

MAGDALENA GAWIN

RACE AND MODERNITY

A HISTORY OF THE POLISH
EUGENICS MOVEMENT

TRANSLATED INTO THE ENGLISH BY
AGNIESZKA WAŚKIEWICZ



WARSAW 2018

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The idea of allowing science to interfere with our intimate personal impulses is undoubtedly repugnant. But the interference involved would be much less than that which has been tolerated for ages on the part of religion. Science [...] is perfectly capable of acquiring the same authority and of being submitted to with the same degree of acquiesce that has characterised men's attitude towards religious precepts [...]. I foresee the time when all who care for the freedom of the human spirit will have to rebel against a scientific tyranny. Nevertheless, if there is to be a tyranny, it is better that it should be scientific.

Bertrand Russell, *Marriage and Morals**

¹ B. Russell, *Marriage and Morals* (London, 1929), p. 213.

INTRODUCTION

In the 1920s, Charles Darwin's son, Leonard, published a pamphlet entitled *What is Eugenics?* Almost a century after its publication, we have the right to ask that same question: What is eugenics? After all, today the term is all but unknown. It is only used by specialists, professional historians, and physicians. During the interwar years, however, eugenics was an avant-garde scientific discipline that straddled the natural sciences, anthropology, and sociology, and enjoyed popularity in broad social circles, as well. It was variously called racial hygiene, eugenetics, social anthropology, population policy, reproductive hygiene, and social hygiene. Its founder, the Victorian scientist Francis Galton, even predicted that in the twentieth century eugenics would become a civil religion for societies and entire nations. He suggested that while eugenics was a scientific discipline, for ordinary people it would become a lifestyle through which they would learn to express their own eugenic worldview.

The simplest definition of eugenics can be summed up by stating that it is the science for the improvement of the human race, i.e., the "betterment" of the physical and mental traits of the human organism. This is why eugenics gained its first footholds in research laboratories and at universities. From the early twentieth century, learned societies began sprouting up in most of the countries of Europe, in the Americas, and even in Asia, where they spread eugenic propaganda at various levels of social and political life. The popularity of eugenics was assured by its universal credo: to uplift nations to a higher level of civilization through a deliberate, artificial selection of the population. The means towards that end was very simple. Galton proposed encouraging healthy and intellectually creative families to produce multiple offspring, while discouraging or even preventing sick people from procreating. In Britain, the advocates of eugenics evinced altogether differing ideological outlooks. Among them were politicians such as Winston Churchill; social activists such as Margaret Sanger and Maria Stopes; writers such as Bernard Shaw and Herbert George Wells, conservative Anglican

priests such as William Ralph Inge; and such socialist free-thinkers as Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

The British example influenced not only the Continent, but most importantly the United States, where sterilization began as early as 1905 in order to prevent undesirable procreation. It was not without the influence of American practices that eugenics became a defined social policy in the early twentieth century, in which two variants – positive and negative – were distinguished. In the case of positive eugenics, the state administration was to take measures to encourage desirable sexual selection, e.g., by providing tax relief and financial support (cheap loans) for big families. The negative variant of eugenic policy provided for legal and institutional barriers to prevent the procreation of family members regarded as “dysgenic” individuals, i.e., ones that provoked justified concerns that their offspring might become a burden on the state budget due to “bad” heredity. People affected with chronic diseases were considered a particular “risk group”: with heart and lung diseases, epilepsy, people with defects such as blindness, deafness and mental retardation, as well as the underclass: from beggars and common offenders, to prostitutes and criminals. The eugenic doctrine viewed the poor with suspicion, because, as I will show further on in this book, the individual’s financial status was associated with their adaptive capacity, and that capacity, in turn, with “good” or “bad” heredity, i.e., with traits inherited from one’s ancestors. That is why at the various stages in the development of eugenic doctrine the poor, or at least some people belonging to this group, were included in the category of “dysgenic” individuals. The basic tools of negative (restrictive) eugenics included the legal prohibition to marry, isolation by means of institutionalization, and voluntary or forced sterilization.

Associating civilization, culture, and prosperity with health characteristics and “good” heredity, eugenic doctrine condemned to biological extermination not only individuals, but whole nations or even races deemed “unfit”. Galton argued as follows: “it may prove that the Negroes, one and all, will fail [...] to submit to the needs of a superior civilization to their own; in this case [...] [they] will in course of time be supplanted and replaced by their betters”.¹ The paradigm of individual selection, as derived from eugenic doctrine, transformed smoothly into demands for mass selection, manifesting itself e.g., in a ban on race-mixing. The latter appeared in an extreme form in Third Reich legislation (the Nuremberg Laws), but there are also other significant examples – for instance, the toughening of the US

¹ F. Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry Into Its Laws and Consequences* (Honolulu, 2001), p. 40; cf. J. Jedlicki, *Świat zwyrodniały. Lęki i wyroki krytyków nowoczesności* (Warszawa, 2000), p. 160.

immigration law in 1924 was preceded by a debate in the course of which American politicians pointed to the need to protect the Nordic race against degeneration that was progressing as a result of its mixing with other, less valuable races from Eastern Europe.²

In the 1920s, national eugenics societies began to form international committees. By 1924 there were fifteen fully fledged members of the International Eugenics Committee: Argentina, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, the Soviet Union, Denmark, Norway, France, the Netherlands, Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Switzerland. Six more states: Australia, Brazil, Columbia, Mexico, New Zealand, and Venezuela, entered into active cooperation with the former. The Polish Eugenics Society, along with similar organizations from other Central and Eastern European countries, joined the committee a little later. Sterilization, practiced from the beginning of the twentieth century in the United States, was applied in the 1930s in Europe as well. Denmark was the first European country to enact a sterilization law (1929): this was followed by other Nordic countries, as well as Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Nazi Germany. Legal barriers introduced at the same time as sterilization legislation effectively prevented individuals suffering from hereditary disorders from marrying.

Nazi eugenics was the version that assumed the most radical form. Associated with Aryan race theories, characterized by an obsessive hatred of the Jews, Gypsies, and Slavs, it assumed an exterminatory character. The outstanding German historian Detlev Peukert³ derived the *Endlösung* not so much from traditional anti-Semitism as from the changes ushered in by the scientific paradigms of eugenics/racial hygiene, psychiatry, and anthropology.⁴ Focusing on the “quality” of life defined in terms of the usefulness of the individual, eugenics produced a category of worthless life. Peukert established a connection between the program of euthanasia for the patients of the Hadamar psychiatric hospital and the Holocaust. He demonstrated not only that the same gassing technique was used in both of these planned and methodically carried out acts of mass murder, but also that euthanasia, just like the sterilization program preceding it and the Holocaust that came later, fit into the same eugenic pattern of “exterminating worthless lives” and “eliminating burdensome existences”. Peukert’s motto: “Hadamard precedes Auschwitz” makes us realize that the euthanasia programs (and in a sense, the sterilization programs, too) were the prelude to scientific

² For more on the subject see Chapter 4.

³ Cf. *Nazizm, Trzecia Rzesza a procesy modernizacji*, ed. H. Orłowski (Poznań, 2000), pp. 205–233.

⁴ I discuss the terminological difference between eugenics and racial hygiene in Chapter 1.

genocide. This thesis was strengthened by additional arguments. The same medical personnel that committed planned euthanasia in German hospitals was subsequently “delegated” to extermination camps. What this means is that the same people first directed the program of the mass killing of the mentally ill, and later of concentration camp inmates.⁵ Peukert’s thesis was developed by other German historians, including Hans-Walter Schmuhl and Dirk Blasius.⁶ The only thing that remains is to express one’s regrets, following Hubert Orłowski, the editor of the collective work *Nazizm, Trzecia Rzesza a procesy modernizacji* (Nazism, the Third Reich, and modernization processes; Poznań, 2000), that the Polish context does not appear in the collected contributions (nor, generally, in the debate on the character of the *Endlösung*). Thus, events as important as the euthanasia campaigns in Polish psychiatric hospitals carried out by the German medical personnel beginning as early as 1939 are overlooked in the debate, and, indirectly, slip from collective memory. Independently of the German historical school, studies pointing to eugenics as the scientific basis for genocide have also appeared in English-language historiography. The outstanding historian George Mosse, author of the book *Toward the Final Solution: a History of European Racism* (London, 1978), should be mentioned here.

The authors stressing the civilization paradigm of genocide, from Hannah Arendt⁷ to Zygmunt Bauman,⁸ point out that it was a result of transformations associated with modernization, and more precisely of the marriage between highly specialized technology and racial anthropology. The automatism, fragmentation, Taylorization of the killing process, and the state-run slaughter so poignantly described by Arendt in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* – all these traits indicate that the Holocaust appeared in a rationalized, modern, highly developed society. Even though this interpretation has met with critical opinions, I regard it an important point of reference which has ordered my own reflection on the rise and development of Polish eugenics.

The subject of my work is the history of the Polish eugenics movement from the 1880s up to the reform of the learned societies in 1952. Even though I have focused mainly on the Polish Eugenics Society, this work should not be regarded as a monograph of that organization. What primarily

⁵ For more on the subject see Chapter 6.

⁶ Cf. D. Blasius, “Ambivalenzen des Fortschritts. Psychiatrie und psychisch Kranke in der Geschichte der Moderne”, in: *Zivilisation und Barbarei. Die widersprüchlichen Potentiale der Moderne. Detlev Peukert zum Gedenken*, eds. F. Bajhor, W. Johe, U. Lohalm (Hamburg, 1991); H.-W. Schmuhl, “Zreformowana psychiatria a masowa zagłada”, in: *Nazizm, Trzecia Rzesza*, p. 381.

⁷ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (London, 2006).

⁸ Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1989).

interested me was the social and political context of eugenics and the thrusts of eugenic thinking in Poland. The term ‘modernity’ that appears in the title of my book is interpreted here, following Max Weber (whom I will invoke further on in my work), as the co-existence of the following phenomena: a capitalist economy and a class industrial society, integrated bureaucratic state structures, the scientific and technological control of the world, and a rationalized and socially disciplined way of life.⁹

The Polish eugenics movement could not be and indeed was not isolated from similar movements arising in various parts of Europe. The English and German examples had a major impact on the Polish eugenics community. The rule that I tried to follow in this book is that foreign eugenics is a background or a point of reference, but never an independent subject of my research. I have made one exception to this rule. In Chapter 1, I present the origins of eugenics societies in Britain and Germany. In my opinion, this is a necessary device, intended to introduce the reader to the subject matter of eugenics and its international background.

This work is written in chronological order. I begin with the reception of Darwinism in Polish territories. Darwin’s theory of natural selection inspired Galton himself and laid the groundwork for the development of eugenics the world over. Darwinism took away from humankind the honourable title of the “crown of creation” and inspired the proposal for the scientific breeding of humans. I was particularly interested in the state of knowledge and awareness of the Polish intellectual elite. Did Darwinism spark an interest in the processes of inheritance in Polish territories, as it did in Western Europe? Which heredity theories were known to Polish scientists and to what uses did they wish to put them? How was heredity associated with the category of race?

The latter issue, the question of race, is related to the degeneration theories that paved the way for the development of eugenic practices all over the world. In Polish journalism and prose, the fear of the degeneration of the race/nation assumed the form of accusations against the industrial city as an environment causing degeneration, and of a debate on degenerative factors that included the mestization and isolation of human races.

Chapter 2 deals with the rise and institutional development of eugenics associations between 1905 and 1918. The revolution of 1905 in the Russian Empire was a special historical experience, peculiar to Central and Eastern Europe. Polish literature has described above all its social and political consequences: the overcoming of political passivity endemic following the armed defeat of the Poles’ bid for independence from the Tsar in 1864;

⁹ Cf. *Nazizm, Trzecia Rzesza*, p. 27.

the rise in the number of political parties; the exacerbation of ideological conflicts, etc. It has yet to be noted, however, that the 1905 revolution also resulted in the growing popularity of social Darwinism's tenets, and that it became an incentive for social activism in combating "the poisons of the race": alcoholism, venereal diseases, and prostitution. It was under these slogans that numerous temperance, abolitionist, and hygienic associations were founded. Indeed, the Polish Eugenics Society was a direct successor of the Polish Society for Combating Prostitution and Venereal Diseases and many other similar associations. That is why in Chapter 2 I analyse the articles published by the pre-eugenic *Czystość* (Purity) journal (1905–1909) and discuss the rise and development of other pre-eugenic associations up to 1918.

Chapter 3 is devoted in whole to the relations between the eugenic idea and the welfare and healthcare model that was taking shape within the framework of the Poland's state structures until the mid-1920s. I was interested in the problem of the impact of the modern state on the eugenics community and the eugenic idea. Thus, I have tried to answer the following questions: what hopes and plans did the eugenicists pin on the emergence of modern state structures? In which government administration sector did they declare their willingness to work? What kind of opinions on the nascent healthcare model did they express? I was also interested in the feedback that they received in the process under discussion: how did the state influence the professional and social status of physicians? May we speak about continuation or rather about change in the doctor's status and role in society as compared to the earlier period? Against this background, what was the clout and political influence of the eugenics community?

In Chapter 4, I present the debates and disputes within the eugenics community in the 1920s. I also show how, under the influence of slogans for a rationalization of professional and private life, both public trust in science and its consent to an eugenic selection of the population were growing. I have also devoted some attention to the presentation of the activities of Polish eugenicists at home and abroad. In conclusion, I juxtapose two social work models: that of the hygienists, deriving from the nineteenth-century Warsaw Hygienic Society, and that of the eugenicists, members of the Eugenics Society founded after the First World War.

In the 1930s, the decade that Chapter 5 is devoted to, eugenics goes beyond the framework of the Polish Eugenics Society. It attracted the interest of various scientific and social circles: anthropologists, psychiatrists, contributors to the military press, advocates of the neo-Malthusian movement, and proponents of a reform of mores. I tried to show the sources of fascination with eugenics both among scholars and social activists. This chapter also analyses opinions critical of the eugenic idea, voiced mainly by representatives

of the Roman Catholic Church. Subsequently, I present draft sterilization laws, stridently proposed by eugenicists in various versions from 1934 up to the outbreak of the Second World War, as well as the reactions of various political, social, and academic circles to that draft legislation.

In Chapter 6 I describe the enforcement of Nazi eugenic principles in occupied Poland. Nazi crimes: the extermination of Jews and Gypsies, but also mass murders in Polish psychiatric hospitals, had a major impact on the subsequent history of the eugenics movement in Poland in the postwar years. The authors of works on Nazi repression in occupied Poland do not use the term “eugenics” at all.¹⁰ Thus, the racial examinations of Polish citizens, the marriage ban that a sizeable group of Wielkopolska residents was subject to, Germanization campaigns, not to mention the extermination of entire groups of people (Jews, Gypsies, Poles, and the sick) were disconnected from the scientific paradigms underlying those criminal activities. In Chapter 6 I also touch upon the problem of Nazi eugenics in concentration camps – namely, the mass-scale sterilization and genetic experiments carried out on inmates.

After presenting wartime developments in eugenics, I go on to discuss the history of the Polish Eugenics Society following its reactivation in 1947. Despite meticulous research in archival records, I was unable to pinpoint the precise date of the society’s dissolution. Its formal dissolution seems to have taken place either in 1949 (this is the year that the final information about the society comes from) or at some later date. That is why I decided to extend this period up to the 1952 reform of the learned societies, in the course of which all of them were deprived of their independence and placed under the supervision of the Polish Academy of Sciences.¹¹

¹⁰ This is the case, i.a., with the excellent work by E. Serwański, *Wielkopolska w cieniu swastyki* (Warszawa, 1970).

¹¹ “The taking over of the supervision of the societies by the Polish Academy of Sciences – Waldemar Rolbiecki writes – [...] was a kind of disaster. For the societies were thus deprived of their academic independence and subjected to the scientific supervision of a central body. [...] Over the centuries of their existence, learned societies had never been completely ‘independent.’ They had always been subject to some kind of supervision. This had been, at various times, political, sometimes also religious, administrative and police supervision, but, apart from minor and peculiar exceptions, in our country this had never been scientific supervision. In this respect, each society was completely independent and could pursue its activities any way it pleased [...]. Now a fundamental change occurred: the societies were supposed to do not what they themselves came up with, but rather whatever followed from the ‘general conception’ of their academic work, to be developed by a central body. Thus, their role was reduced to complementing the work of the science sector, i.e., to performing a small part of its tasks, as it were. There was virtually no question any longer of opposing that sector with alternative scientific initiatives. A monopoly was emerging in Polish science.” Quoted after: *Życie naukowe*

This extension allowed me to describe the political climate of the late 1940s and the early 1950s, which importantly contributed to compromising the tenets of eugenics. The accusations that it was Western genetics together with the neo-Malthusian doctrine and eugenics that had laid the scientific groundwork for the extermination of entire groups of people during the Second World War ultimately put an end to whatever meagre prospects there might have been for the Eugenics Society's further activities. Leon Wernic, the founder and main propagator of Polish eugenics, died in 1953. The end of the period covered in the present study coincides with the dissolution of the PES (in 1949 or in the early 1950s). My choice of the time-limit, however, was motivated not by the dissolution of the Eugenics Society, but by the end of eugenics in terms of government administration, as an instrument for implementing a eugenic improvement of the population. After the PES disappeared, a slow evolution began towards the present-day forms of eugenics, or free-market eugenics, which lies outside my interests.

My interests were reflected in the selection of press sources. For the nineteenth century, I looked through selected annual volumes of *Wszechświat* (Universe), *Ateneum*, *Prawda* (Truth), *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* (Pedagogical Review), *Przegląd Tygodniowy* (Weekly Review) and *Głos* (Voice). For the 1905–1918 period, my main sources were the *Czystość* (Purity; 1905–1909) and *Zdrowie* (Health) journals as well as the socialist weekly *Ogniwo* (Link). For the interwar era, my principal press source was the quarterly *Zagadnienia Rasy* (Race Questions, from 1938 *Eugenika Polska* [Polish Eugenics]), published between 1918 and 1939. Apart from that, I consulted other social and medical journals, such as *Lekarz Polski* (Polish Physician), *Warszawskie Czasopismo Lekarskie* (Warsaw Medical Magazine), *Medycyna Społeczna* (Social Medicine), *Lekarz Wojskowy* (Military Doctor), *Medycyna Praktyczna* (Practical Medicine), *Polska Gazeta Lekarska* (Polish Medical Paper), *Higiena Psychiczna* (Mental Hygiene), *Trzeźwość* (Sobriety), *Biuletyn Państwowej Służby Zdrowia Publicznego* (State Public Health Service Bulletin), and *Praca i Opieka Społeczna* (Labour and Welfare). My other important sources were scientific journals as well as magazines popularizing science intended for the general public, such as *Przegląd Antropologiczny* (Anthropological Review), *Kosmos* (Cosmos).

From among magazines devoted to literature and social and political affairs, I need mention first and foremost *Wiadomości Literackie* (Literary News), as well as Kraków's *Życie Świadome* (Conscious Life), *Prosto z mostu* (To Put it Bluntly), *ABC*, *Szaniec* (Entrenchment), *Kurier Warszawski* (Warsaw Courier) and *Robotnik* (The Worker). As regards the Catholic press, I found the greatest

w Polsce w drugiej połowie XIX i w XX wieku. Organizacje i instytucje, ed. B. Jaczewski (Wrocław, 1987), p. 376.

number articles on eugenics in *Ateneum Kapłańskie* (Priestly Athenaeum) and *Przegląd Powszechny* (General Review). From the postwar period, I analysed the journals *Z służby zdrowia* (From the Health Service), *Służba Zdrowia* (Health Service) and *Kwartalnik Psychiatryczny* (Psychiatric Quarterly).

