approval of eugenic societies in Brazil, Belgium, France and Italy⁹³.

Corrado Gini was elected President of the new international eugenic organization. As he was not able to attend the congress, Alfredo A. Saavedra, Secretary of the Mexican Eugenics Society, read his inaugural lecture. In it Gini reiterated the main tropes of Latin eugenics, including «human dignity and personal integrity», and continuing with the Latin countries' «long tradition of civilization» and their «more balanced and fair-minded attitude»⁹⁴. Gini admitted that there were economic and cultural differences among the Latin nations, and indeed some had «a past superior to the present». But history was on their side, as they were all «experiencing a phase of renewal with hopes for a grand future». Connected to this projection into the future was Gini's discussion of «the relationship between quantity and quality» of the Latin peoples. After all, this was one of the Latin Federation's «fundamental eugenic problems», which, Gini believed, should be «objectively studied, in all its complexity»⁹⁵.

Another thorny issue was that of racial superiority. According to Gini, Latin eugenicists were not «blinded by nationalism to the point of believing, against history, what we can speak of a superiority of race, across time and place». Rather, «all races were absolutely equal from the point of view of their intellectual attitudes»⁹⁶. This was no veiled criticism of Nordic racism, prevalent amongst German and Scandinavian eugenicists at the time. Furthermore, radical eugenic measures, such as sterilization, which was the method preferred in the Anglo-Saxon and Nordic countries to prevent the reproduction of «defectives» and «degenerates», had no place in Latin countries, Gini believed. This critique was articulated in concrete terms, almost in a militant language, leaving no one in doubt about Gini's conceptual orientation.

With the mission of the International Federation of Latin Eugenic Societies now established, the focus turned to strengthening institutional ties between its constituent members. The first constitutive meeting of the Federation followed two months later, on 18 December 1935, once again in Mexico City. The Italian Society of Genetics

⁹² J.A. Beruti, *Eugenesia y maternidad*, in *Actas de la Segunda Conferencia Pan Americana de eugenesia y homicultura de las repúblicas Americanas*, Buenos Aires, Imprenta Frascoli y Bindi, 1934, p. 169.

⁹³ *Memoria del VII Congreso Panamericano del Niño: Reunido en la Ciudad de México del 12 al 19 de octubre de 1935*, vol. 1, Mexico City, Departamento de Salubridad Pública, 1937, pp. 80-82.

⁹⁴ C. Gini, *Parole inaugurali del Prof. Corrado Gini: Presidente della Società Italiana di Genetica ed Eugenetica e della Federazione Latina fra le Società di Eugenetica: lette alla Riunione delle Società di Eugenetica dell'America Latina tenutasi a Messico il 12 Ottobre 1935*, «Genus», 1936, 1-2, pp. 77-78.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, 78.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, 79.

and Eugenics, the Argentine Society of Biotypology, Eugenics and Social Medicine, the Peruvian League of Hygiene and Social Prophylaxis, and the Mexican Society of Eugenics sent delegates, together with representatives from Columbia, Cuba, Costa-Rica, Chile, Guatemala, San Salvador, Nicaragua, Haiti, Uruguay, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay and Brazil. Eugenicists from Romania (Sabin Manuilă, the Director of the Demographic, Anthropological and Eugenics Department of the Romanian Social Institute), Switzerland (Eugène Pittard, of the Anthropological Laboratory in Geneva) and Spain (Hermenegild Puig i Sais, from the Catalan Eugenics Society) also joined the Federation. Equally important, it was also agreed that «the first Congress of the International Federation of Latin Eugenic Societies» will be held in Paris in 1937⁹⁷.

As the Latin eugenic organization turned its attention to Europe, it revived the leading role attributed to France and the French eugenicists in providing an alternative narrative of human improvement to the one aggressively and efficiently promoted by Germany. This situation became apparent at the Second International Congress of Mental Hygiene held in Paris between 19 and 23 July 1937. The first plenary lecture was given by Ernst Rüdin, the Swiss-born German psychiatrist and Nazi eugenicist, who asserted confidently the hereditary nature of most mental diseases and that the only solution to improve the hereditary health of the population was through compulsory sterilization of the mentally defective⁹⁸. Not surprisingly, his views were received with criticism, most notably from the Polish-French psychiatrist Franziska (Françoise) Minkowska, who refuted Rüdin's claim about the categorical heritability of psychiatric disorders, whilst other participants, such as psychiatrist Emilio Mira, President of the Spanish League of Mental Hygiene, spoke only about social factors affecting mental health⁹⁹.