Archival records are a very important source for the interwar era, and they are my basic source for the post-Second World War period. I used documents collected at Warsaw's Central Archives of Modern Records (*Archiwum Akt Nowych*): the Interim Council of State, and the Ministry of Labour and Welfare records. The minutes from the Eugenics Section of the Chief State Health Council sessions, kept in the Central Medical Library Special Collection, were a valuable archival source for the 1930s. Working on the chapter devoted to the postwar years, I consulted the Education Ministry, Health Ministry and Higher Education Ministry Records, kept at the New Records Archive. The Leon Wernic papers from the Central Medical Library Special Collection were definitely my most important source; they include his lectures, private correspondence, reports on the activities of the Polish Eugenics Society from 1947–1949, minutes from the State Health Council sessions, as well as annexes and instructions to particular Health Ministry regulations.

Memoirs and reminiscences proved much less useful in my work on the present book. After the Second World War, doctors and social activists tried to conceal or pass over in silence their own involvement in the prewar eugenics movement. Thus, I used the available such literature, for example: *Wspomnienia* (Reminiscences) by Ludwik Krzywicki (Warszawa, 1959), *Pamiętnik przyrodnika* (A Naturalist's Memoirs) by Józef Nusbaum-Hilarowicz (Lwów, no date of publication given), *Wspomnienia* by Aleksander Świętochowski (Wrocław, 1966), *Osamotnienie. Pamiętniki z lat 1932–1942* (Solitude. Memoirs from the Years 1932–1942) by Odo Bujwid (Kraków, 1990), *Wyznania gorszyielki* (The Confessions of a Debaucher) by Irena Krzywicka (Warszawa, 1992), and *Historia jednego życia* (The Story of One Life) by Ludwik Hirszfild (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2010). These are the most important sources of information on the relevant era, rather than sources for the history of the eugenics movement itself.

Nor did I benefit much from studies on eugenics. Until recently, this subject had not been taken up by historians. The few articles on eugenics in Poland include “Dzieje Polskiego Towarzystwa Eugenicznego” (A history of the Polish Eugenics Society) by Ryszard Zabłotniak,¹² the pioneering articles by Krzysztof Kawalec: “Spór o eugenikę w latach 1918–1939” (The eugenics dispute in 1918–1939),¹³ and “Polska myśl polityczna wobec hitlerowskiej

¹² *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Technologii*, 4 (1971): 769–787.

¹³ *Medycyna Nowożytna. Studia nad Kulturą Medyczną*, 7, 2 (2000): 87–102.

ustawy eugenicznej z 14 VII 1933 r.” (Polish political thought on the Nazi eugenics law of 14 July 1933)¹⁴ that ushered the subject of eugenics into Polish historiography. Eugenics was also mentioned in Kawalec’s books on the margin of his discussion of the visions of government systems in the interwar era.¹⁵

There is an entry on the Polish Eugenics Society in *Słownik polskich towarzystw naukowych* (A Dictionary of Polish Learned Societies), edited by Barbara Sordylowa (Warszawa, 1990, vol. 2, part 1). We can find short notes on eugenicists in *Biogramy uczonych polskich* (Biographical Notes on Polish Scientists), edited by Andrzej Śródka and Paweł Szczawiński (Wrocław, 1985). A little more information is provided in books on the hygienic movement: *Polskie Towarzystwo Higieniczne* (The Polish Hygienic Society) by Cezary W. Korczak (Warszawa, 1995), and *Księga tradycji PTH* (On the traditions of the Polish Hygienic Society) by Maciej Demel (Warszawa–Łódź 1986).

Eugenics is not covered in the multi-volume *Historia nauki polskiej* (A history of Polish science) edited by Bohdan Suchodolski (vol. 5, Wrocław, 1992), nor in the collective work edited by Bohdan Jaczewski *Życie naukowe w Polsce w drugiej połowie XIX i w XX wieku. Organizacje i instytucje* (Academic life in Poland in the second half of the nineteenth and in the twentieth century. Organizations and institutions) (Wrocław, 1987).

In contrast to the scant historiographic writings on the eugenics movement in Poland (the situation is similar in the other East and Central European countries), there is ample material on the history of eugenics in Western, especially English-speaking countries. The first bibliographic compendium, which listed most of the works published in Western Europe and the United States, appeared in 1924.¹⁶ After the Second World War, the activities of the eugenics movements in Europe came to a standstill. It was not until the 1960s that research into the history of eugenics was initiated by historians from English-speaking countries. The authors of the first postwar works on American eugenics were Mark Haller and Donald K. Pickens.¹⁷ In 1970, Lyndsay Farrall’s pioneering doctoral dissertation on Britain’s eugenics movement was completed.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Studia nad faszyzmem i zbrodniami hitlerowskimi w Europie*, vol. 20 (Wrocław, 1997).

¹⁵ K. Kawalec, *Wizje ustroju państwa w polskiej myśli politycznej lat 1918–1939. Ze studiów nad dziejami polskiej myśli politycznej* (Wrocław 1995); id., *Spadkobiercy Niepokornych. Dzieje polskiej myśli politycznej 1918–1939* (Wrocław, 2000).

¹⁶ Cf. S.J. Holmes, *A Bibliography of Eugenics* (Berkeley, 1924).

¹⁷ Cf. M. Haller, *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* (New Brunswick, 1963); D.K. Pickens, *Eugenics and Progressives* (Nashville, 1968).

¹⁸ Cf. L.A. Farrall, *The Origins and the Growth of the English Eugenics Movement 1865–1925* (New York, 1985), as well as id., “The history of eugenics. A bibliographical review”, *Annals of Science*, 36 (1979): 111–123.

In the 1970s, there was a growing interest in eugenics. It was then that works by Geoffrey Russell Searle, Donald A. MacKenzie,¹⁹ and Michael Freedon²⁰ were written. Not without relevance were also works by Gertrude Himmelfarb,²¹ and Greta Jones,²² which, though focusing mainly on Darwinism, did touch upon the subjects of heredity and eugenics.

In the mid-1980s, Daniel Kevles' book²³ was published, in which the author presented eugenics as part of the history of genetics, thereby opening a new field for debate, i.e., the relationship between genetics and eugenics.²⁴

In 1990 Angus McLaren's work was published on the history of the eugenics movement in Canada.²⁵ That scholar, the author of a number of works on the history of contraception and birth control in England and France²⁶ stressed, more explicitly than had his predecessors, the relationship between neo-Malthusianism, the women's movement, and eugenics. The problem of the involvement of women in the eugenics movement

¹⁹ Cf. G.R. Searle, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain 1900–1914* (Leyden, 1976); id., “Eugenics and Class”, *Social Studies of Sciences*, 6 (1977): 217–242; id., “Eugenics and Politics in Britain in the 1930's”, *Annals of Sciences*, 36 (1979): 159–169; D. MacKenzie, “Eugenics in Britain”, *Social Studies of Sciences*, 6 (1976): 499–532; id., “Karl Pearson and the Professional Middle Class”, *Annals of Sciences*, 36 (1979): 125–143; id., *Statistics in Britain 1865–1930: The Social Construction of Scientific Knowledge* (Edinburgh, 1981).

²⁰ Cf. M. Freedon, “Eugenics and Progressive Thought: A Study in Ideological Affinity”, *Historical Journal*, 22, 3 (1979): 645–671; see also G. Jones, “Eugenics and Social Policy Between the Wars”, *Historical Journal*, 25, 3 (1982): 717–728. From among more recent studies: R.A. Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration. Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, 1990).

²¹ Cf. G. Himmelfarb, *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution* (Garden City, NY, 1959).

²² G. Jones, *Social Darwinism and English Thought: The Interaction between Biological and Social Theory* (New Jersey, 1980).

²³ Cf. D.J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics, Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (Cambridge–London 1995; 1st ed. 1983).

²⁴ As commonly understood, the history of genetics begins only in 1900, with the rediscovery of Mendel's laws of inheritance. However, that year crowned a long process of searching for inheritance mechanisms with more or less speculative theories. Like Darwin, Weismann, Naegeli, and Haeckel, Galton was searching for a method to discover the rules of heredity. Together with Karl Pearson, he developed the statistical heredity method. After 1900, he questioned Mendel's laws. Following Galton's death in 1911, the tension between the Mendelian and statistical schools gradually abated. In the interwar years, most geneticists came to accept Mendel's laws.

²⁵ Cf. A. McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada 1885–1945* (Toronto–Ontario, 1990).

²⁶ Cf. A. McLaren, *Birth Control in Nineteenth Century England* (New York, 1978); id., *Sexuality and Social Order. The Debate over the Fertility of Women and Workers in France 1770–1920* (New York–London, 1983); id., *A History of Contraception: from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford, 1990).

had been mentioned in Canadian historiography much earlier – namely, in the collective work edited by Linda Kealey *A Not Unreasonable Claim. Woman and Reform in Canada 1880s–1920s* (Toronto 1979) and in Carol Lee Bacchi's book *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragist, 1877–1918* (Toronto 1983).²⁷ McLaren was the first, however, to analyse this phenomenon in depth.

Studies on eugenics including a gender perspective are clearly gaining momentum. The most recent works include: Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain since 1880* (London, 2000), and the article by Molly Ladd-Taylor, "Eugenics, Sterilization, and Modern Marriage in the USA: The Strange Career of Paul Popenoe" (*Gender and History*, 2 [2001]: 307).

In the 1980s and 1990s, the wave of interest in eugenics coming from the English-speaking countries reached the Nordic countries, the pioneers of sterilization in Europe in the interwar years. Denmark was the first European country to introduce voluntary sterilization in 1929, and forced sterilization six years later. In 1934, coercive sterilization was introduced by Norway and Sweden, and one year later by Finland. Besides medical and eugenic recommendations for sterilization, social causes, e.g., the lack of funds to support numerous offspring, were also considered legitimate. If the patient refused to give his or her consent to sterilization, various kinds of pressure were applied. From 1938 in Sweden, for example, abortion on eugenic grounds was connected with sterilization. If the woman opposed sterilization, the doctors refused to perform an abortion. This practice of combining abortion and sterilization procedures survived there as all the way into the 1950s.²⁸ In all Nordic countries, it was chiefly individuals deprived of family protection and support that fell victim to the sterilization laws. Medical questionnaires that provided the basis for sterilization decisions are a separate source for investigating eugenic practices. They show just how unrealistic was the objectivity requirement in valuing individuals according to eugenic criteria, as invoked by artificial selection enthusiasts. The medical diagnosis of an inmate of a Finnish nursing home, stating that she had inclinations to steal and sell illegal alcohol,²⁹ was the basis of a sterilization decision – and unfortunately it was no exception. The Nordic countries are unique in Europe in that the sterilization practices intensified there during the Second World War. After the war, when the eugenic paradigm was

²⁷ The complex relationship between feminism and eugenics is discussed in an article by R. Love, "Alice in Eugenics-Land. Feminism and Eugenics in the Scientific Careers of Alice Lee and Ethel Elderton", *Annals of Sciences* 36 (1979): 145–158.

²⁸ In 1942, 180 such cases were noted, and as many as 5000 in 1949.

²⁹ *Eugenics and the Welfare State, Sterilization Policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland*, eds. G. Brobert, N. Roll-Hansen (East Lansing, Michigan, 1996), p. 237.

widely abandoned in Europe, in the Nordic countries it survived into the 1970s as an important element of the state's health policy.

Nordic research undermined the thesis concerning the right-wing and nationalist character of eugenics.³⁰ In Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Norway, eugenics was an integral part of the welfare state idea. Social democratic parties pushed eugenic legislation, including forced sterilization legislation, through their parliaments.³¹ Among the factors that determined the popularity of eugenics in broad social milieux, the following are mentioned: the progressing secularization of social life, the gradual fading of Christian ethical standards, and the growing confidence in science and social engineering.

Studies on German eugenics have a separate place in historiography. As in the case of the Nordic countries, the main works on the subject were published relatively late. In 1984, Benno Müller-Hill published a book (available in English since 1988) in which he described the involvement of outstanding German scientists in the Nazi extermination program. This was the first work of the kind to dispose of the theses claiming that Nazi medicine had a "pseudo-scientific" basis.³² Other valuable studies on Nazi eugenics include the biography of Wilhelm Schallmayer³³ and a collective work of more than 700 pages by Peter Weingart, Jürgen Kroll, and Kurt Bayertz presenting eugenics in the context of German culture from the time of Weismann and Nietzsche until the end of the Second World War.³⁴ Works by Proctor Robert and Paul Weindling³⁵ have also come to be widely known.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ In the summing-up chapter of the book, Nils Roll-Hansen writes that after the Second World War, eugenics gained a reputation as a conservative, even a reactionary movement. However, the close connections between eugenics and the social reform movement are now widely recognized. In particular, eugenic sterilization was an integral part of the welfare state that took shape in the 1930s and 1940s. In Denmark, for example, the first government board charged with considering sterilization and other eugenic methods was established immediately after the left came into power in 1924. As a result of these measures, in 1929 Denmark became the first Nordic country to pass a sterilization law. The social democratic faith in eugenics lasted all the way until the 1950s; *ibid.*, p. 260.

³² B. Müller-Hill, *Murderous Science: Elimination by Scientific Selection of Jews, Gypsies, and Others. Germany 1933–1945* (Oxford–New York, 1988)

³³ Cf. S.F. Weiss, *Race Hygiene and National Efficiency: The Eugenics of Wilhelm Schallmayer* (Berkeley, 1987).

³⁴ P. Weingart, J. Kroll, K. Bayertz, *Rasse, Blut und Gene: Geschichte der Eugenik und Rassenhygiene in Deutschland* (Frankfurt a. Mein, 1988).

³⁵ Cf. R. Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, 1988); P. Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazis 1870–1945* (Cambridge, 1989). Weindling is the author of numerous other works, books and articles, on eugenics. A detailed list of publications is given in the book *The Wellborn Science. Eugenics*

In addition to monographs, a tendency has emerged to publish comparative studies. Attempts of this kind include a 1990 collective volume edited by Mark B. Adams that juxtaposes the history of eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and the Soviet Union, as well as Hans-Walter Schmuhl's work on eugenics in totalitarian states namely, the Soviet Union and Germany.³⁶ These studies show important differences between eugenic movements in various countries. In Britain eugenics developed thanks to affluent donors, while in Germany and the Nordic countries as part of state institutions. The state funding of and state support for eugenics was conducive to enacting sterilization legislation. The economic crisis was a factor that promoted public acceptance of eugenics and sterilization legislation. It was not an accident that Denmark introduced, as the first European country, voluntary sterilization in the year of an economic crisis. In the early 1930s, successive European states introduced coercive sterilization or, as was the case in Britain, eugenicists formed pressure groups in an effort to persuade the parliament or government administration to introduce it.³⁷ Everywhere, the Roman Catholic Church, which throughout the interwar period consistently rejected eugenic doctrine, was an institution impeding eugenic programs.³⁸

The brief bibliographical overview presented above shows that eugenics is situated on four planes – to wit, as an extensive fragment of: the history of science (biology, medicine, genetics); the social sciences (anthropology, sociology and psychology); social history (neo-Malthusianism, the birth control movement, the revolution in social mores); and the history of ideas. The most recent literature on eugenics seeks to integrate all these different planes.

To conclude, I offer a few editorial comments. In my work, identical family names of various doctors appear with different given names. The reason for this is that we are often dealing with medical clans. For example, there were four doctors called Sterling in the interwar era: Seweryn Sterling (b. 1864, specialist in internal medicine), Waclaw Sterling (b. 1870, skin disease specialist), Władysław Sterling (b. 1876, psychiatrist), and Stefan Adam Sterling-Okuniewski (b. 1884, specialist in internal medicine).

in Germany, France, Brazil and Russia, ed. M.B. Adams (Oxford, 1990), pp. 51–68 and 227–231.

³⁶ Cf. *Rassenhygiene in Deutschland – Eugenik in der Sowjetunion: Ein Vergleich*, in *Im Dschungel der Macht. Intellektuelle Professionen unter Stalin und Hitler*, ed. D. Beyrau (Göttingen, 2000), 365–378.

³⁷ On the order of enacting sterilization legislation in Europe cf. Chapter 5.

³⁸ In Canada, as a result of opposition from Catholics in the Quebec province, sterilization legislation could not be pushed through, while in the Protestant provinces of Alberta and British Columbia it was passed without impediment. Cf. McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, p. 126.

The second comment concerns the term eugenics itself. It was commonly used before the war. The phrase “the eugenics of the Polish nation”, popular especially in medical circles, was often a synonym for “the health of the nation”. The very occurrence of the term “eugenics” in someone’s remarks does not entail the author’s potential consent to a eugenic selection of the population. Bearing that in mind, I did my best to distinguish between the use of the term under discussion in a neutral context and the author’s clear commitment to a eugenic correction of the population.

My third comment concerns the language of writings on medical and social problems. The linguistic conventions that we are used to today were most definitely not observed during the period in question. Words such as “the blind”, “cripples”, “idiots”, “imbeciles”, “dimwits”, “morons” were used in journalism and even in official documents. The term “the disabled” used in the present-day Polish language was not in use at that time. Medical pamphlets from the interwar era very often presented a child’s physical or mental disability to the parents/caregivers as an irreversible disaster, viewed as a punishment for a reprehensible lifestyle (e.g., for alcohol abuse which was believed to have a degenerating effect) or simply “bad” heredity. Given that context, disabled people were social outcasts. At that time, no-one had heard of integration schools, associations, or social campaigns aimed at including people with intellectual disability into community life. People belonging to that category generally did not have access to sundry forms of social life, from education to attending a play or concert.³⁹

In this sense, language is in itself an important source of information on the period, in that it reflects people’s awareness and sensitivities. While acknowledging this problem, I think it is a serious mistake to justify the brutality of the eugenicists’ language with the historical context. The eugenicists did increase the public distrust of the incurably ill, disabled, or mentally-challenged in any other way. They openly admitted to dreaming of breeding and selecting the population in line with scientific recommendations. Their activities were the consequence of the choice they had made, the choice of a perspective defining human life solely in terms of its quality.

Now I would like to fulfil the pleasant obligation of expressing my gratitude to individuals and institutions that have helped me at various stages

³⁹ Even though schools for intellectually disabled children did develop in the interwar years, the educational concepts of the day could hardly be described as promoting integration. Under the law, the teaching of mentally retarded children was facultative and depended on the existence locally of *appropriate educational establishments*. Cf. W. Sterling, “Opieka lecznicza nad dzieckiem anormalnym”, *Zagadnienia Opieki nad Dziećmi i Młodzieżą w Polsce*, 18 (1935): 9; M. Wawrzynowski, “Opieka wychowawcza nad dziećmi upośledzonymi umysłowo”, *Zagadnienia Opieki nad Dziećmi i Młodzieżą w Polsce*, 13 (1931): 5–129.

of my research for and during the writing of this book. I wish to thank the De Brzezie Lanckoronski Foundation, which granted me a scholarship in London in 2000 that allowed me to acquaint myself with English-language literature on eugenics and thus place my work in a broader context. I am also grateful to the State Committee for Scientific Research, which partially funded the publication of my book. My very special thanks go to Professor Janusz Żarnowski for his supervision and the versatile assistance I could always count on. Professor Żarnowski laboriously read through individual chapters of my work, which allowed me to avoid major mistakes as well as weaknesses with felicity. I also wish to thank Professor Jerzy Jedlicki for his discreet friendly support and interest in my subject, something I could feel throughout my work. Excerpts from the present work were discussed at meetings of the Social Transformations Section and History of the Intelligentsia Section of the History Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, attended by Professor Anna Landau, Professor Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, Professor Andrzej Jaszczuk, Dr Katarzyna Sierakowska, Professor Magdalena Micińska, Professor Maciej Janowski, and Professor Anna Żarnowska of the History Institute of the University of Warsaw. I thank all of them for their insightful observations that helped me develop the final idea of my dissertation. I also thank my reviewers: Professor Jerzy Jedlicki and Professor Andrzej Chwalba for their valuable comments on and corrections to my book.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE RISE OF THE POLISH EUGENICS MOVEMENT (1880–1904)

1. THE ORIGINS OF EUGENICS: BRITAIN AND GERMANY

Darwin's theory of evolution, Mendel's laws of inheritance, and Galton's proposal for artificial race selection laid the groundwork for the development of the eugenic idea in the twentieth century. Underlying the early history of eugenics were these three names: Darwin, Mendel, and Galton.

From the time of the publication *On the Origin of Species* (1859), Darwin's theory began to live a life of its own. Ever since then, numerous scientists, commentators, and politicians have admitted to having been inspired by it. Darwin's work has been invoked by nationalists and socialists, militarists and pacifists, proponents of *laissez-faire* capitalism and advocates of the welfare state. Darwinism has provided arguments for liberals and conservatives alike.¹ It has influenced economic and social theories, both old and new. The public protest against applying Darwinian theory to the social sciences has been diverse, too. Conservatives have accused Darwinism of sanctioning the brutalization of social life, and socialists of moral consent to an unjust redistribution of goods and social differences.²

The theory of evolution by means of natural selection sparked interest in the question of heredity. For if organic life as a whole transforms itself in the long chain of generations, the phenomenon of passing on traits becomes all the more important, as it is on this phenomenon that the quality of the next link in the chain of evolution depends. Scientists of the stature of Darwin, Weismann, Naegeli, and Haeckel studied heredity. The theories of pangenesis, idioplasm, germ-plasm continuity, and mechanical heredity

¹ Cf. J. Jedlicki, *Świat zwyrodniały. Lęki i wyroki krytyków nowoczesności* (Warszawa, 2000), p. 160.

² Ludwik Krzywicki wrote most extensively on the issue in his article "Arystokracja ducha (studium darwinowsko-socjologiczne)" (Aristocracy of the spirit [a Darwinian and sociological study]), in: *Artykuły i rozprawy 1886–1888. Dzieła*, vol. 3 (Warszawa, 1959), pp. 65–92 (first published in the weekly *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45 of 1886).

were developed. None of them was capable of reconstructing the genuine mechanism of heredity, however.

Scientists seeking to outdo one another in speculative theories overlooked the discovery of Gregor Mendel, the Augustinian monk from St. Thomas' Abbey in Brno. Mendel did not conform to the image of the scientist as epitomized by Darwin or Galton. He came from a poor family, he was a mediocre student, he was not a member of any learned societies, nor was he in communication with any foreign representatives of the biological sciences. Jacob Bronowski described Mendel as "an allotment-gardener naturalist".³ Indeed, it was only in his leisure time that Mendel grew sweet pea plants to decorate the abbey's garden. He published merely one paper based on his experiments in 1866 in the journal of the Natural History Society of Brno. The article, completely ignored by scientists, caused disapproval on the part of Mendel's superiors, who forbade him to experiment with mammals. Mendel experimented on bees, but the particular species he bred turned out be exceptionally venomous and aggressive: they were especially dangerous for the local residents, and had to be exterminated. After Mendel's death as abbot in 1884, the new abbot had all his notes and manuscripts burned. Mendel's important experiments remained in oblivion for over 30 years. It was not until 1900 that several scientists recreated them in laboratory conditions.

Francis Galton (1822–1911), Darwin's cousin, the proper founder of eugenics, was a classic example of the Victorian scientist. He came from an affluent family and received a thorough education. At 22, he received a B.A. in mathematics from the University of Cambridge. He had a wide range of interests: from experimental psychology, anthropology, criminology, and statistics to linguistic research. He was a member of several learned societies, inventor, constructor, and explorer. His greatest inventions include a device for testing hearing ability (which became a standard piece equipment in psychological laboratories) and the development of the method of identification by means of fingerprints.

In 1869 Galton published the work *Hereditary Genius*. In it he presented the basic problems studied by the science that he later called eugenics. He argued that the development prospects of any civilization depended on the condition of the race. The more outstanding individuals in a given race, the better the civilization developed. The processes of the decline of ancient civilizations were actually the histories of race degeneration, which had once threatened the ancient Athenians (he classified their race the highest on his 10-point scale) as it in his own time threatened the European race. In order to prevent degeneration, one should encourage gifted individuals, or even

³ J. Bronowski, *Potęga wyobraźni* (Warszawa, 1988), p. 383.

whole talented families, to produce numerous offspring. Galton had no doubts whatsoever that talents for politics, sports, and poetry writing were inherited like the eye or skin colour. In order to convince others that this was the case, he compiled detailed genealogies of English lawyers, scholars, artists, and sportsmen. As with talents, so negative traits: physical and mental retardation, along with attraction towards crime and cruelty, were also subject to the processes of heredity. That is why Galton argued that the reproduction of families burdened with bad heredity should be limited. However, he warned, not everywhere could the selection measures bring the desired result. Sometimes a race's hereditary traits were an irremovable barrier. In these cases, he prophesied, such races would be "supplanted and replaced by their betters".⁴

After the publication of *Hereditary Genius*, Galton continued his study of heredity. He collected detailed information on the lives of almost 80 sets of twins. The most interesting data concerned those twins that had been separated in childhood. Despite living in different environments, the siblings chose the same or similar occupations, married at the same age and, over time, got the same diseases. The research results confirmed Galton in his belief that heredity was the key to the improvement of the race.

In 1883 he published a book *Inquiries into Human Faculty*, in which he first used the term "eugenics". In this work he discussed in greater detail and developed the theses first presented in *Hereditary Genius*. He concluded that inequalities between people were caused by nature itself. The existence of a social hierarchy was therefore a natural verification of the fitter and the stronger. Most people were characterized by low intellectual and moral standards that impeded the progress of civilization. Therefore, control should be taken over the process of human evolution by deliberately supporting the fittest and most worthy individuals. This was the task that he assigned to the new science of eugenics.

In his book Galton criticized traditional charity and philanthropy. "Emotional humanitarianism" ignored the laws of evolution and interfered with natural selection, increasing the number of degenerate individuals. He proposed replacing the traditional forms of caring for the poor with scientific philanthropy that would provide care to worthy individuals only. He proposed addressing assistance to the strong rather than the weak and the healthy rather than the sick, and to think about the future rather than the present. He also thought that with its "noble aim" of promoting race development, eugenics might become a national creed, or even a kind of civil religion. He

⁴ F. Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry Into Its Laws and Consequences* (Honolulu, 2001), p. 40; Jedlicki, *Świat zwyrodniały*, p. 171.

predicted that both law and custom would come to guard eugenic principles. Like caste-matched marriages in Hinduism, the celibacy of Roman Catholic priests, and Muslim polygamy, a rational physical selection combined with eugenic selection of individuals would become a permanent feature of the moral and legal code of modern societies.

In institutional terms, the eugenics movements in the British Isles developed successfully. This was the doing of a young mathematician and Cambridge graduate, Karl Pearson (1857–1936). Galton met him in the late 1880s. Pearson, at that time under the strong influence of Ferdinand Lassalle's and Karl Marx's writings, belonged to the Men's and Women's Club, promoting free relationships and birth control.⁵ In that club he met both the eminent sexologist Havelock Ellis and Maria Stopes, a birth control advocate. Thus, Pearson equally supported women's emancipation and the neo-Malthusian movement. On the women's question, he definitely differed from Galton, who opposed women's emancipation and defended the Contagious Diseases Act, which stipulated the compulsory medical inspection of prostitutes, something attacked by neo-abolitionists. Unlike the old liberals who, like John Stuart Mill, advocated voluntary motherhood and the rights of women to develop their individual abilities, Galton believed that differences between the sexes were a biological fact that could not be ignored by invoking the principles of justice and equality. The woman's role, Galton believed, was determined by the biological functions of her body. He repeated that it was not politics but biology that had subjected woman to man.⁶

As late as the First International Eugenics Congress in London in 1912, the birth control movement met with criticism. In the opinion of the eugenicists attending the event, birth control had brought about negative changes in social structure. Due to the use of contraceptives and women's education, eugenically worthy families were bearing the fewest children, while the urban and rural poor produced the most.

However, the reformers of bourgeois morality who were interested in eugenics, notably Havelock Ellis, proposed a solution that was eventually adopted by a major part of the English eugenicists of the interwar era. Ellis showed eugenicists that their objectives could be achieved not only by invoking Galton's anti-egalitarian rhetoric. As a future mother, the woman should choose a man on the basis of his eugenic value. This requires the

⁵ Cf. D. MacKenzie, "Karl Pearson and the Professional Middle Class", *Annals of Science*, 36 (1979): 135.

⁶ For more on the complex relations between the birth control movement and eugenics, see Chapter 5.

freedom of choice that tradition and social conventions deny her. Darwin himself taught that animals had developed numerous secondary traits thanks to sexual selection that had been the woman's primeval instinct in nature. The woman's liberation from social and economic restrictions is the basis of successful eugenic selection. The argument was convincing for both sides; eugenicists gradually abandoned their anti-feminist rhetoric, and female birth control movement activists found their way into eugenics associations.⁷

Influenced by the works of Galton and the zoology professor W.F.R. Weldon, in the late 1890s Pearson devoted himself to intensive statistical studies. It was not until after 1900, when Mendel's theory (called 'genetics' by William Bateson) was rediscovered, that he engaged in close cooperation with Galton. When some English scientists recognized the correctness of the tenets of genetics, Galton in protest left the Evolution Committee of the Royal Society which he had founded. One year later, together with Pearson he established the *Biometrika* quarterly. They published in it the law of ancestral heredity. As a result, permanent tension arose between two schools of heredity, the biometric and the Mendelian. In their dispute with Mendel's supporters, the position of eugenicists was weaker, as they did not have scientific institutions or laboratories at their disposal. Therefore, Galton decided to donate 1,500 pounds to the University of London for eugenic studies. In 1905, the first issue of *The Eugenics Review* was published. In 1907, the British Eugenics Education Society was founded, with Galton as its head. After his death in 1911, Leonard Darwin, a son of the great naturalist, became first its chairman, and later its honorary president. Under Galton's will, the first chair of eugenics was set up at the University of London under Pearson's direction. This marked the end of the formative stage of the eugenics movement in Britain.

The movement's members and sympathizers were persons connected with the reform camp, broadly defined. The most active eugenicists included: Montague Hughes Crackanthrope (1832–1913), an Oxford graduate, lawyer, commentator, member of the International Commission on Criminal Sentences, EES president in 1909–1911; William Allan Chapple (1864–1936), a doctor and politician, author of a dozen or so books on medicine and education; Leonard Darwin (1850–1943), Charles' son, a retired intelligence officer with the Ministry of War, president of the Royal Geographical Society, long-time EES chairman; William Ralph Inge (1860–1954), an Anglican priest, Cambridge graduate, university teacher and essayist, dean of St. Paul's cathedral; Caleb Williams Saleeby (1878–1940), a journalist, Edinburgh University graduate, member of the National Temperance League

⁷ Cf. G. Jones, *Social Darwinism and English Thought. The Interaction Between Biological and Social Theory* (Sussex, New York, 1980), p. 110.

and the National Birthrate Commission, advisor in the Ministry of Food in 1917–1918; Alfred Frank Tredgold (1870–1952), a neurologist, specialist on mental diseases, expert of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded, Royal Medical Society member; William Cecil Dampier Whetham (1867–1952), a physicist, Cambridge graduate, author of a number of books on eugenics; and Arnold White (1848–1925), a journalist who unsuccessfully ran for parliament several times, and one of the most staunch agitators demanding a limitation of Jewish immigration to Britain.⁸

The eugenic demand to put an end to the procreation of the mentally retarded and the mentally ill was enthusiastically supported by Winston Churchill. In 1909, he personally distributed Alfred Tredgold's eugenic brochure in political circles. In 1912, the home secretary presented a government Mental Deficiency Bill. The law was to limit the reproduction of the feeble-minded, stipulating penalties for those marrying such persons. However, as a result of strong opposition in Parliament, the bill was rejected.

In the early 1930s, with growing unemployment caused by the Great Depression, the British eugenics movement revived. Nevertheless, a eugenic bill presented by a Labour MP was blocked in the House of Commons. Consequently, eugenicists changed their tactics and turned towards the civil service. Their pressure led to setting up a government board headed by Sir Laurence Brock to examine the problem of sterilization of the mentally retarded from the medical point of view. A report published by the board stated outright (despite the lack of conclusive medical evidence) that mental retardation was hereditary. The report was intended as an introduction to sterilization bills. At the same time, the news coming from Nazi Germany of the barbarism with which the sterilization law was enforced (condemned even in *The Eugenics Review*) made wide circles of society distance themselves from coercive sterilization. The Labour Party, whose members criticized eugenics as a form of struggle against the lower social classes, came to oppose the idea of eugenic selection. Of some importance were also the environmental explanations of human nature that gained popularity thanks to the social sciences in the latter half of the 1930s.

Apart from the British model, the Polish eugenics movement was also influenced by German eugenics, known as racial hygiene (*Rassenhygiene*). The German eugenics movement dated back to the 1890s. One may discern four principal stages in its development: the formative stage (1890–1903), racial hygiene in Wilhelmine Germany (1904–1918) and in the Weimar Republic (1918–1933), and Nazi racial hygiene (1933–1939 and 1939–1944). Three contexts need to be taken into consideration while analysing German eugenics/

⁸ G.R. Searle, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain 1900–1914* (Leyden, 1976), pp. 116–117.

racial hygiene: the social problems resulting from rapid industrialization, the character and traditions of the German medical community, and the attractiveness of the “selective” variant of social Darwinism for German naturalists, physicians, and social theorists.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, rapid industrialization occurred in the Reich that transformed the structure of German society. The urban proletariat emerged, radical left-wing political movements began to grow, and various forms of workers’ protests intensified. The German bourgeoisie (Bürgertum) was frightened of and anxious about the uncontrolled growth of the proletariat. The social pathologies accompanying industrialization and urbanization caused deep concern. Rising crime in the cities, the spread of alcoholism and prostitution, increasing rates of suicide and the proportion of individuals with mental defects (mental retardation, mental illnesses) were pointed out. Scholars and journalists coined the phrase *soziale Frage* (social question) to cover the social problems caused by the processes of industrialization. From these debates arose the question of the growing number of “unproductive, asocial types”, which over time became a permanent element of a new form of social policy: racial hygiene.

Almost all racial hygiene advocates studied medicine. In accordance with the scientific paradigm of the day, they held the opinion that most severe disorders were hereditary and attributed to their own profession the role of guardians of the physical and mental health of the people as a whole. That Prometheanism had its roots in the earlier traditions of Germany’s medical community. In the mid-nineteenth century, a movement for hygiene and improving public health emerged. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century, as medicine and hygiene rapidly developed, the physician’s professional and social status rose. From the 1880s, social issues viewed through the prism of social Darwinism, popularized by the biologist Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) and the embryologist August Weismann (1834–1914), were discussed in medical circles.

At the formative stage of the German eugenic idea, an important role was played by Wilhelm Schallmayer and Alfred Ploetz. Schallmayer specified the theoretical and practical questions of German eugenics, while Ploetz laid the basis for its institutional development. The first periodical devoted to eugenics, *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie*, was established by Ploetz in 1904. The articles published in it may be divided into several categories: dealing with evolution and genetics, written by outstanding biologists such as Carl Correns, Hugo de Vries, and Erich Czermak (the authors of the rediscovery of Mendel’s laws in 1900), August Weismann, Wilhelm Johannsen and Ludwig Plate; describing the symptoms of social degeneration

(e.g., alcoholism, various forms of mental disorders and sexual deviations, including homosexuality); discussing “dysgenic” effects, i.e., the social and economic costs of the “protection of the weak” (concerning the work of both non-governmental and governmental organizations); and anthropological articles exploring connections between anthropology and eugenics.

The next stage in the institutional development of eugenics was the founding of the Society for Racial Hygiene. In 1905, Alfred Ploetz, Ernst Rüdin and the psychiatrist Anastasius Nordenholz established a Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene in Berlin, the first professional eugenic organization in the world. Thanks to Ploetz’s efforts, in 1907 it was transformed into an international organization (Internationale Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene) with two local centres in Berlin and Munich. In 1910, Ploetz specified the objectives of the organization, including: opposition to the family model with two children; promotion of big families among eugenically fit individuals; restoration of the dignity of motherhood as the woman’s principal vocation; the enactment of legal restrictions to prevent the reproduction of the unfit; combat against the poisons destroying the race (venereal diseases, tuberculosis, and alcoholism); toughened the immigration law; protection and expansion of the peasant stratum; and introduction of the principles of hygiene in the workplace and the places of everyday life of the urban populations.

The same year, a Deutsche Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene was founded, initially as a branch of the Internationale Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene. In 1916, given the small number of eugenic organizations from Europe and the United States declaring their willingness to cooperate with the Internationale Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene, Ploetz had to abandon his hopes of setting up one central international organization. In the following years, the German Society for Racial Hygiene came to dominate the International Society.

With the outbreak of the First World War, German eugenicists began to stress the promotion of nationwide population policy (Bevölkerungspolitik). Following in the footsteps of American eugenicists, they advocated sterilization as a reliable and safe means of stopping the reproduction of the unfit.

Representatives of German eugenics (including Ploetz and Schallmayer) established international contacts. Their articles published in the *Archiv* were translated and published in the American periodical *Journal of Heredity*. German eugenicists participated in the First International Eugenics Congress in London in 1912, where they joined those attacking the neo-Malthusian doctrine. Alfred Ploetz added racial arguments to social and class ones (that it is the lower, poorly educated, inferior strata that show the highest growth). He sounded the alarm, warning that the Germans and the Nordic race were facing a threat of being inundated with Slavic races: “Poles, Hungarians [*sic!*], Russians, and South Slavs – nationalities with strong Asiatic traits – have an

extremely high birth rate such that they are everywhere successfully pushing westward".⁹ Ploetz views the Slavic threat (Slavicization of the West) both in terms of civilization and biology. Immigrants from the East are weakly rooted in culture and civilization. The genetic material nature has equipped them with is too weak to create a civilization but strong enough to spoil the Nordic race.