It is the terms of this constant rejection of the claims made by Nazi eugenicists at four successive international congresses, taking place in Paris in July and early August 1937 that need to be emphasised here. First of these – and benefitting from the presence of other Latin eugenicists in Paris, who attended the congress on mental hygiene, such as the Romanian neurologist Gheorghe Marinescu, President of the Romanian Royal Society of Eugenics and Heredity – was the International Meeting of Biotypology (*Réunion Internationale de Biotypologie*), organized on 24 July

⁹⁷ *Informations*, «Revue Anthropologique», 1936, 1.

⁹⁸ E. Rüdin, *Bedingungen und Rolle der Eugenik in der Prophylaxe der Geistesstörungen*, in R. Charpetier, (ed), *Comptes rendus, I^{er} Congrès International d'Hygiène Mentale, Paris, 19-23 juillet 1937*, vol. 1, Paris, Imprimerie A. Coueslant, 1937, pp. 105-115. He also published his paper as an article in *Zeitschrift für psychische Hygiene* (1937), pp. 99-108. A discussion of the nexus between mental hygiene and eugenic sterilization, or indeed of debates between German and French psychiatrists about methods of psychiatric treatment during the 1930s, is beyond my scope here. See, for example, F.E. Williams, (ed.), *Proceedings of the First International Congress of Mental Hygiene*, 2 vol., New York, The International Committee for Mental Hygiene, 1932.

⁹⁹ E. Mira, *Le rôle des conditions sociales dans la genèse des troubles mentaux*, *ibidem*, pp. 31-45.

1937 by the French Society of Biotypology. The topic of the meeting was «the study of human personality from the point of view of biotypology». Italian endocrinologists Nicola Pende and Giacinto Viola also attended. All involved promoted the image of a strengthened and coordinated Latin eugenic community, effectively conveying the message that it was possible to discuss human improvement in terms other than race¹⁰⁰.

The importance of biotypology to Latin eugenics was further confirmed just five days later, on 29 July, when the International Congress on Population (*Congrès International de la Population*) began in Paris. The congress was presided over by Adolphe Landry, the prominent champion of Latinity and pro-natalism in France. Vice-Presidents of the congress included the Catholic historian Édouard Jordan, an Italian statistician, Livio Livi, and a number of prominent German demographers and eugenicists, including Friedrich Burgdörfer, Eugen Fischer and Ernst Rüdin. The arguments in favour of negative population policies put forward by the German delegation notwithstanding, the congress reflected Latin preoccupations with quantitative and positive population policies¹⁰¹. Emphasis throughout was placed on education, the environment and, of course, positive measures to encourage population growth.

Equally important, French, Belgian and Romanian participants at the congress shared their concern about the growing tide of racism in Europe, particularly in Germany, whilst arguing that culture and environment, not innate racial qualities, led to human improvement¹⁰². The French psychologist and biotypologist Dagmar Weinberg's closing plenary lecture on biometry and biotypology, reiterated the scientific importance of classifying individuals and human groups according to biometry, defined as «the quantitative study of characteristics that differentiate individuals or human groups», and biotypology, which visualized «those differences as a total unit of analysis and comparison»¹⁰³. To reaffirm the biotypological and environmentalist interpretation of human improvement at such an important international event was to assume, again, that the racial imperative invoked by the German participants was not acceptable to Latin eugenicists as a justification for the introduction of eugenic sterilization. As Maurice Vanikoff noted in his extensive coverage of the congress for the journal *Races et racisme*, «eugenics has nothing in common with racist theories, and one should in no way identify it with the form practiced currently in Germany» And further, he warned: «eugenics must not make the same mistakes as politics»¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰⁰ *Comptes rendus de la Réunion Internationale de Biotypologie*, «Biotypologie», 1934.

¹⁰¹ M.S. Quine, *The First-Wave Eugenic Revolution in Southern Europe: Science sans frontières*, in Bashford, Levine (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, cit., p. 391.

¹⁰² M. Vanikoff, *La question des races au Congrès International de la Population*, «Races et racisme», 1937, 1.

¹⁰³ D. Weinberg, *La biométrie différentielle et la biotypologie comme méthodes pour la classification des individus et des groupes*, in *Congrès International de la Population. Paris 1937*, vol. 8, Paris, Hermann, 1938, p. 238.