In the interwar years, up to the Nazi period, the eugenics movement brought together doctors and commentators with left-wing views. As before the First World War, eugenicists agreed that human races should be viewed in a hierarchical order, yet they differed in their degree of acceptance of racism and anti-Semitism. Fritz Lenz, the leader of the eugenics movement, believed, for example, that the Nordics and the Jews, two races most productive in terms of civilization and culture, were at the top of the race hierarchy.¹⁰ He criticized the "emotional" anti-Semitism of other eugenicists, at the same time sharing their views concerning the invariable traits of the Jewish soul and the historical mission of the Aryan race. Others openly propagated anti-Semitic slogans. Others, like Alfred Grotjahn (1869–1931), tried to purify eugenics of racist influences. In the 1920s a sharp division between the enthusiasts of Aryan theories (Alfred Ploetz, Max von Gruber, Ernst Rüdin, Fritz Lenz) and their opponents (Wilhelm Schallmayer, Herman Muckermann, Artur Osterman, Alfred Grotjahn) appeared in the eugenics community. Their conflicts found reflection in eugenic terminology and in the movement's institutional development. In order to avoid racist connotations, Schallmayer did not want to use the term *Rassenhygiene* (racial hygiene). He adopted other terms in its place: *Vererbungshygiene* (hereditary hygiene) and *Rassendienst* (race service). The socialist Alfred Grotjahn proposed that German eugenics should be referred to as *Fortpflanzungshygiene*, i.e., reproductive hygiene. Tomasz Janiszewski, who translated Grotjahn's textbook into Polish in the early 1930s, rendered the term *Fortpflanzungshygiene* as "higiena ludzkiego rozrodu" (the hygiene of human reproduction).¹¹

When the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene merged with the Deutscher Bund für Volks Aufwärtung und Erbkunde (this union was founded in 1926, had about 15,000 members, was left-oriented in its opposition to racist views, and was headed by Karl von Behr-Pinnow), the name of the organization was changed to Deutsche Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene (Eugenic). It was an intentional move to demonstrate that racial hygiene was

⁹ *The Wellborn Science. Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia*, ed. M.B. Adams (Oxford, 1990), p. 27.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹¹ See Chapter 5.

a counterpart of eugenics. These tendencies were expressed in the *Eugenik* journal, which, even though it did not have a position equal to the *Archiv* in the international arena, was nevertheless an important platform for non-racist eugenicists to present their opinions.

In the 1920s, other scientific and research establishments were founded that popularized the principles of racial hygiene. In 1923, a racial hygiene university chair, headed by Fritz Lenz, was set up in Munich. Ten years later, about 40 university courses on eugenics were taught across Germany. In 1924, the Kaiser Wilhelm Psychiatry Institute was opened in Munich with the aid of the Rockefeller Foundation: it was managed by Ernst Rüdin after 1931. In 1927, the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics was founded in Berlin, headed by Eugen Fischer.

The activities of the German eugenics movement became increasingly visible in the international arena. In 1928 an International Congress of Federations of Eugenics Societies was organized in Munich. Wiktor Borkowski, an active contributor to *Zagadnienia Rasy*, attended it as a delegate of the Polish Eugenics Society. During the congress, foreign guests were given a tour of Ploetz's private laboratory and of the Kaiser Wilhelm Psychiatry Institute.

In the 1920s advocates of racism had little influence on the movement as a whole. Racist theories gained popularity during the Great Depression (1929–1932). Even so, it was only after 1933 that they came to dominate the entire eugenics movement as a result of administrative and political decisions. In the Nazi period, the *Deutsche Gesellschaft* lost its independence. It was subordinated to government health committees. It was to support government efforts in fulfilling tasks in the field of racial hygiene. In 1933, Ernst Rüdin deleted the word “eugenics” from the society's name. This was symbolic, as the possibility of promoting non-racist racial hygiene in Germany was thereby eliminated. Two influential eugenicists, Osterman and Muckermann, were forced to withdraw from the society's work (in 1937, Muckermann was forbidden even to write about eugenics). After 1934, the other non-racists as well as Jews, including the famous geneticist Richard Goldschmidt, were forced to leave the society.

Other *Deutsche Gesellschaft* members (such as Otto Helmut and Friedrich Burgdörfer) popularized the fear of Jews and Slavs. The principal aims of racial hygiene institutions included preparing SS doctors at courses for enforcing the principles of racial hygiene, genetics, and anthropology, assisting in the conduct of sterilization programs, drawing up racial certificates, and carrying out genealogical research for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In addition to the sterilization program (with between 200,000 and 370,000 sick individuals as its victims), a euthanasia program was conducted. During

the Second World War, Nazi eugenicists were sent to concentration camps to carry out medical experiments on inmates.¹²

Prior to the Nazi era, the German eugenics movement in many respects resembled the British one. From the very beginning, however, it was better organized and more closely connected to state structures than its UK counterpart. Scholars studying German eugenics emphasize the fact that up to the Nazi era, racist eugenicists did not have any major influence on the movement as a whole. Yet, on the other hand, Aryan myths as well as anti-Slav and anti-Semitic obsessions were decidedly stronger in Germany than in the British Isles. The *völkisch* ideology was also in tune with Nazi-era eugenics. Thus, additional circumstances had arisen in Germany prior to 1933 that made eugenics easily turn into an instrument of the totalitarian system after 1933.

Indeed, it was in Germany that the conflict between enthusiasts of Aryan theories and eugenicists rejecting racist theories was stronger than anywhere else. Two biological visions of the human condition based on determinist assumptions clashed in this conflict. Even the milder, non-racist version of eugenics contained a dangerous load of hatred of and contempt for everything that was weak in society. Professor Grotjahn, a socialist and opponent of racism, offered assurances in his eugenic textbook that “asthenics and others with hereditary disorders could disappear from among humanity without any detriment whatsoever to society”.¹³ Both types of eugenics reduced human beings to the level of biological material: race or set of genes determined their value.

The success of eugenics, a science popularizing the fear of degeneration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, was a symptom of the crisis of the liberal idea. Most of the nineteenth century passed in the atmosphere of rivalry between two theories: Malthus’ pessimistic one and Spencer’s optimistic. Eugenics took a stand in opposition to both these ideas. Followers of Spencer, who coined the “survival of the fittest” slogan, believed rivalry to be the key to multiple social specializations and forms of diversity. They believed that the struggle for survival was still going on, while eugenicists announced it had ended.

Liberal Malthusians saw poverty as a consequence of the lack of rational calculation among the working class. In order to limit it, they addressed moral appeals to the poor, called for responsibility and refraining from producing excessive numbers of progeny. Eugenicists, by contrast, explained

¹² For more on the subject see Chapter 6.

¹³ A. Grotjahn, *Higiena ludzkiego rozrodu* (Warszawa, 1930), p. 180.

the situation of the poor by bad heredity; consequently, they argued, poverty could not be alleviated by individual prudence. "The poor are not depraved, the poor are degenerate", the eugenic creed declared. While neo-Malthusian liberals assumed that the poor, while indeed being morally irresponsible, nevertheless might change if they saw the evil resulting from their actions, the younger generation of eugenicists denied the poor and the unfit a chance to right their mistakes. There was no turning back from bad heredity, they preached.¹⁴

While neo-Malthusian liberals focused on the size of the population, the eugenicists' attention was attracted not by its size, but by its quality. A consummate student of this problem, Angus McLaren, said: "The question was not if some survived, but who survived; the process of selection, not elimination, had to be controlled. The Malthusian and utilitarian concept of 'static adjustment' was thus replaced by the eugenicists with an evolutionary model in which heredity and environment, rather than reasoned self-interest, drove the engine of progress. The eugenicists argued that decisions on breeding could no longer be left to individual whim or chance; an outside agency was required to monitor actions that affected the entire community. The belief that some order had to be brought to the question of breeding motivated not only hereditarians; social scientists and politicians were also shifting away from the Malthusian hedonistic model and the atomistic individualism of Spencer and turning toward 'collectivist' or 'interventionist' approaches to social problems".¹⁵

In political terms, the Eugenics Education Society was connected with a variety of milieux belonging to the broadly defined reform camp. Karl Pearson and people from his closest circle identified themselves with the socialist movement. Up to 1933, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene was dominated by the left. However, the left-wing stance of the eugenicists differed importantly from what was traditionally seen as social sensitivity. The language of the eugenic description of society was pervaded with brutal violence. "To intern", "to sterilize", "to eradicate", "to impede", "to restrict": such were the words addressed to the weaker members of society. To eugenicists, socialism was a technocratic form of government, equipping experts with means of social control.

Eugenic movements are also regarded as a political expression of the stratum of professionals. Members of eugenic societies did not fit into any

¹⁴ Cf. R. Soloway, "Counting the Degenerates. The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17 (1982): 64–137.

¹⁵ A. McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada 1885–1945* (Toronto–Ontario, 1990), p. 18.

of the traditional classes: landowners, the industrial and financial circles, or the working class. Their social status, like that of doctors, lawyers, architects, and civil servants, was determined by their particular professional skills and accumulated knowledge. As industrial society developed, their importance grew. A new ideology of experts emerged, saying that one's social status should depend not on capital, property or work, but rather on qualifications and the services rendered.¹⁶

The vigorous development of eugenics in European countries and the United States was one of the symptoms of the crisis of liberalism (if we are to understand liberalism as the protection of individual rights) and the anti-egalitarian and anti-democratic tendencies of the late nineteenth century.

2. DARWIN'S THEORY IN THE ERA OF POLISH POSITIVISM

The theory of evolution, which had enjoyed immense popularity in Poland since the 1860s, laid fertile ground for the development of eugenic thought. The writings of Galton, Pearson, Gruber, Lenz, Schallmayer, Ploetz, and Forel¹⁷ were read and discussed in the circles of the elite intelligentsia. The spread of Darwinism in Polish lands was dependent on the scientific policies of the occupying powers. The best conditions for pursuing science were offered by the Austrian partition. The steadily weakening Austria was forced to reconstruct its empire and offer concessions to the peoples inhabiting it. In 1867, the Poles were granted autonomy in economic and scientific policies. Thanks to that, several institutions of higher education and scientific and research establishments were founded. An Academy of Sciences and an Academy of Fine Arts were established in Kraków and a Technical University in Lvov. Administrative impediments having been removed, numerous reading and learned societies were founded. This situation contrasted with the atmosphere in the other two partitions.

United under Prussian influence, Bismarck's Germany pursued an anti-Polish policy affecting all areas of social and cultural life. It was not until the early twentieth century that an Institute of Biology and Agriculture was founded in Bydgoszcz and a Technical University in Gdańsk (Danzig). These were purely German establishments. Poles did not have any influence on the syllabi or the faculty.

¹⁶ H. Perkins, *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780–1880* (London, 1972), pp. 254–255; MacKenzie, *Karl Pearson*, p. 127.

¹⁷ A Swedish eugenicist, a pioneer of sterilization. See Chapter 2.

In the Russian partition, the institutional basis of science deteriorated dramatically after the Poles' failed January Uprising of 1863. As part of the repressions following the defeat, the Russian authorities shut down the splendidly developing Main School (1862–1869), establishing in its place a University of Warsaw with a Russian teaching staff and curriculum, which meant a marked decline as compared to the establishment's high standards of the earlier period.¹⁸ In an atmosphere of the occupying power's political retaliation for the January Uprising, the voice of the generation of Main School alumni began to be heard in Polish journalism in the 1870s. It was thanks to them that Polish readers got to know the views of Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Theodule A. Ribot, David Hume, and others.

Unlike its Western European variety, Polish positivism is not only a philosophy, but most importantly journalism and belles-lettres. The original philosophical contribution made by Polish positivists is not rated highly.¹⁹ The foremost representative of Polish positivism, Aleksander Świętochowski, admitted that the movement's roots in philosophy was secondary to the "movement's spontaneous nature", it having "arisen out of the natural developmental necessity", and not from "doctrinairism, not from theorizing, but from watching reality"²⁰. Central to their worldview was Darwin's theory of evolution, with which they had acquainted themselves as early as during their university studies.

Benedykt Dybowski (1833–1930), a physician and zoologist, lectured on the theory of evolution at university at the same time as Haeckel. He belonged to the radical wing of Darwinists.²¹ He combated religion and its manifestations, was a member of anti-alcohol associations, and an advocate of complete prohibition.²² He was arrested and eventually exiled to Siberia by the tsarist authorities for his participation in the January Uprising. Released

¹⁸ *Życie naukowe w Polsce w drugiej połowie XIX i XX wieku. Organizacje i instytucje*, ed. B. Jaczewski (Warszawa, 1987).

¹⁹ Barbara Skarga writes: "One may easily be overcome by boredom while reading contributions by the most outstanding representatives of the 'young press' [...] They are theoretically weak, full of inconsistencies and sometimes factual errors. The youthful daring could not disguise dilettantism [...] The authors unscrupulously drew on other writers' theories, combining them to form most diverse mosaics by lumping together the theses of Comte, Mill, Büchner, Sechenov, Darwin, and Ribot", in: *Polska myśl filozoficzna i społeczna*, vol. 2, ed. B. Skarga (Wrocław, 1975), pp. 13–14.

²⁰ A. Świętochowski, *Wspomnienia* (Wrocław, 1966), p. 232.

²¹ Cf. *Biogramy uczonych polskich*, part 2, ed. A. Śródka, P. Szczawiński (Wrocław, 1985).

²² During his university studies, Dybowski was a member of the Bracia Mleczni (Milk Brothers) teetotaler society. His attitude influenced the circle connected with the *Czystość* (Purity) journal, which popularized Darwinism with marked influences from Galton. Cf. Chapter 2.

under an amnesty for his outstanding scientific achievements, he returned to Poland and lectured in comparative anatomy, anthropology, and evolutionism at the University of Lvov between 1884 and 1906.

During Dybowski's long time in exile, considerable changes had taken place in the Congress Kingdom of Poland. From 1870, Darwinism had been taught by his disciple, August Wrześniowski, at the Imperial University of Warsaw. The first books on the doctrine of evolution had been published: *Przegląd dziejów przyrody* (An overview of the history of nature) by Wincenty Szyszyłło (1872), *Teoria Darwina rozwinięta przez Haeckla* (Darwin's theory as developed by Haeckel) by Bronisław Rejchman (1873), as well as translations: *On our knowledge of the causes of the phenomena of organic nature* (O przyczynach zjawisk w naturze organicznej, 1872) by Thomas Huxley and *Nauka o pochodzeniu gatunków* (The science of the origin of species) by O. Schmidt, as well as the first translations of Darwin's works, including *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (O pochodzeniu człowieka; Dobór płciowy; 1874–1876). A special role in the scientific popularization of Darwinism was played by Józef Nusbaum-Hilarowicz. Together with Szymon Dickstein, he translated *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (O powstawaniu gatunków drogą doboru naturalnego czyli o utrzymywaniu się doskonalszych ras w walce o byt; 1884), and on his own the *Journal of researches into the geology and natural history of the various countries visited by H.M.S. Beagle, 1832–1836* (Podróż naturalisty, 1887), *The variation of animals and plants under domestication* (Zmienność zwierząt i roślin w stanie kultury, 1888–1889), and *Life and letters of Charles Darwin* (Autobiografia, życie i wybór listów, 1889). He was the author of many original works on evolutionism, such as *Zasady ogólne nauki i rozwoju zwierząt* (The general principles of science and of the evolution of animals, 1887), and *Z zagadnień biologii and filozofii przyrody* (Selected problems of biology and natural philosophy, 1889).

After years of university studies, junior research workers in the natural sciences and philosophy popularized Darwinism in journals such as *Przyroda i Przemysł* (Nature and industry), *Wszechświat* (The Universe), *Przegląd Tygodniowy* (Weekly review), *Prawda* (Truth) and *Ateneum*. Adam Mahrburg recalled:

I am overcome by justified emotion as I bring back to mind the era when the horizon of the world was lit up, in quick succession, by flashes of lightning such as the conservation of energy principle, spectral analysis, and the theory of evolution. When in these flashes of lightning nature, and man within that nature, were seen in a new light, laughter arose over that gaping void that had been revealed after the collapse of Romantic metaphysics and the philosophy of nature [...] Evolutionism spread like wildfire to devour all flammable materials accumulated

in science: after plants and animals, attention focused on man with his spiritual life and culture.²³

As in the West, Darwin's theory was associated with the name of Herbert Spencer. He attracted the interest of Warsaw's whole intellectual elite: from Aleksander Świętochowski, Bolesław Prus, Adolf Dygasiński, Henryk Struve, Stanisław Krusiński, and Ludwik Gumpłowicz to Kazimierz Kaszkowski and Adam Mahrburg. A record number of Spencer's philosophical works was translated in the 1870s and 1880s. The work *Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical* (O wychowaniu umysłowym, moralnym i fizycznym) was reissued as many as six times between 1879 and 1908. Spencer was the best known positivist philosopher in Poland. Even when he tried to write about Mill's philosophy, Świętochowski in fact summarized Spencer's arguments (which he himself admitted, incidentally²⁴).

Influenced by Spencer, Polish commentators called for a thorough reform of the school system to extend the curricula in the sciences, modern languages, and physical education.²⁵ The diligent readers of Spencer's works included the educator Henryk Wernic, a relative of the founder of Polish eugenics, Leon Wernic. Henryk Wernic met with a practical application of Spencer's pedagogy during his stay in England and his work at Guilden Hall outside London. He was so impressed with it that his later articles and child-raising guidebooks almost literally repeated Spencer's theses.²⁶

Spencer's demand to ensure health, fitness, and physical vitality influenced the publicist imagination of physicians and social activists. As compared to highly civilized countries, such as Britain and France, the overall health of the population of the Congress Kingdom of Poland was poor. The tsarist authorities were not interested in modernizing the health care system. In such circumstances, the most urgent task was to obtain the Russian authorities' consent to establish a society to promote the principles of hygiene. The hygienic exhibitions organized in Warsaw in 1887 and 1896 paved the way for achieving that goal.²⁷ It was only in 1898 that Bolesław Prus noted with joy: "our people have obtained one of the most important and most useful public institutions, namely the Warsaw Hygienic Society, something which philanthropists and physicians had been seeking to organize in vain for more

²³ A. Mahrburg, "Nauka i filozofia", *Prawda*, 1 (1901): 11.

²⁴ Skarga, *Polska myśl filozoficzna*, p. 14.

²⁵ Cf. B. Prus, *Kroniki. Wybór* (Warszawa, 1987), pp. 168–179; S. Kramsztyk, "O pedagogicznym znaczeniu nauk przyrodniczych", *Przegląd Pedagogiczny*, 3, 5, 8, 9 (1882).

²⁶ Cf. H. Wernic, *Praktyczny przewodnik wychowania* (Warszawa, n.d.).

²⁷ Cf. W. Ferens, "Znaczenie pierwszych wystaw higienicznych w Warszawie dla rozwoju wychowania fizycznego i sportu", *Wychowanie Fizyczne*, 2, 3 (1953).

than ten years".²⁸ The tsarist authorities also gave their consent for the society to publish a new journal entitled *Zdrowie* (Health) as its organ under the leadership of the physician and social activist Jan Polak.

The founding of the Warsaw Hygienic Society was a joint success of physicians, educators, and writers. The efforts to improve the standards of bodily hygiene, as well as the hygiene of clothes and accommodation, mass vaccinations against infectious diseases, combating venereal diseases and prostitution, were all given a new organizational framework.²⁹ On the other hand, it was understood that efforts to improve the overall health of the population were limited by a factor that was still poorly known at that time – namely, heredity.

3. HEREDITY THEORIES AND RACE

The nineteenth century's fascination with the problem of heredity derived from a variety of sources. In French society, it intensified after the defeat of the 1848 Revolution.³⁰ In his well-known, encyclopaedic, two-volume *Philosophical and physiological treatise on natural heredity* of 1847 and 1850, Prosper Lucas expresses the view that history is shaped by the phenomenon of heredity.³¹ The theory most popular in France, proposed by Jean Baptiste Antoine de Lamarck (1744–1829), said that adaptive changes occurred in organisms under environmental influences that were inherited by the following generations. In Britain, heredity became a key term under the influence of Darwin's theory of natural selection. It assumed that changes in species' characteristics were random mutations; some of them turned out to be favourable for the organism, while others unfavourable. Individuals with desirable changes pass on their traits to their descendants and thus the fittest populations may hold out in the struggle for survival, while those with unfavourable changes are doomed. Beginning from the late 1860s and the early 1870s, heredity became a central focus of debates between naturalists, anthropologists, physicians, philosophers, and politicians in highly developed West European countries.

Eugenics emerged due to Galton's strong inspiration concerning the problem of heredity. The genealogical tables scrupulously compiled by

²⁸ Prus, *Kroniki*, pp. 365, 372.

²⁹ Cf. C. Korczak, *Polskie Towarzystwo Higieniczne* (Warszawa, 1995); M. Demel, *Księga tradycji PTH*, vol. 1 (Warszawa–Łódź, 1986); M. Hanecki, "Z dziejów warszawskiej służby zdrowia w latach 1863–1900", in: *Warszawa powojstaniowa 1864–1918*, ed. S. Kalabiński, R. Kołodziejczyk (Warszawa, 1968).

³⁰ Cf. D. Pick, *Faces of Degeneration. A European Disorder, c. 1848 – c. 1918* (Cambridge, 1999).

³¹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 48.

Galton consolidated the view that heredity – albeit still not fully understood – influenced not only the offspring’s physical characteristics, but also their mentality and social attitudes. Thus, Galton moved heredity from the biological to the social sphere. What we are is determined by the sum of material that our ancestors have equipped us with.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, biological determinism inspired numerous scientists and founders of avant-garde scientific disciplines. It was invoked by Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909), the Italian psychiatrist, anthropologist, and criminologist, and propagator of anthropometry. Based on anthropometric studies, he isolated the anthropological criminal type and proposed a biological conception of congenital criminal traits, completely independent of the formative role of the environment. This claim was embraced by English eugenicists, who, in addition to genealogies of outstanding lawyers and artists, began to reconstruct genealogies of criminals, vagrants, deviants, and alcoholics. Lombroso’s theories concerning connections between intellectual genius and mental diseases were another major influence on the eugenic idea. In the interwar period, professor Grotjahn, who proposed the sterilization of all the sick and potentially sick (e.g., asthenics, who are prone to tuberculosis) in the name of the health of the future generations, nonetheless offered advice to “leave a few for reproduction”, because of their “unexplored” talents. This opinion was not shared by all the enthusiasts of racial hygiene. In the Polish eugenics community, too, there were voices negating the thesis about schizophrenics’ extraordinary talents. Like Galton (to whom he devoted part of a chapter in his *Genius and madness [Genio e follia]*), Lombroso strengthened the belief in the unconditional role of heredity, and in the connection between social pathologies and mental illnesses. Genealogies showing that a mad suicide gives birth to a feeble-minded epileptic, and a prostitute to a thief and a drunkard reassured the readers that the social evil is born among the indolent and degenerate plebs.

Both Galton and Pearson and Lombroso used statistical methods in their research. The application of sophisticated formulae, conversion factors, and mathematical operations served to objectivize and rationalize their studies. However, when we take a closer look at Lombroso’s research, we see the flagrant disproportion between the scientific techniques used in his studies and his primitive conclusions. For instance, thanks his to meticulous calculations, Lombroso concluded that most scientific discoveries are made and most musical masterpieces composed in the summer, and the fewest in the winter.³² Lombroso’s works enjoyed considerable popularity in Poland. They were read by the most eminent representatives of Polish science. In

³² C. Lombroso, *Geniusz i obłąkanie* (Warszawa, 1987), p. 84.

the 1880s and 1890s, Ludwik Popławski translated the main works of the Italian psychiatrist into Polish.³³ Ludwik Krzywicki wrote on Lombroso, not without fascination, on numerous occasions in *Prawda*.³⁴

At that time, neither the natural nor medical sciences were able to deal with the problem of heredity. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, there was complete chaos in that field.³⁵ In Poland, too, this problem attracted lively interest. In 1871, a contributor to *Przegląd Tygodniowy* noted: "There is no problem more interesting in the modern sciences [...] than the problem of heredity. Everyone broaches upon it almost daily in friendly talks, it is upon heredity that we pin our hopes for posterity, it is upon heredity that almost all sciences touch [...]"³⁶ In Poland, the evolution of the theory of heredity consisted mostly in the reception of foreign models. = Darwin's theory of pangenesis was spreading together with the reception of Darwinism. While formulating his theory, Darwin was aware that certain diseases occurred within a family, but he was unable to explain why this was so. He observed that the incidence of certain disorders was independent of any patterns or regularities. Thus he believed that the life-giving fluid from the parents' bodies that mixed in their children's bodies, i.e., blood, played a certain role in that process.³⁷ Inheritance was supposed to occur by means of the mixing of body fluids. The pangenesis theory assumed, therefore, that each cell produced germs that moved freely in the blood throughout the organism. Subsequently, they reproduced through division and were passed on to the offspring to develop into separate cells. Darwin himself was aware of the imperfections of his theory. He knew that occasionally an individual with atavistic traits was born, who did not look like an average of the parents,

³³ Ibid.; he translated Lombroso's *L'uomo delinquente in rapporto all' antropologia, alla giurisprudenza ed alle discipline carcerarie. Delinquente nato e pazzo morale* as: *Człowiek-zbrodniarz w stosunku do antropologii, jurysprudencji i dyscypliny więziennej. Zbrodniarz urodzony. Obląkanie zmysłu moralnego*, vol. 1–2 (Warszawa, 1891). It is worth noting that Popławski includes an annotation on Galton's theory of heredity in his footnotes to *Geniusz i obląkanie*. This shows that he had a good knowledge of his writings. Cf. Lombroso, *Geniusz i obląkanie*, p. 102.

³⁴ L. Krzywicki, "Teoria Cezara Lombroso", in: *Artykuły i rozprawy*, vol. 3, pp. 100–112 (first published in *Prawda*, 45, 1886); "Tatuowanie wśród kryminalistów", in: *Artykuły i rozprawy*, pp. 113–115 (first published in *Prawda*, 50, 1886).

³⁵ Even after the rediscovery of the laws of Mendelian inheritance, it was still a prevailing belief among Polish doctors that a vast majority of physical and mental traits of the parents and grandparents was naturally passed on to the offspring. It was also believed that serious diseases were hereditary, with the offspring inheriting epilepsy, blindness, deafness, tuberculosis, "melancholy", mental retardation, and all kinds of mental illnesses from their parents. This is an evident vestige of Darwin's theory of heredity.

³⁶ Editor's note, "Pangenesis Darwina", *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 6 (1871): 327.

³⁷ Cf. S. Jones, *In the Blood: God, Genes and Destiny* (London, 1996), p. 12.

but like a very distant ancestor. Some people were born with thick facial or body hair, others with extra nipples, still others with a vestigial tail. Darwin could not answer the question how a certain trait could have survived for thousands of generations and not disappear, given that each of its carriers mated with an individual without that trait.

The phenomenon of atavism in farm animals was addressed in articles in *Gazeta Rolnicza* (Agricultural newspaper) in 1876.³⁸ Their author also discussed the phenomenon of cross-breeding. He maintained that in the case of mating cattle of the same race, the individual inherited traits equally from the mother and the father. In the case of crossbreeding, on the other hand, relations between inherited traits were unpredictable, that is why he advised against experiments of this kind. The following excerpt well illustrates the superficiality of the argument: when “mating the products of the first crossbreeding (mestizos) of various races, the offspring often has the traits of a grandfather or a great-grandfather (or, by analogy, of a grandmother or a great-grandmother), or those of an even more distant ancestor, even if the parents had inherited equal numbers of traits from their own parents”.³⁹ Francis Galton polemicized with Darwin’s heredity theory. In 1871, the young Polish press mentions his name as that of Darwin’s adversary, not devoting any attention to the essence of the dispute or to the scientist’s profile.⁴⁰

Scientific debate on heredity did not appear in the press until the second half of the 1880s. It was undertaken by the young generation of scientists educated at the Imperial University of Warsaw.⁴¹ Thanks to Józef and Rozalia Nusbaum, Polish readers got acquainted with the nineteenth-century’s major heredity theories: Haeckel’s mechanical theory, *Naegeli’s idioplasm* theory, and Weismann’s theory of the continuity of the germ

³⁸ A. Kohn, “Nauka hodowania czyli teoria selekcji”, *Gazeta Rolnicza*, 5 (1874): 15; “Szkic rozwoju zasad racjonalnej hodowli i praktycznego ich zastosowania”, *Gazeta Rolnicza*, 27 (1876): 207.

³⁹ “Szkic rozwoju”, p. 207.

⁴⁰ Editor’s note, “Pangenesis”, p. 329.

⁴¹ That lively interest in Darwin’s theory was not limited to naturalists. Disputes on Darwinism and the heredity theory were a fascination for the whole generation. Because of the administrative impediments imposed by the tsarist authorities, debates on Darwinism were held in students’ private flats. “We would gather, a dozen or even several dozen of us, in private flats of various colleagues, mostly cramped and poor, usually situated at upper storeys or in the attics... The following colleagues took a prominent part in these meetings of naturalists’ circles: J. K. Potocki, known later under the pen name Marian Bohusz; furthermore, Mieczysław Brzeziński, later a very popular and most distinguished peasant writer, Józef Konic, Józef Siemaszko, Wawrzyniec Trzcziński, Bolesław Hirszfeld, a distinguished activist in the field of women’s education, Łopot, Norblin, and others”, J. Nusbaum-Hilarowicz, *Pamiętniki przyrodnika. Autobiografia* (Lwów, n.d.), pp. 32–33.

plasm.⁴² Like most academics in Europe, the Nusbaums concurred with Weismann's theory.⁴³ His theory questioned the inheritance of acquired characteristics, undermining the still popular Lamarckian theory. All the diversifications, Weismann argued, that an embryo undergoes in its individual development, depend on the structure of the germ plasm, i.e., that part of the reproductive cell which is immune to environmental influences and has an invariable chemical structure. The editors of *Wszechświat* polemicized with this opinion, thus dissociating themselves from the Nusbaums' view: "it is impossible to imagine any progress, and more precisely any evolution in the Spencerian sense, in living nature without the inheritance of acquired traits. The most flagrant natural selection [...] is unable to produce this progressive variation that we see at every step".⁴⁴ Weismann's theory long remained an important point of reference in considerations on heredity. It was still popularized in the *Ogniwo* (Link) weekly in 1904.⁴⁵

The problem of progressive heredity was studied by the philosopher Adam Mahrburg. His articles were the first to report on Galton's and Pearson's experiments.⁴⁶ Mahrburg distanced himself from the views held by eugenicists. He combated the belief concerning connections between mental illnesses and social pathologies (prostitution and alcoholism) and between alcoholism and epilepsy. He argued: "indeed, while it seems very simple that if the father was a drunk, and the son an epileptic, maniac or idiot, we have to do with heredity. Yet the fact is only that the father was a drunk and the son is an epileptic; thus, inheritance – that is, the passing on of a pathological trait from father to son – is our surmise, and one which needs to be justified before being recognized as a fact".⁴⁷ Similarly, he attacked the view concerning the hereditary nature of mental diseases. He cited French analyses of statistical surveys included in a work by Legrand du Saule: *Leçons sur la folie héréditaire*, which showed that, depending on the survey, the percentage of inherited diseases varied between 4 percent and 85 percent. In Mahrburg's opinion, Galton's research dealt with the problem of heredity "at little cost". Galton ignored environmental influences on the

⁴² J. and R. Nusbaum, "Nowe poglądy na istotę dziedziczności", *Wszechświat* of 1887: no. 40: 623; no. 41: 648; no. 43: 676; no. 44: 697; no. 47: 738; no. 50: 791; no. 51: 809.

⁴³ It said that from the reproductive cell emerges germ plasm, which is the carrier of hereditary traits; in the course of ontogenetic development, part of the plasm is kept for building the given individual's body and constitutes a crucial element of the reproductive cell for the next generation.

⁴⁴ J. and R. Nusbaum, "Nowe poglądy na istotę dziedziczności", *Wszechświat*, 1887, no. 51: 812.

⁴⁵ Z. Szymanowski, *August Weismann, Ogniwo*, 8 (1904): 172–174.

⁴⁶ A. Mahrburg, "Dziedziczność pod względem empirycznym", *Ateneum*, 4 (1889): 315.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

individual and simplified the complex mechanism of heredity. Genealogical studies may not be the basic research tool, because they show variations only within formal marital unions, while ignoring e.g., the existence of illegitimate children and their offspring.

A different kind of reflection on heredity was offered by representatives of anthropology. Galton, who for many years holding the honorary post of the president of the London Anthropological Society, played a ground-breaking role in the development of anthropology. In his *Zarys historii antropologii polskiej* (An outline history of Polish anthropology), Jan Czekanowski admitted that an impasse in anthropology had been overcome due to Galton and Pearson, who proposed a new kind of research: biometrics in the 1880s.⁴⁸ It was thanks to biometrics that anthropologists completed the basic human taxonomy in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Both eugenicists and anthropologists were fascinated by the idea of race. Thinking in terms of race, which dated back to the eighteenth century, appeared in all countries in the following century thanks to Arthur de Gobineau, the author of the *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853). The first sentence of the treatise read: “The fall of civilizations is at once the most striking and obscure of all historical phenomena”.⁴⁹ Gobineau, whose theory of races was invoked by Polish eugenicists, subscribed to doctrines on the origins of the French people claiming that the nobility was descended from Germanic warriors, while the bourgeoisie from Gallo-Roman slaves. The fall of a civilization is caused by the degeneration of the race, and the degeneration by blood mixing. Gobineau strove towards defining and producing an “elite” to replace aristocracy. Galton liked this idea and his prefaces to *Hereditary Genius* testify that the teachings of the French false aristocrat were properly received.⁵⁰

Anthropology found a relatively good institutional basis in Polish lands. It was taught at university beginning in 1854. From the 1880s, it became imbued with eugenic ideas. Numerous outstanding anthropologists, such as Stanisław Żejmo-Żejmis, Jan Mydlarski and Kazimierz Stołyhwo joined the Polish Eugenics Society in the interwar years. Jan Mydlarski, head of the Scientific Council of the Polish Eugenics Society in 1928–1937, organized, in cooperation with eugenicists, an anthropological centre (attached to the Central Physical Education Institute in Warsaw) that investigated the physical and mental traits of human races.

⁴⁸ On Pearson's and Galton's contributions to anthropology: *Antropologia*, eds. A. Malinowski, J. Strzałka, (Poznań, 1985).

⁴⁹ (Count) Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853), extracts, <http://www.indiana.edu/~hist104/sources/Gobineau.html>.

⁵⁰ Cf. Jedlicki, *Świat zwyrodniały*, p. 171.

In the 1880s and 1890s, Ludwik Krzywicki took an interest in heredity in the context of anthropology. He followed closely the development of Aryan racial theories. He was particularly interested in the academic achievements of the continuators of Gobineau's idea: Lapouge and Penka. In one of his articles, he presented the views of both scholars, also quoting the views of Galton himself.⁵¹ According to these theories, Europe was inhabited by various races, and two of them: one of long-headed blond people from the north and the other of short-headed, dark-haired people from the south, played the greatest role in the continent's history. The first race is represented by the noble Aryans, from whose language all Indo-European languages took their origin. An Aryan has willpower, imagination, and initiative. By contrast, the passive and cautious short-headed individual personifies everything that is practical and mundane. In the territories with the highest proportions of long-headed blond individuals: in England, Scandinavia, and northern Germany, Protestantism prevails. In the regions inhabited by the short-headed, i.e., in parts of France, southern Germany, and in western Slav lands, Catholicism dominates. The driving force behind civilization is naturally the Aryan, now threatened with degeneration as a result of mixing with lower races. And yet the example of animals teaches us that a crossbreed is characterized by an asymmetrical body or by the loss of its reproductive capacity. People born to mixed marriages are also evidence of physical degeneration. In order to achieve the intended objective, one needs to explore the working of the laws of heredity and make them the basis of social policy.⁵² Thus, it will be possible to eliminate degenerate individuals and ensure the victory of "eugenistic types". According to these theories, societies may be divided into several groups. The first one includes individuals with abilities to initiate things, i.e., the forerunners of progress; the second is made up of those with the capacity for imitation; and the lowest two are made up of individuals susceptible to herd behaviour and "minds unable to understand any kind of culture at all". In Lapouge's opinion, the way to reduce the numbers of those in the third and fourth groups is self-restraint, as recommended by Malthus himself.

Naturally, one can hardly regard the views presented above as part of the worldview of Krzywicki himself, who for the most part was pointedly reporting on other authors' intellectual achievements in his articles. On the other hand, Krzywicki concurred with the views on the natural, innate inequality of the races and, with some reservations, accepted the

⁵¹ L. Krzywicki, "Antropologia w historiografii i socjologii", in: id., *Artykuły i rozprawy. 1888–1889. Działa*, vol. 4 (Warszawa, 1960), pp. 7–25 (first published: *Wista*, 3 [1888]).