¹⁰⁴ M. Vanikoff, *La question des races au Congrès International de la Population*, cit., 7.

The opposition to racism and compulsory sterilization as a means to improve the biological quality of the population was thus condemned unequivocally. Latin eugenics had now appeared clearly distinct from other variants of eugenics, especially Nazi racial hygiene.

As the Congress on Population was drawing to a close, another one was just beginning: the much-anticipated First Congress of Latin Eugenics (*1^{er} Congrès Latin d'Eugénique*), which took place at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Paris, from 1 to 3 August 1937. Louis Martin, President of the International Institute of Anthropology, and Gustave Roussy, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, were Honorary Presidents. The organizing committee included Georges Schreiber, Henri Vignes and Georges Heuyer. The International Federation of Latin Eugenic Societies was now composed of the following countries, their eugenic societies and representatives: Mariano R. Castex and Arturo R. Rossi (Argentine Society of Biotypology, Eugenics and Social Medicine); Norbert Ensich and Albert Govaerts (Belgian Eugenic Society); Renato Kehl (Central Brazilian Commission on Eugenics); Hermenegild Puig i Sais and Josep A. Vandellós (Catalonian Eugenic Society); Eugène Apert, Raymond Turpin and A. Brousseau (French Eugenic Section of the International Institute of Anthropology); Corrado Gini, Agostino Gemelli and M. Saibante (Italian Society of Genetics and Eugenics); Adrián Correa and Alfredo Saavedra (Mexican Society of Eugenics); Carlos A. Bambarén and Ursula Ch. de Schmitt (Peruvian National League of Hygiene and Social Prophylaxis); Almerindo Lessa (Portugal); Gheorghe Marinescu and Sabin Manuilă (Federation of Romanian Eugenic Societies); and finally, Eugène Pittard and Hersch Liebmann (Switzerland).

The outgoing President of the Federation, Corrado Gini, gave the opening address. Once again Gini praised the objectivity, moderation and humanity of the eugenic sciences of the Latin countries, the outcome of «their most ancient civilization»¹⁰⁵. Next to speak was the new Federation President, Eugène Apert, who discussed the eugenic significance of morality and who claimed eugenicists were an enlightened scientific elite whose role was to actively pursue solutions to their nations' health problems. Instead of relying exclusively on heredity and genetics, as was the tendency among Anglo-Saxon and Nordic eugenicists, Latin eugenicists promoted eugenic improvement through preventive medicine, social hygiene, public health, and education¹⁰⁶. Finally, Gheorghe Marinescu highlighted the common medical tradition of the Latin countries, in particular Claude Bernard's writings on physiology, endocrinology and «Pasteur's doctrine of hygiene»¹⁰⁷. In forging such a creative synthesis, of history, bi-

¹⁰⁵ C. Gini, *Allocution*, in *Premier Congrès Latin d'Eugénique*, Paris, Masson, 1937. See also M. Turda, A. Gillette, *Latin Eugenics*, cit., p. 185.

¹⁰⁶ E. Apert, *L'importance sociale des études eugéniques*, *ibidem*, pp. 7-12.

¹⁰⁷ G. Marinescu, *Allocution*, *ibidem*, pp. 13-14.

ology and medicine, these three leaders of the Latin eugenic movement considered this congress a unique opportunity to discuss the 'vital problems' preoccupying the Latin nations¹⁰⁸.

Reviewing the congress for the journal *Revue Anthropologique*, Henri Briand, Professor of Heredity at l'École d'Anthropologie in Paris, considered that the Latin Federation's «efforts towards positive eugenics and to oppose the Anglo-Saxon negative eugenics were successful»¹⁰⁹. It was possible, he suggested, to study «heredity and demographic phenomena» from other vantage points than biological and racial determinism. In France and elsewhere in the Latin world, «the methods of positive eugenics» were no longer just «good-natured remarks» and «philosophical digressions» but were deemed of «paramount practical importance»¹¹⁰. In this respect, as noted by Georges Schreiber, Latin eugenicists endeavoured to provide an international scientific narrative of human improvement that was distinguished from, and opposed to, ideas of Nordic racial superiority¹¹¹.