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

attempts to solve the racial problem by means of mild social engineering. He declared:

An Aryan's brain, as compared to an Australian's brain, displays the essence of so many degrees of historical experiences that it would take a multitude of generations among the latter to fill this chasm, provided that the progressive movement of the European peoples continued. Similarly, one should fully agree with Lapouge's observations, and partially with Galton's, concerning the ways of improving humanity: by means of the selection of eugenistic and the elimination of non-eugenistic elements, which do exist among humanity, whatever egalitarian sentimentalism might preach. If we were able to carry out something like that in practice, it would help to elevate humanity sooner to a higher level of ability than the homeopathic propagation of popular education and the work to elevate the spiritually lower elements over long periods of time [...] [In the future] the knowledge of the principles of heredity will become the basis for pedagogic education and sexual selection will be carried out with equal care to that given today in the breeding of pure-bred animals, with the single difference [...] that here it will be based on individual initiative and an individual's sense of obligation towards one's descendants.⁵³

Krzywicki accepted mild social engineering devices, provided that they did not stand in contradiction to individual freedom. He resolutely rejected those ideas that involved the use of violence. He called the proposals of the anonymous author of *Die Aristokratie des Geistes* to completely separate gifted families and turn them into a separate social species, and the rest into a caste of subjects "vile ideas".⁵⁴ He complained about the "rampant biology" in the humanities, sanctioning all kinds of brutality and social injustice.⁵⁵

Benedykt Dybowski, by contrast, was uncritical of anthropotechnics. Having assumed a professorship at Lvov University in 1884, he became an ardent propagator of anthropology. Retiring in 1904, he made efforts to have a chair of anthropology established at Lvov University (following the example of the Jagiellonian University). After a chair of ethnology was approved in 1908, Dybowski brought the young anthropologist Jan Czekanowski to teach there in 1913. The young scientist was fascinated with Pearson's statistical methods. He wanted to introduce them into anthropology at all cost. A controversy arose between him and Dybowski; as a result, their official acquaintance never turned into close cooperation. Czekanowski was an ardent supporter of Mendel's laws, while Dybowski

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 21–22.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵⁵ Cf. L. Krzywicki, "Arystokracja ducha (studium darwinowsko-socjologiczne)", in: id., *Artykuły i rozprawy*, vol. 3, pp. 65–92 (first published: *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 41–45 [1886]).

subscribed to Haeckel's mechanical theory.⁵⁶ He regarded anthropology, and in particular anthropogenesis, as a logical continuation of the tenets of zootechnics (and this may also be viewed as a source of the controversy between him and Czekanowski). He argued that, just as zootechnics had been able to breed many noble races from primitive original types by means of artificial selection, so anthropotechnics was able to transform people into "physically beautiful, morally virtuous, and intellectually powerful" beings.⁵⁷ He propagated the opinion that there was a connection between anatomical features and an individual's spiritual virtues and talents. In 1899, he published a treatise on the "racial components" of Adam Mickiewicz.⁵⁸ He photographed outstanding scholars and politicians, later analysing the shapes of their skulls and even their expressions.⁵⁹ He fought against the belief that giving up the dead body of a loved one for scientific research was a profanation of that person's memory. Skeleton collections were to become "shrines of race, national pantheons" in the future.⁶⁰ Here is what he said about the destiny of anthropology:

Once anthropology, based on large skeleton collections, is able to precisely determine that mutual relation between the body and the spirit, only then will it be able to assume a proper leadership, steering the work of anthropotechnics in the area of shaping human races according to an ideal: goodness, beauty, and physical as well as intellectual strength [...] Anyway, what is needed is the most strenuous work in the area of anthropology and its branches: applied knowledge, anthropotechnics, i.e., eugenics, or artificial breeding of human races; what we expect from it is a transformation of society in the spirit of justice, the love of one's neighbour, and truth.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Cf. G. Brzęk, *Benedykt Dybowski. Życie i dzieło* (Lublin, 1981), p. 374. Not only did Dybowski propagate Haeckel's theory, he also translated his works. The two scientists corresponded with each other. In the case of Dybowski, one may speak of both an intellectual and a personal fascination with the German scientist.

⁵⁷ B. Dybowski, "Kilka uwag dotyczących stanowiska antropologii i jej przyszłej działalności", *Światowit*, 12 (1924): 11.

⁵⁸ B. Dybowski, "Próba określenia składników rasowo-plemiennych, uwydatnionych w postaci wieszczą Adama Mickiewicza, rozpatrywanych na tle typów mieszkańców Europy i ziemi nowogródzkiej", *Kosmos*, 23 (1898): 153–215.

⁵⁹ Cf. Brzęk, *Benedykt Dybowski*, p. 382. Dybowski introduced photography into Polish anthropology as material for examining relations between an individual's physical traits and spiritual and intellectual characteristics.

⁶⁰ Dybowski, "Kilka uwag dotyczących", p. 14.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

4. THE OBSESSION WITH DEGENERATION: THE CITY AND STATISTICS

One of the sources of the successes of the eugenic idea in the early twentieth century was that of fuelling the fear of the degeneration of the race, nation, and society. The phenomenon of degeneration, Daniel Pick observed, should be considered in relation to the long and complex process of the political definition and redefinition of European culture. Beginning from the second half of the nineteenth century, a fascination with the phenomenon of degeneration may be observed in European culture, politics, science, and literature. After the defeat of the 1848 Revolution, heredity became a keyword with which to explain a variety of social and political processes. The idea of degeneration was intensely reflected in the writings of outstanding intellectuals, including Hipolit Auguste Taine, Emile Durkheim, Gustave Le Bon, Cesare Lombroso, and Friedrich Nietzsche. It appeared in the novels of *Honoré de Balzac*, *Émile Zola*, and Charles Dickens. Among the politicians using the term “degeneration” we may find liberals, conservatives, and socialists. Each of the above-mentioned intellectuals approached the idea of degeneration very individually. It assumed multiple shades of meaning and nuances, depending on the author and the context in which it was used.

What is indisputable is the fact that from the second half of the nineteenth century there was a major shift from the conception of individual degeneration to the biomedical conception of a degenerate mob or masses. The idea of degeneration evolved from pertaining to the individual to the family – after which it pertained to races, nations, and societies. The scientific writings of the French psychiatrist Bénédict Augustin Morel (1809–1873) provide an interesting exemplification of how the idea of degeneration evolved. After completing his medical studies in Paris, he travelled throughout Europe, visiting psychiatric clinics and hospitals. After he returned to the French capital, his studies on cretinism attracted the attention of the Archbishop of Chambéry who was also investigating this condition. The acquaintance of the two researchers led to an exchange of letters published in the *Annales Médico-Psychologiques*. The archbishop believed that the cause of the disease lay in the mineralogical constitution of the soil. Morel did not agree with his adversary, placing cretinism in the wide context of degeneration. He wrote: “I do not believe in the curability of cretinism when the illness is confirmed. All the pedagogic procedures, and best hygienic influences are in vain in the case of the complete cretin. He will remain what he is: a monstrous anomaly, a typical representation of the state of *dégénérescence*, which nothing could prevent”.⁶²

⁶² Quoted after Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p. 47.

According to Morel, cretinism was an exemplification of a racial and historical degeneration in societies. He argued for isolating the most severe cases of mental retardation from the rest of society. It was the only way, he assured the readers, to prevent the reproduction of cretins and safeguard the healthy fabric of society against degeneration. It is worth noting that Morel was one of the progressive psychiatrists; he recommended modern therapies, and was in favour of granting more freedom to the inmates of mental institutions.

The outstanding historian Daniel Pick expressed his amazement at this kind of attitude.⁶³ On the one hand, Morel wanted a definitive solution to the problem of severe mental retardation in society by using brutal means (complete isolation, involving removing the patients from society and civilization), and on the other hand, he recommended a humane and gentle conduct towards the mentally ill. To Pick, this represents an inexplicable paradox. However, when we take a closer look at the evolution of psychiatry in the early twentieth century, and in particular at what is known as the reformed psychiatry movement, we may regard Morel's case as an example of a historical pattern rather than a paradox. In the interwar years, the German, but also the Polish advocates of reformed psychiatry supported the eugenic correction of the population through forced sterilization of the sick. The German psychiatrists involved in the extermination of the "burdensome existences", i.e., the mentally ill and concentration camp inmates, were an extreme and unique case.⁶⁴

To return to the subject of our reflection, one should state that in the final years of the nineteenth century, an obsession with degeneration had spread through West European countries: France, Britain, Italy, and Germany. The English naturalist and evolutionist Edwin Lankester warned: "We are accustomed to regard ourselves as necessarily progressing, as necessarily having arrived at a *higher* and *more* elaborated condition [...] and as destined to progress still further. On the other hand, it is well to remember that we are subject to the general *laws of evolution*, and are as likely to degenerate as to progress".⁶⁵

In each country, this obsession with degeneration arose on different grounds. In France, the sense of degeneration resulted from the fear of the

⁶³ Ibid., p. 48.

⁶⁴ For more on the position of the advocates of Polish reformed psychiatry on draft sterilization laws see Chapter 5. On German psychiatry and the involvement of German psychiatrists in the extermination of the mentally ill and concentration camp inmates, see Chapter 6.

⁶⁵ P.J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 195–196; Jedlicki, *Świat zwyrodniały*, p. 163.

rapid decline in births. The English saw symptoms of degeneration in great human agglomerations, the products of industrial civilization.⁶⁶ In the opinion of the Germans, degeneration resulted both from the pathologies of modern civilization (alcoholism, prostitution, venereal diseases) and from the fear of the German race being driven out by Slavic elements. In Polish writings, degeneration was presented similarly to the English and German variants. There were two lines of argument in the Polish degeneration debate. First the industrial city was accused of being the factor causing degeneration. Later, there was a debate on whether the poor physical condition of military recruits from Galicia and the Congress Kingdom of Poland was a consequence of collective degeneration.

The first articles concerning degeneration in cities come from the 1880s from the Congress Kingdom of Poland, which was the only Polish district to experience the industrial revolution. It was there that the three most important industrial areas were concentrated: Łódź (Lotz), the Dąbrowa Coal Basin, and Warsaw. Only the latter centre could boast the status of a metropolis. The industrial revolution reached the Congress Kingdom of Poland late, not until the 1870s, but it progressed very rapidly there. A mass increase in urban population was an important sign of economic transformations. According to the 1872 census, the urban population accounted for over 16 percent of the total, and the rural population for less than 84 percent. By 1897, this relationship had changed, with the urban population making up less than 22 percent, and the rural population 78 percent. By 1910, the urban population had reached 24 percent and the rural population had declined to 76 percent.⁶⁷

That process was particularly intensive in Warsaw. According to statistical calculations, Warsaw had a population of 387,000 in 1882, of whom only 52 percent were registered as permanent residents, and over 46 percent had been born in other localities in the Congress Kingdom of Poland. In the following years, the proportion of non-permanent residents grew steadily: in 1891, permanent residents comprised 44 percent of Warsaw's population,

⁶⁶ The map of London drawn up by the English reformer Charles Booth in the late 19th century is testimony to the fear of degeneration arising in an industrial city. Each street was colour-coded according to the occupation and origin of its residents. According to the description, some streets are inhabited by professional people, other ones by workers, and still others by people from the lowest classes, without a regular occupation. According to Booth, these districts were a hotbed of diseases, crime, and poverty. "The men who live in this place, said our informant, are not *human* they are *wild beasts*," the author of the map warned. Cf. Jones, *In the Blood*, p. 173.

⁶⁷ The statistics cited after J. Żurawicka, "Z problematyki inteligencji warszawskiej w końcu XIX wieku", in: *Warszawa powstaniowa*, p. 163; cf. M. Nietyksza, "Spisy 1882 i 1897 r. jako źródło badań nad ludnością", in: *Ludność Warszawy*, pp. 21–23.

and non-permanent residents over 55 percent. The rapid growth of the population of Warsaw in the last decades of the nineteenth century was not an exceptional phenomenon. The population of Paris grew by 150 percent, of London by 160 percent, of Moscow by 200 percent, and of St. Petersburg by 150 percent over the second half of the nineteenth century. However, Janina Żurawicka observed, “in terms of the pace of population growth, Warsaw is ahead of other European capitals. For example, the population of Berlin grew by 104 percent between 1877 and 1907, and that of Warsaw by 158 percent”.⁶⁸ New working-class districts developed on the outskirts of the city. Apart from Powiśle and Muranów, the western district was expanding. The new cityscape was characterized by extensive development: factories and industrial plants, as well as barrack-style tenement houses with numerous small flats were built; in the existing buildings ground floors were expanded and new stories added. The new buildings soon came to dominate the traditional suburban landscape, with the number of one- and two-story buildings shrinking systematically. The developmental dynamics of the working-class Wola district was characterized by great architectural chaos, with residential buildings alternating with industrial plants, and brick constructions with wooden ones. In a word, the building work was carried out without any comprehensive land development plan.⁶⁹ Overcrowding, squalor, and high crime rates were intrinsic elements of the new districts.

Literature was the first to respond to the challenges posed by the new realities. The contrasts of Warsaw, depicted in *The Doll*, a novel by Bolesław Prus, were portrayed even more fully in the prose of Adolf Dygasiński. In his three-volume novel series *Nowe tajemnice Warszawy* (The new secrets of Warsaw) (vol. 1: *Spod ciemnej gwiazdy* [A shady type]; vol. 2: *Upośledzeni i wybrani* [The disadvantaged and the chosen]; vol. 3: *Co lepsi, marniej* [The better ones go downhill]), modelled on the prose of Émile Zola, Dygasiński attempts to present a range of new social phenomena, including in the area of mores, characteristic of an industrial city. Dygasiński’s characters are people from the criminal underworld, the underclass: pimps and prostitutes, paupers and beggars from working-class suburbs. Poverty resides next to swindling, suffering coexists with crime. Dygasiński was criticized for often leaving various threads and events described in his novels unfinished, without any continuation. Paradoxically, that lack of transparent form in his novels reflects the “quivering” atmosphere of Warsaw in the 1880s. A variety of threads, apparently unrelated, one historian of literature observed, combine to make

⁶⁸ Żurawicka, “Z problematyki inteligencji warszawskiej”, p. 162.

⁶⁹ Cf. the descriptions of working-class districts: A. Żarnowska, *Robotnicy Warszawy na przełomie XIX i XX wieku* (Warszawa, 1985).

“a certain train of evidence that is intended to show the corrupting function of a big city”.⁷⁰ Warsaw is portrayed as a Moloch of a city, generating social pathologies: usury, pimping, and theft. This exaggerated vision of the city met with a favourable reception from the critics. In 1888, Cezary Jellenta wrote in a review: “The author relishes black colours, putrid air, a drinking den, and underground dives on the shores of the Vistula, and, generally, nests of poverty, crime, and debauchery [...] One must confess that after rejecting a considerable dose of exaggeration, there will remain quite a sound view and one corresponding to reality”.⁷¹

The corrupting and degenerating effects of industrial growth were soon publicized by the press of various shades. In 1889, one could read in *Głos*: “For any serious student, present-day society makes an impression of an out-of-order, broken mechanism falling into the abyss, a decaying organism grappling with death [...] . The overcrowding of prisons and hospitals, countless suicides, alcoholism which, having conquered the cities, is spreading in villages, the physical and moral degeneration of the entire nation”.⁷² Numerous other writers agreed that accelerated and uncontrolled industrial growth had negative consequences. Reflecting on the character of modern Warsaw, Ludwik Krzywicki compared it to an “enormous hotel”, a disintegrated human agglomeration.⁷³ Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska warned: “The working classes gone brutish that we saw in the early nineteenth century in England, that one can still meet today in London’s East End, in Moravian Ostrava, and in the corners of Łódź [...] are a sad warning that moral and intellectual brutishness is not precluded by the progress of civilization”.⁷⁴ The chronicler of *Biblioteka Warszawska* noted in 1892: “The feverish pace of present-day life terrifies economists, statisticians, and humanists; they calculate ever more precisely the consequences of such conditions [...] The consequences of this disease are all too evident today: premature old age and decrepitude, the growing number of suicides, the falling population growth in the civilized strata”.⁷⁵

The criticisms presented above had their rational justification. Compared to the rapidly growing population, there was no corresponding growth of

⁷⁰ J. Detko, *Warszawa naturalistów* (Warszawa, 1980), p. 67.

⁷¹ Quoted after Detko, *Warszawa*, p. 62; cf. C. Jellenta, “Literatura polska”, *Prawda*, 5 (1888).

⁷² J.H. Siemieniecki [Hłasko], “Koniec świata”, *Głos*, 17 (1889). Quoted after R. Zimand, *Dekadentyzm warszawski* (Warsaw, 1964), p. 45.

⁷³ K.R. Żywicki, “Kto winien?”, *Prawda*, 10 (1890); quoted after Zimand, *Dekadentyzm*, p. 65.

⁷⁴ Z. Daszyńska-Golińska, *Teoretyczne podstawy polityki społecznej w XIX stuleciu* (Warszawa, 1906), p. 58.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 1893. Quoted after Zimand, *Dekadentyzm*, p. 37. In a similar vein: J. Laskowski, “Choroba wieku”, *Głos*, 44 (1889): 551; and A. Łętowski, “Widmo wyludnienia”, *Głos*, 19 (1887): 299.

medical infrastructure. In 1888, 6,500 mentally ill for whom there were no hospital beds were registered. The situation improved at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1900, the Society for Medical Assistance and Care for the Mentally Ill and Patients with Nervous Diseases was founded, which offered free medical assistance and financial support to the mentally ill; a year later, the construction outside Warsaw of a very modern mental hospital in Tworki (with electric lightning, a sewage system, bathtubs and showers) was completed. However, these efforts were not enough to meet even the barest portion of the needs of Warsaw itself. The lack of modern medical facilities, including outpatient clinics and the modernization of the existing hospitals, was felt by the general public. Naturally, this could not be remedied without state participation. Private donations could fund, at the most, shelters for women in labour, but the construction of a modern obstetrics hospital was beyond the financial reach of private donors. This was one of the causes of the persistently high infant mortality rate.

The thesis concerning the degenerative character of big cities soon gained popularity in broad circles of experts, including that of physicians. In 1909, one of them reported: "We are unable even to calculate that whole mass of the imbeciles, epileptics, psychopaths, criminals, prostitutes, and vagrants, born of drunkard or syphilitic parents, who keep spreading their feeble-mindedness further by means of the inexorable law of heredity".⁷⁶ The author of the article pointed to the lack of interest in these problems on the part of the state and the special role played by the members of his profession, given the situation: "The danger is great and the symptoms very serious; it is our responsibility to bring them to the attention of the people and the governments, and at the same time to indicate the way towards healing our race".⁷⁷ The young venereologist Leon Wernic, who was to play a crucial role in the development of Polish eugenics, arrived at a similar conclusion.

Wernic, born in Warsaw in 1870, completed his medical studies at the Imperial University of Warsaw, specializing in venereology. He completed his medical traineeship in the provinces, at Krzepice and Kalisz. He made himself known there as a good organizer and social activist. In 1902, he founded the Kalisz Hygienic Society. Two years later, he moved to Warsaw. He joined the progressive intelligentsia circles and served as the editor of the *Zdrowie* journal in 1905–1907. He was also co-editor of other journals: *Medycyna* (Medicine) and *Kronika Lekarska* (Medical chronicle). In 1905, he published a series of articles on organizing more efficient medical services

⁷⁶ Prof. Kraepelin, "W sprawie zwyrodnienia", *Zdrowie*, 7 (1909): 538.

⁷⁷ Prof. Kraepelin, "W sprawie zwyrodnienia".

in the provinces in the socialist weekly *Ogniwo*.⁷⁸ In 1907 he became a close contributor to the *Czystość* (Purity) journal founded in 1905 by the anarchist Augustyn Wróblewski. Wernic combined his writing career with lecturing at the Mikołaj Rey secondary school. He designed new school uniforms, promoted a healthy, hygienic lifestyle and argued that it was necessary to include elements of sex education in school curricula for schoolboys. His principal occupation at that time was his work at St. Lazarus hospital, first as the head of a ward, and from 1913 as the hospital's director.

The surroundings of that hospital were very special. Stefan Żeromski became interested in that part of the city. As emphasized by students of literature,⁷⁹ the young writer wanted to find a vantage point to give him the best possible grasp of the atmosphere of a great human agglomeration, a crowd of workers, the rhythm of the city: "Once" we read in his *Diaries*,

I went to Książęca, Ludna, and Solec streets to take a better look at this city. It was noon. Whistles and bells can be heard from a railway engine factory, coal gas-producing gasworks, from chemical works, from steam mills and a foundry,. Thousands of workers pile out from factories. The streets become crowded with people, as if during a fire, everybody is running, pushing one another, hurrying [...] Younger ones are running with cans, all shaped in the same way, more or less similar to small tin kerosene lamps. They bring themselves milk or coffee in them. Whole bunches of them sit down for lunch under the wall of the St. Lazarus hospital. Their wives, daughters, sisters, perhaps mistresses too, bring them food. They lunch out in the cold, in the wind, bareheaded.

It is not an accident that eugenic thought sprouted at the very heart of Warsaw's working-class district. It was there, among the chimneys, factory smoke and fumes, among the crooked, muddy streets: Książęca, Ludna and Solec, to the accompaniment of whistles and bells, that the idea of physical and moral degeneration found its fullest justification.

The health of the populations of the Congress Kingdom of Poland and Galicia was a separate problem in the ongoing degeneration debate. In 1874, an Anthropological Commission attached to the Academy of Sciences was established, in which Józef Majer started studying the height of conscripts: Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians. The collected materials, as well as disclosed statistics from conscription boards in the Congress Kingdom of Poland, became a basis for debate on the threat of physical degeneration. The health criteria were set out in instructions for physicians issued in 1876, 1883, and

⁷⁸ L. Wernic, "Rozprawy o samorządzie ziemskim", *Ogniwo*, 19 (1905): 422; 20 (1905): 446; 21 (1905): 470; 22 (1905): 595.

⁷⁹ Cf. Detko, *Warszawa naturalistów*, p. 145.

1897.⁸⁰ The instructions described the examination in detail and catalogued the diseases and physical defects either exempting an individual from military service or causing deferment. Even though there are differences between the three sets of instructions, the most important provisions concerning the criteria for qualifying the recruits remained virtually unchanged. The minimum height limit throughout the 1874–1913 period was 153.33 cm. The 1876 set of instructions for the conscription boards stated precisely that individuals shorter than 148.88 cm should be definitively exempted from military service. Apart from insufficient height, the causes for exemption included chronic diseases and physical defects. According to the same set of instructions, chest circumference should equal at least half of the recruit's height. In practice, the standards set out in the instructions were not enforced up to 1883, when stricter standards defining “the lack of masculine fitness” and ways to enforce them were introduced.

It was Jan Ludwik Popławski who initiated the debate on the recruits' health in 1886 with his article “Ciekawe cyfry” (Interesting figures), in which he analysed the results of medical examinations from conscription boards in the Congress Kingdom of Poland and Galicia in 1874–1884.⁸¹ The examination results were based on three measurable factors: height, chest circumference, and physical defects. In all three categories, recruits from the Congress Kingdom of Poland scored the most poorly. Popławski tabled the thesis that the recruits' poor health was connected with the degeneration of the indigenous Polish population as a result of its isolation from other races. In Popławski's opinion, in those places where races crossbred and merged, i.e., in the Eastern Borderland of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the general health of the population was much better. In subsequent articles he strengthened his argument, claiming that not only physical, but also mental health was improved as a result of crossbreeding between racial types. That was why, he argued, the Polish intellectual elite came from the Eastern Borderland, while the ethnic Polish population suffered from an “exhaustion of spiritual energy” and “intellectual barrenness”. Popławski's views on interracial cross-breeding stood in opposition to the anthropologists' views invoked by Krzywicki. This shows the paradox of thinking in which a socialist advised against cross-breeding between races, while a nationalist saw it as a remedy for the “fatigue” of his own race. Incidentally, Popławski's views were met

⁸⁰ Cf. a discussion of the results of medical examinations using the statistical method: M. Kopczyński, “Wpływ I wojny światowej na poziom życia w Królestwie Polskim w świetle mierników biologicznych”, *Przegląd Historyczny*, 92 (2001): 301–321.

⁸¹ J.L. Popławski, “Ciekawe cyfry”, *Głos*, 12 (1886): 180; id., “Smutne wnioski”, *Głos*, 4 (1887): 49; id., “W ważnej sprawie”, *Głos*, 9 (1887): 127; id., “Krzywa logika”, *Głos*, 38 (1887): 593.

with criticism on the part of the editors of the *Kraj* (Country) magazine, who challenged the idea of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. For as the offspring only inherited traits established in the population, no kind of degeneration could be inherited.

The decisive opinion in that dispute was that of Władysław Wścieklica, who published a brilliant treatise *Czy się wyradzamy?* (Are we degenerating?) in 1887.⁸² At once with the introduction, he questioned the race degeneration thesis: “the cause for that alleged degeneration”, Wścieklica writes, “is the reputed inferiority of ethnic Poles, their unfortunate ‘anthropological characteristics’, and it is only saved thanks to the mixing [of races]”.⁸³ Wścieklica accused Popławski of manipulating the statistics so as to prove his *a priori* assumptions. He demonstrated, for example, that the statistics could be interpreted in a way contrary to Popławski’s conclusion (for example: the shortest recruits from the Congress Kingdom of Poland were at the same time the physically fittest group). Wścieklica had comparative material: works by the Polish anthropologists Józef Majer, Izydor Kopernicki, and Paweł Myrdacz (whose paper was presented at a hygienic and demographic congress in Vienna) that did not support Popławski’s theses. “This convinces us definitively”, he wrote,

that our common people [...] are not degenerated by any diseases, but are half-starved and that is why they are getting ever weaker and wasting away [...] That some decadence, an exhaustion of vigor due to the oldness of the race should be the cause for a degeneration of the people of Galicia is out of the question [...], babbling about the difference of the ages of these peoples does not make much sense. Linguistic studies have shown that all Indo-European races are derived from one stem. Consequently, all of them are equally old.⁸⁴

The weekly *Ogniwo* was equally critical of the degeneration theory. It proffered the theses of the German eugenicist Max von Gruber, who argued that the progress of hygiene, while favourably influencing the individual, at the same time negatively affected the race.⁸⁵ For in protecting the weaker individuals against untimely death and disability, hygiene consolidates undesirable traits in a race, contributing to its degeneration. The low infant mortality that nineteenth century medicine boasted about had checked natural selection, resulting in an increasing number of unfit individuals. Given these facts, Gruber proposed introducing a eugenic selection of the

⁸² W. Wścieklica, *Czy się wyradzamy?* (Warszawa, 1888).

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.

⁸⁵ Dr M.F., “Higiena a nauka Darwina”, part 1, *Ogniwo*, 49 (1903): 1164–1165.

population. Both the degeneration theory and the eugenic selection of the population were resolutely rejected by *Ogniwo*'s contributors.⁸⁶ Gruber was accused, among other things, of misinterpreting the terms taken from Darwin's theory. "The fittest" does not simply mean strong and healthy individuals, but those whose adaptation and socialization capacity is above average. The advisability of a segregation of the population into the strong and the weak was also rejected.

The debate on the health of the pre-enlistees from Galicia and the Congress Kingdom of Poland resulted from an increased interest in the health of the population that was in evidence in most European countries from the end of the nineteenth century and from the professionalization of medical examination methods. The set of instructions issued in 1897 was more restrictive than the earlier ones. It ordered a more detailed examination; most importantly, the pre-enlistee had to appear before the conscription board naked and not dressed, as had been the case thus far. The health standards that the pre-enlistees were expected to meet were specified. Later statistical research showed that there was no dramatic decline in the recruits' physical fitness between the 1880s and the first decade of the twentieth century.⁸⁷ Even so, the fear of the degeneration of the nation did not disappear.

The degeneration theories tended to gain popularity especially at the times of political shocks in Europe. After the Boer wars, a hysteria broke out in Britain as a result of a threat of "national degeneration". In 1903, an Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration was founded to investigate the causes of the rising rejection rates of prospective recruits by conscription boards.⁸⁸ Apart from the political hysteria, these fears also had beneficial consequences. Government funds were allocated for investigating venereal diseases, including syphilis, regarded as the most acute and most dangerous disease in the nineteenth century. Shortly after the wave of debates on the spectre of "national degeneration", the British Eugenics Education Society was founded in 1907.

The subsequent waves of the degeneration debate came during the First World War and in its wake. As the French Catholic Paul Bureau bitterly noted in 1919: "Prewar France was steadily losing its strength; this loss was

⁸⁶ Dr M.F., "Higiena a nauka Darwina", part 2, *Ogniwo*, 50 (1903): 1185; part 3, *Ogniwo*, 51 (1903): 1212–1213.

⁸⁷ Cf. "Przyczynek do charakterystyki fizycznej ludności męskiej powiatu miechowskiego na zasadzie pomiarów rekrutów w ciągu 30 lat 1874–1903", *Czasopismo Lekarskie*, 7 (1905); W. Tołwiński, "Rozwój fizyczny ludności powiatu lubartowskiego na zasadzie pomiarów w ciągu lat dwunastu (1886–1897)", in: *W naszych sprawach*, vol. 2 (Warszawa, 1902), p. 316.

⁸⁸ Cf. L.A. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain since 1880* (London, 2000).

due to devastating diseases [alcoholism and venereal diseases] that ravaged its social organism, and assumed such dimensions that even those who admire our immunity the most must time and again ask themselves the question whether this nation, which was bleeding for four years, will still find in itself the courage and the strength to effectively combat these diseases”.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ P. Bureau, *Rozprężenie obyczajów. Studium socjologiczne* (Kraków, 1929), p. 10.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ORIGINS OF THE POLISH EUGENICS MOVEMENT (1905–1918)

1. THE REVOLUTION OF 1905

Even though the revolution of 1905 was confined to the Russian Empire and the Congress Kingdom of Poland, it is one of the most important landmarks in the political history of twentieth-century Poland. The economic crisis caused by the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 soon began to affect the major industrial centres of the Congress Kingdom of Poland, launching waves of strikes and violent workers' demonstrations. Very soon came political demands: for the restoration of the Polish language to schools and administration, and abolition of censorship and freedom of speech, association, and the press. Social demands were also made: for an eight-hour working day, insurance, improved working conditions, and higher pay. The strikes were joined by large numbers of secondary school teachers and pupils, clerical workers, craftsmen, as well as agricultural labourers. The leaders of the two foremost political parties: Józef Piłsudski (Polish Socialist Party) and Roman Dmowski (National Democracy) confronted each other in a life-or-death conflict. The two men had differing political visions for the desirable course of developments. Dmowski feared the influences of revolutionary Marxism and sought to have the strikes stifled with the approval of the Church. In foreign policy he promoted the slogan of tactical agreement with Russia, which was to result in autonomy for the Congress Kingdom of Poland (along similar lines as the autonomous district of Galicia under Austrian rule). Piłsudski, on the other hand, sought to transform the strike wave into an armed uprising against Russia with the aim of regaining Polish independence. The conflict between the two politicians led to outbursts of fratricidal fighting between Poles in the streets of major cities that cast a shadow on further relations between the two parties. The divide between the supporters of Piłsudski's and Dmowski's policies deepened and a psychological barrier of mutual hatred arose that disappeared only at the times of the greatest threats to Poland: the war against the Bolsheviks in 1920 and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

In many respects, the revolution of 1905 was a landmark for the Polish people, marking the beginning of the twentieth century. Politics became the domain of the crowd, and violence turned into an instrument of policy-making. Hate speech appeared in the language of party propaganda, with nationalists markedly exacerbating their already anti-Semitic rhetoric. In 1906, the Polish Socialist Party fell into two wings: those advocating social reforms and those who regarded Poland's independence as their foremost objective. Piłsudski fled to Galicia in order to rebuild his own party structures. He set up paramilitary organizations there, designed to prepare society for a possible armed conflict in Europe. The hopes of the general public for a reform of the despotic state, as Russia then was, that would transform it into a parliamentary monarchy were eventually thwarted, but the Russian authorities made some concessions to benefit the Poles. They relaxed censorship in the Congress Kingdom of Poland and allowed the founding of private schools and associations that had been prohibited thus far.

A breakthrough occurred not only in politics, but in public life as well. New educational, hygienic, self-help, and feminist associations that formulated their own agendas kept sprouting up one after another. In all these fields, there was an increasingly close cooperation between the autonomous district of Galicia and the Congress Kingdom of Poland.

Those in the avant-garde of social change included the physicians and social activists from the Warsaw Hygienic Society. Leon Wernic was then working his way up the ladder; in 1906, he became editor-in-chief of the most important nationally-circulated social and medical journal *Zdrowie* (Health). He believed that the revolution and the atmosphere of political change encouraged debates on matters previously ignored: sexuality, human reproduction, and public health. In 1906, he declared in *Zdrowie*:

In devoting the entire present issue to sexual hygiene and to combating prostitution, we are guided by our deep belief in a major breakthrough in social and ethical opinion. Following long years of oppression by the despotic government, the evolution of Polish thought is beginning to manifest itself spontaneously in all areas which have hitherto been fettered by the brutal hand of violence.¹

The journal *Zdrowie* turned into a platform for meetings and debates between members of anti-alcohol, neo-abolitionist, and feminist associations. At a conference held between provincial delegates and the Council of the Warsaw Hygienic Society it was agreed that the members' foremost objectives would be to combat alcoholism and prostitution as the factors responsible for the growing incidence of venereal diseases and the degeneration of the human

¹ *Zdrowie*, 8 (1906): 517.

race.² The journal also published debates on extramarital relationships, and contributors discussed the advantages and disadvantages of sexual abstinence.³ It was believed that science not only had the right, but indeed that it ought to shape moral standards. In Kraków and Warsaw, well-known social activists set up several tea lounges for working-class customers, intended to take over the social functions of drinking dens.⁴ In 1906, a Circle of Friends of Physical and Moral Health was founded in Warsaw (probably at Wernic's initiative), setting for itself goals such as the introduction of co-education, increasing the number of hours of physical exercise and outdoor games in school syllabuses, and the establishment of the post of school physician/hygienist in every school. Wernic himself designed modern school uniforms made of light, breathable fabrics, not restraining the child's movements, that differed visually from the popular military-style school uniforms of the day.⁵ Wernic established contact with Augustyn Wróblewski, the patron of Kraków's Eleuteria society for promoting abstinence from tobacco and alcohol, who had been appointed the editor of the new *Czystość* (Purity) journal. The journal, published between 1905 and 1909, initially in Kraków and later in Warsaw, became one of the foremost centres of the formation of the eugenics idea in Poland.

2. THE JOURNAL CZYSTOŚĆ, 1905–1909

The first issue of *Czystość*, as its subtitle heralded: 'A Non-party Bi-weekly Devoted to Combating Prostitution and Harlotry', was published in 1905, as an appendix to the feminist magazine *Nowe Słowo* (The latest word), edited by the prominent activist from Galicia, Maria Wiśniewska-Turzyma (1860–1922).

Nowe Słowo, under the auspices of which the first issue of *Czystość* appeared, advocated complete equality of status between men and women, and the abrogation of all legislation discriminating against women in education and employment. One of the most vigorous feminist activists in Galicia, and a person who worked closely with Maria Turzyma, was Kazimiera Bujwidowa, the wife of the well-known bacteriologist Odo Bujwid (1857–1942), a graduate

² W. Chodecki, "O zadaniach lekarza w walce z chorobami wenerycznymi", *Zdrowie*, 6 (1906): 556.

³ For example: J. Wiśniewski, "Kilka słów o prostytutce", *Zdrowie*, 8 (1906): 520; L. Wernic, "Podstawowe drogi do walki z chorobami wenerycznymi", *Zdrowie*, 6 (1906): 517; *Zdrowie*, 8 (1905): 649–662; 11: 935–936, 938–939.

⁴ Cf. D. Zamojska, "Romualda z Bagnickich Baudouin de Courtenay (1857–1935) i jej działalność społeczna", in: *Kobieta i świat polityki*, ed. A. Żarnowska and A. Szwarc (Warszawa, 1994), p. 267.

⁵ L. Wernic, "Na progu rozwoju higieny", *Zdrowie*, 2 (1906): 67.

of the medical faculty of the University of Warsaw, head of the chair of hygiene at the Jagiellonian University, and the founder of the Pasteur vaccination centre in Kraków. Thanks to the efforts of the Bujwids, mainly Kazimiera Bujwidowa, the first female secondary school to grant its alumnae the right to take the secondary-school leaving exam (*matura*) and enroll at university was founded in Kraków in 1897. Beginning from the late 1890s, women were admitted to the medical and philosophy departments of the Jagiellonian University. Because the Russian authorities did not allow women to study at the Imperial University of Warsaw, women from the Congress Kingdom of Poland who wished to take up university education came flooding into Galicia. The Bujwids had a popular salon on Lubicz Street, a regular meeting place for academics, social activists, hygienists, and feminists.⁶ The well-known linguist Jan Baudouin de Courtenay and his feminist wife, Romualda, were close friends with the Bujwids. The progressive milieu was diversified; what the progressives shared was their aversion to all kinds of nationalism. They mostly declared themselves to be rationalist, atheist, or non-religious. They enthusiastically welcomed the development of Esperanto in the belief that it would help overcome ethnic separatisms. They generally stayed away from party politics. In 1900, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay assumed the chair of comparative linguistics at the Historical and Philological Faculty of St. Petersburg University. In 1905, he became close to the “Kadets” party (Constitutional Democratic Party), and one year later he was elected deputy to the Russian Duma from that party’s electoral list. Together with Leon Petrażycki, a law professor and also a deputy from the “Kadets” party list, he tried in vain to push through a bill providing for cultural autonomy for the peoples inhabiting the territories of the Russian Empire. Both supported the emancipation of women. Petrażycki’s sister, Jadwiga Petrażycka-Tomicka, was a well-known activist for equal rights for women in Galicia, and Baudouin de Courtenay’s wife, Romualda, worked together with Russian feminists and the Union for Equal Rights for Women from Warsaw.⁷ In 1906, Petrażycki submitted to the Duma a liberal bill to grant equal rights to women all over the Empire; it was however rejected.⁸

⁶ For more on the Bujwid’s salon, see: F. Goetel, *Patrząc wstecz* (Kraków, 2009), pp. 69–71.

⁷ R. Baudouin de Courtenay, “Sprawa równouprawnienia kobiet w pierwszej Dumie”, *Ster*, 1 (1907): 33–40; by the same author: “Petersburg 5 marca 1907 r.”, *Ster*, 1 (1907): 40–43; “Jak się prawa zdobywa”, *Ster*, 2 (1907): 102–109; “Związek Polek w Petersburgu”, *Ster*, 2 (1907): 124–125. On women’s rights in Russia, see “I Wszecchrosyjski Zjazd Kobiet w Petersburgu”, *Ster*, 1 (1908): 21–40.

⁸ Cf. L. Petrażycki, *O prawa kobiet. Mowa wygłoszona w I Dumie rosyjskiej w 1906 roku*, transl. by J. Petrażycka-Tomicka (Lwów, 1919); R. Sities, *The Women’s Liberation Movement in Russia. Feminism, Nihilism and Bolshevism, 1860–1930* (New Jersey, 1991).