To this effect, the Second Congress of the International Federation of Latin Eugenic Societies was planned to take place in Bucharest in September 1939, organized by the Union of the Eugenic Societies in Romania. The endocrinologist Constantin I. Parhon was elected the third (and last) President of the Federation, whilst geneticist Gheorghe K. Constantinescu was appointed Secretary General of the congress. The themes proposed for the congress included the prevention of hereditary diseases; natalism and demographic growth; heredity and infectious diseases; heredity and intelligence; and, heredity and endocrinology¹¹². Ultimately the German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, and the subsequent outbreak of World War II prevented the Latin eugenicists from meeting again. Eventually, the congress was «postponed indefinitely»¹¹³, and the development of Latin eugenics thus came to an abrupt end.

Conclusions

As discussed here, by the mid-1930s, Latin eugenicists in Europe and elsewhere, had formulated their own programme of human improvement. It was premised on a number of theories and ideas developed since the early 1900s, particularly in France

¹⁰⁸ *Congrès des Sociétés Latines d'Eugénique*, «Revue Anthropologique», 1938, 1.

¹⁰⁹ H. Briand, *Les progrès de l'eugénique et de la génétique en France au cours des dernières années*, «Revue Anthropologique», 1938, 1.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 310.

¹¹¹ G. Schreiber, *Au congrès des eugénistes latins*, «Races et racisme», 1937, 1.

¹¹² *Al II-lea Congres Internațional al Federațiunii Societăților Latine de Eugenie*, «Revista de Științe Medicale», 1939.

¹¹³ Eugenics Education Society, International Federation of Eugenic Organisations, SA/EUG/E.12: 1932-1940.

and Italy, including *puériculture* and biotypology, and on its opposition to birth control, compulsory sterilization and racism. As such, Latin eugenics often dovetailed with various programmes of preventive medicine, public health and social hygiene, focussing as much on child and maternal care as on population welfare and pronatalist strategies of demographic growth.

Equally important, Latin eugenicists in Europe also regarded the Anglo-Saxon and Nordic eugenic narratives of human improvement as problematic due to their insistence on racial protection, and the elimination of individuals classified as hereditarily and socially «defective». By contrast, Latin eugenicists believed their methods to improve the nation and race were more «humane», arguing that eugenic goals were best realized through improving environmental health, encouraging population growth, educating the public about sexual hygiene, and cultivating moral behaviour linked to marriage and reproduction. Their eugenic vision of a healthy nation stressed the protection of mothers and children within the family, as well as the introduction of social welfare programmes. However, this is not to say that Latin eugenicists were not attracted to the more radical eugenics measures practiced in the USA, the Scandinavian countries and Nazi Germany. As seen, during the 1920s, many Latin eugenicists believed that certain methods of population management and control, such as medical examination before marriage, were required in order to ensure the health of future generations. In a few cases, governments in Latin countries even experimented with still more radical practices: for instance, compulsory eugenic sterilization was authorized in Vera Cruz in 1932, whilst Catalonia and Romania legalized abortion for eugenic reasons in 1936.

In addition to formulating distinct narratives of human improvement, Latin eugenicists were also able to establish their own international eugenic organization in 1935. This significant moment in the history of international eugenics represented both the convergence of decades of eugenic activism in the Latin countries and the result of the deterioration of relations between eugenicists in these countries and those who championed negative eugenics, combined with Nordic racial science, especially in Germany. After 1933, given the powerful support for the negative eugenic cause provided by the Nazi dictatorship in Germany, Latin eugenicists continued to promote their scientific collaboration in the name of a common cultural and scientific heritage. These Latin eugenic narratives survived until the early 1940s, when they succumbed, together with the inter-war European order, to another world war.

Yet, their legacy has survived to this day. When peace was declared in 1945 it brought with it not only the defeat of Nazi Germany but also the near universal condemnation of eugenics. Latin eugenicists, however, were less tarnished by their association with racism and the Holocaust and, to some extent; this helped them rebuild their scientific careers after the war. More importantly, eugenic ideas continued to remain influential in countries such as France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Italy, par-

ticularly in the post-war reconstruction of public health and social welfare¹¹⁴. Even in countries such as Romania, in which Mendelian genetics was officially banned after 1950, Latin eugenic narratives of the interwar period were brought back in a nuanced form, only to achieve their obsessive, final phase in Nicolae Ceaușescu's project of pronatalism and total population control¹¹⁵.

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¹¹⁴ P.-A. Rosental, *Eugenics and Social Security in France before and after the Vichy Regime*, «Journal of Modern European History», 2012, 4.

¹¹⁵ See G. Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceausescu's Romania*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998.