The famous linguist Baudouin de Courtenay did not conceal his disenchantment with politics, which he described years later as “a filthy cesspool”.⁹

It was also within the milieu of the free-thinking intelligentsia, distancing itself from nationalisms and religion, that Dr Augustyn Wróblewski (born in 1866) moved. Wróblewski was a chemist by education, an associate of Odo Bujwid, a participant of the social gatherings on Lubicz Street, and an advocate of syndicalism and anarchism. Because of his political views he encountered problems in academic circles; his application for the post-doctoral habilitation degree was stridently turned down.¹⁰ It seems that such conflicts compelled him to the decision to abandon science and devote himself to promoting a new ethic, instead. This is what Wróblewski wrote in the first issue of *Czystość*:

For a long time now, a trend towards an elevation of public morality, towards a purification of morals in the sphere of relations between the two sexes, has been budding in our society. This trend has been intensifying, spreading, and organizing itself [...] Voices are being raised against the tyranny of custom and the prejudice of public opinion, and calls are being made for relevant changes in the legislation [...] In the struggle for a universal change in morals, one of the crucial outposts is a journal [...] to carry forward the standard in battle.¹¹

In its first year, the contributors to *Czystość* were some fairly obscure journalists.¹² Later, they were joined by writers of some repute, such as well-known feminist activists from the Congress Kingdom of Poland – namely: the physician Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, and the publicist Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit, the naturalist Professor Benedykt Dybowski, the sexologist Dr Waclaw Miklaszewski, and the creator of the Esperanto language, Dr Ludwik Zamenhoff. The subtitle was changed to *An Ethical Weekly*, and later the entire title was printed also in Esperanto: *Puerco. Organo de etika movado*.

3. THE ANTI-ALCOHOL CRUSADE

The “purity” in the title was used in a double sense: as a symbol of public health and as moral purity. Purity understood as the nation’s physical health was threatened by “race-degenerating” diseases, i.e., by alcoholism

⁹ Cf. S. Falkowicz, “Udział Jana Niecisława Baudouina de Courtenay w życiu społeczno-politycznym Rosji na początku XX wieku”, in: *Działalność naukowa, dydaktyczna i społeczno-polityczna Jana Niecisława Baudouina de Courtenay w Rosji* (Wrocław–Kraków, 1991), p. 139.

¹⁰ On A. Wróblewski, see: L. Krzywicki, *Wspomnienia*, vol. 2, (Warszawa 1958), p. 93; O. Bujwid, *Osamotnienie. Pamiętniki z lat 1932–42* (Kraków, 1990), p. 121.

¹¹ A. Wróblewski, “Nasz Program”, *Czystość*, 1 (1905): 1.

¹² E.g., Andrzej Baumfeld, Samuel Starski, Maria Wojnarowa, Stanisław Teodorczuk, and Jadwiga Mizerówna.

and promiscuity. Within the milieu of *Czystość* it was believed that even the smallest amount of alcohol was harmful, causing irreparable physical and mental changes in the human body. The editors were in contact with the international prohibition movement. In September 1905, they participated in the Tenth International Anti-Alcohol Congress in Budapest. Subsequently, *Czystość* reprinted and published in the form of a pamphlet the lecture delivered there by the Swiss psychiatrist, eugenicist, and pioneer of sterilization, Professor Auguste Forel. The lecture, entitled “Alcohol, Heredity, and Sex Life”, was originally published in the German Workers’ Library series. The effects of alcohol abuse were obvious to Forel:

An increased incidence of venereal and infectious diseases, seductions of both sexes to practice the most odious and aimless forms of intercourse, bringing low-quality offspring into the world, an increase in prostitution, an increase in sexually-motivated crime [...] and, lastly, the relaxation of family ties.¹³

According to Forel, the effect of alcohol degenerates the race by poisoning the foetus. Besides alcohol, Forel regarded “thoughtless sexual selection”, which destroys the inherited spiritual and physical resources, as a source of evil: “the agile, brave, and strong should procreate; the weak, infirm, evil, and stupid should not procreate at all. Average ones, moderately”.¹⁴ Rational sexual selection should also take place at the race level. Forel writes:

There are stronger and weaker races, more and less worthy, but the strengths and weaknesses are not always evenly distributed. The negroes, with their *extraordinary fertility*, are almost completely devoid of any other good qualities of the mind and character.¹⁵

Forel elaborated on the issues of sexual selection and marriage in his extensive two-volume work *The Sexual Question*, translated into Polish and published in the Library of Scientific Works series in the first decade of the twentieth century. In it the author developed his theory of morality and sexual ethics. He proposed that prostitutes, sex offenders, and sexual deviants should be castrated.¹⁶ The author also advocated the introduction of elements of matriarchy into family law. They may be summarized in a few points. The child should bear the mother’s family name. Apart from particular situations (the inability to fulfill parental duties, illness, disability), it is the mother who should enjoy full custody rights and be made responsible for the child’s

¹³ A. Forel, *Alkohol, dziedziczność, życie płciowe* (Warszawa, 1907), p. 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15–16.

¹⁶ A. Forel, *Zagadnienia seksualne*, vol. 2 (Warszawa, nd.), p. 20.

upbringing, including after divorce. The wife should be the owner of the house and she should be in charge of hearth and home. The mother's work should be remunerated, like the husband's gainful occupation. As long as the marriage lasts, the husband has the right to demand accommodation, board, and domestic services from his wife. On condition that the husband provides adequately to meet the household and child-raising expenses, the rest of his earnings and assets constitutes his private property.¹⁷

Forel's influence on the writers from the *Czystość* milieu was indisputable. Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka literally repeated his theses: "An alcoholic, being a social outcast himself, commits yet another social crime: he breeds sick children".¹⁸ She also warned against even sporadic consumption of alcohol, because: "one need not necessarily be an alcohol addict to give life to a degenerate child; it is enough for the body to be saturated with alcohol at the moment of conception; then the sperm secreted may also be poisoned with alcohol and incapable of giving life to a normal human being as a result".¹⁹ She counted the following among the hereditary disorders the offspring of alcoholics were susceptible to: convulsions, epilepsy, mental retardation ("idiotism"), encephalitis, hysteria, mental illnesses ("susceptibility to melancholy and madness"), a tendency to commit crimes, drunkenness, vagrancy, and suicide.²⁰ According to Budzińska-Tylicka, the spread of drunkenness may only be halted by top-down government policy. The author above all had in mind the enactment of legislation providing for compulsory treatment of alcoholism and promoting prohibition societies. The contributors to *Czystość* agreed that a conscious selection of future spouses based on the criteria of health and general mental and physical condition was a crucial element of the new ethics and morality.

4. PREMARITAL COUNSELLING

Despite the full support that they gave to Forel's anti-alcohol crusade, the contributors to *Czystość* maintained a discreet silence on the issue of sterilization. On the other hand, they did give their support to the idea of premarital counselling. The problem of spouse selection was earnestly debated in medical circles. In 1908, the editors of *Przegląd Higieniczny* carried out a detailed survey among physicians on the heredity of various diseases and the possible prohibition to marry, should prenuptial certificates be introduced:

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 174–175.

¹⁸ J. Budzińska-Tylicka, "O potomstwie alkoholików", part 1, *Czystość*, 1 (1909): 4.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ J. Budzińska-Tylicka, "O potomstwie alkoholików", part 2, *Czystość*, 2 (1909): 27–29.

Nature and name of the disease or anomaly	Impact on one spouse or the other	Transmission of the disease from one individual to another	Impact on the number and quality of offspring	Recommended course of action
1 Age of the spouses: a) too young (the husband aged less than 24, the wife less than 18)	2 <i>Adverse effect on health</i>	3 -	4 Frail children, often developmental anomalies, higher incidence of idiotism	5 Discourage. In the case of a very young age, forbid!
b) too old (the wife over 30, the husband over 40)	Difficult births, same as above	-	Same as above. More often twins. Problems with child-rearing	Discourage!
Close blood relationship	Same as above	-	Risk of accumulation of defects and diseases running in the family. Frail children, often blindness, deafness and dumbness, epilepsy, polydactyly and other similar developmental anomalies	Discourage, and, if there are visible negative family characteristics, forbid! Marriage between close relations has been prohibited by almost all cultural peoples, and by some primitive peoples as well. An Arab hadith says: marry among strangers, so that you do not have weak progeny or remain sterile.
Too distant races (a white + a Negro)	Same as above	-	Same as above	Same as above

<p>Metabolic disorders: a) Diabetes</p>	<p>In the case of younger individuals (a man below 35 years of age) the disorder usually deteriorates as a result of marriage</p>	-	<p>Frequent impotence, irregularity of menses, infertility, frequent miscarriages. Frail and weakly children. Diabetes is heritable (18–5% according to Noorden, 21–6% according to Kitzl)</p>	<p>Men over 35 years of age may be allowed to marry with certain precautions and guidance. Girls should be discouraged, given their younger age and the greater risks they are facing.</p>
b) Arthritis urica	-	-	-	<p>Because of a permanent hospital at home, in the case of a more severe form, discourage</p>
c) Acromegalia and myxomatous degeneration (...) There may only be talk about a form in adults, more commonly in women	Deterioration of suffering	-	Irregularity of menses, infertility, a susceptibility to miscarriage	<p>Severe symptoms, only temporary improvement is possible. Forbid!</p>
d) Excessive obesity	<p>In the case of women often the irregularity of menses, infertility. Difficult births, breastfeeding impossible. In men sometimes impotence.</p>	-	-	Warn, explain
Scrofulas (scrophulosis)	<p>Frequently, an onset of tuberculosis, especially in poor classes</p>	-	Offspring susceptible to tuberculosis. Inheriting of scrofulas	Discourage, especially the poor

Blood diseases: a) hemophilia	A disorder of major importance, especially for women, because of bleedings at deflowering, menses and childbirth. Fortunately, women are less often affected by this condition	-	Very strong heredity. Women may be carriers. The disorder is usually transmitted from a hemophilic father through a healthy daughter to a hemophilic grandson	Women from a hemophilic family, though themselves healthy, should not marry. Men may marry, provided they are healthy. Hemophilia weakens over time, which should be taken into consideration in assessment
	Dangerous diseases	-	-	If there is a risk – forbid
Heart and blood vessel disorders: a) Congenital disorders	Constant risk to health and life	-	A fairly frequent susceptibility to inherit	In severe cases forbid
b) Acquired defects	Same as above	-	Same as above	Discourage
c) Artery diseases, arteriosclerosis, aneurisms, etc.	Same as above	-	-	Warn!
Kidney disorders: a) Albuminuria in young girls	Pregnancy and childbirth may cause deterioration	-	-	Attention! Postpone the wedding until the affected individual is cured, or at least warn
b) Chronic nephritis	The spouses' lives are short. Risks during pregnancy and childbirth	-	Frequent miscarriages. Frail children	Forbid to women, warn men

Tuberculosis	To a proletarian affected by tuberculosis marriage means deterioration. Permanent hospital, frequent tragedies	An easily transmittable disease, transmission often through sexual intercourse, though not through sperm (unless the genitals are affected by tuberculosis)	Frail, scrofulous children who inherit susceptibility to tuberculosis. A risk of parents infecting the children	From the social point of view, it should be absolutely forbidden, especially to women. A permanent presence of bacilli in the spit should be the decisive factor in the assessment
Neoplasms:	-	-	-	Incurable! Forbid, whatever the location
a) Malignant (cancer)	-	-	-	Warn, particularly women.
b) Benign (fibroma)	-	-	-	Discourage and warn
Motoric disorders:	Risk at childbirth as a result of spinal curvature and contraction of the pelvis	-	-	
a) Rickets				
b) Osteomalacia				
c) Congenital hip joint dislocation				
d) Hip joint tuberculous inflammation	A possibility of onset of generalized tuberculosis		Frequent heredity (40% according to Narath), sometimes whole families [are] affected	
Eye diseases:	Individual risks and disabilities	-	Sometimes hereditary	Warn and discourage
a) Cataract				
b) Glaucoma				
c) Neuromyelitis optica			According to Leber, a highly hereditary condition	
d) Pigmentary retinitis			Hereditary in half of the cases	

Skin and venereal diseases:	Incurable	Infecting others	-	Forbidden
a) Leprosy	A possibility of onset of generalized tuberculosis		The offspring's susceptibility towards tuberculosis	Allow in those cases in which the condition is completely cured, and the person is generally healthy. In the case of an active form – forbid!
b) Lupus	Same as above	-	Same as above	Allow perhaps only after a successful surgical treatment
c) Scrophuloderma	-	-	-	Forbidden in the case of severe changes, particularly on the genitals
d) Elephantiasis	Individual and shared risks and misfortunes. If untreated, the effects of the disease are fatal. Miscarriages, preterm	One person may infect the other and the children as well! births, stillbirths	The disease may be transmitted to offspring: 1. through direct infection, 2. through the placenta of a syphilitic mother, 3. through perinatal infections, when the mother has recent changes. It may be transmitted both from the mother and the father, even though the possibility of transmission ends much earlier in	As long as any symptoms of the disease persist, forbid! The more time has passed from secondary changes, the lesser the risk of transmission. Allow no earlier than 5 years after contracting the disease, and no earlier than 3 years after the latest changes and symptoms of the disease
e) Syphilis				

				men. One must also remember about hereditary syphilis tarda and about the so-called para- and metasyphilitic symptoms, such as scrofulas, rickets, hydrocephalus, epilepsy, etc.	
f) Gonorrhoea	In men frequent impotence. In women frequent sterility and infirmity for years. According to the statistics of Bumm and other authors, in 40–50% of infertile married couples infertility is due to changes caused by gonorrhoea. A condition with very grave consequences	One individual very easily infects another through genital contact	Frequent gonococcal conjunctivitis in newborns	Conscientious and careful microbiological testing of the secretion or sperm. Forbid, allow or postpone accordingly	
Nervous system disorders:			Naturopathic heredity	Depending on the intensity of the disease allow, discourage or forbid	
a) Hysteria	-	-			
b) Neurasthenia	-	-	-		
c) Epilepsy	Risks for both spouses	-	Heritable susceptibility to the disease and degeneration	Forbid!	

d) Chorea	-	-	-	-	-
e) Tetany	-	-	-	-	-
f) Basedow-Graves disease	A risk of deterioration	-	-	Hereditary disease	Depending on the intensity
g) Tabes dorsalis (slowly progressive degeneration of the spinal cord)	The disease speaks for itself	-	-	-	Forbid!
Mental illnesses (except for postpartum cases and those occurring after infectious diseases as not causing permanent changes)	Individual and shared risks. Misfortunes. Tragedies	-	-	Extremely strong heritable susceptibility (...). Sometimes predisposition only. Cumulative heredity (a mental illness + a neurological illness)	Forbid even when it is only the parents who are mentally ill or when there is a high incidence of mental illnesses within the family
Sex drive deviations: <i>psychological impotence</i> , homosexuality, sadism and masochism, fetishism, etc.	-	-	-	-	Discourage or forbid on a case-to-case basis
Women's diseases: a) Developmental anomalies (...) b) Neoplasms	-	-	-	-	In the case of certain infertility forbid or warn against Discourage because of the complications
c) Tuberculosis of the reproductive organs	-	-	Transmittable	Heredity	Forbid

<p>Poisonings: a) Alcoholism</p>	<p>Physical and moral disasters. Moral and material ruin</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Frequent miscarriages, frequent twin births. Strong and disastrous heredity. A high percentage of physically and mentally meager children. Susceptibility to tuberculosis and epilepsy</p>	<p>Forbid, place in custody, possibly grant a divorce</p>
<p>b) Morphineism</p>	<p>Same as above</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Heredity. Degeneration. Sometimes children are even born with symptoms of chronic morphine poisoning</p>	<p>Forbid!</p>

After: W. Hojnacki, "Choroby a małżeństwo", *Przegląd Higieniczny Luwowski*, 11 (1908): 308–311.

According to physicians, a man should not marry until he is 24 years old, and a woman until she is 18. The conditions that the contributors to the *Medical Review* regarded as the greatest impediments to marriage included mental and venereal diseases, epilepsy (it was explicitly described as causing “heritable susceptibility to the disease and degeneration”), tuberculosis, alcoholism, and drug addiction, next to which the notes “forbid!” appear. Next to mental illnesses, it was noted that there is an “extremely strong heritable susceptibility” to such disorders; accordingly, marriage should be “forbidden even when it is only the parents who are mentally ill or when there is a high incidence of mental illnesses within the family”. That the knowledge of heredity was still in its nascent stages is demonstrated by the medical opinion that the birth of twins may be caused by alcoholism (of one or both parents) or by the advanced age of the father.

Opinions on premarital counselling, conception, and contraception were divided among the contributors to *Czystość*. Neo-Malthusianism, which, the writers argued, had been embraced in practice by the bourgeois stratum in Western Europe, was viewed unfavourably. Accordingly, the tendency to limit the number of offspring that had swept across Western Europe was seen as caused not by difficult living conditions, but rather by sheer excessive love of comfort. “In our country”, it was written, “there has been no great danger in this respect in the working and peasant classes so far, and as long as these repulsive and unethical measures, degenerating the human race [in the moral sense], are not promoted by the bourgeoisie, the common people will not use condoms on a mass scale”.²¹

In the opinion of Augustyn Wróblewski, it was not for a doctor or any government authority to prohibit people from marrying, but what authorities may and should demand of a married couple burdened with a hereditary disease was for them to remain childless. He regarded contraception as permissible in those cases where there is a clear medical indication that the newlyweds should not have children.²²

Leon Wernic, on the other hand, was a declared advocate of prenuptial certificates and prohibitions to marry. He spoke against both traditionalists, who believed in matchmaking based on family interests, and against progressives, who pointed to affection as opposed to financial calculation as the precondition for marriage:

We need to say once and for all that the destiny of mankind ought to be governed not by a fleeting impulse or a fleeting emotion or an individual’s sex drive, but

²¹ “Wiadomości”, *Czystość*, 2 (1909): 31.

²² A. Wróblewski, “Uwagi nad artykułem ‘Choroby a małżeństwo’ dra Władysława Hojnackiego”, *Czystość*, 2 (1909): 30.

rather by the interest of the human race that must exclude dwarfed types from its number and strive to breed generations strong in body and spirit. Let the proponents of the principle that the only sanction of marriages of this or that kind is the sentiment of love [...] not shake their heads doubtfully [...]; the ultimate goal of married unions is to preserve and improve the human race.²³

Wernic believed 25 years of age, after which the spouses would be able to ensure the “improved qualities” to their offspring, to be the optimum age for entering into marriage. Given the risk of contracting venereal diseases, race hygiene also demanded absolute premarital chastity and matrimonial fidelity, elimination of prostitution from social life, and, as the author forcefully emphasized, social reforms to guarantee decent living standards to all.²⁴

5. A NEW SEXUAL ETHIC

The contributors to the journal *Czystość* proposed a new ethic to be based on the foundation of science. The guiding slogan of that milieu was “back to nature”, i.e., to studying the natural sciences, the principles of which were to be translated into the language of social life.²⁵ According to the editors of *Czystość*, Darwinism, with its laws of evolution and natural selection, had laid down the foundations for building a scientific, secular ethic.²⁶ One of the contributors, an ardent proponent of Darwinism, believed that the time had come to thoroughly redefine the concepts that, produced by religion in the “dark” ages, had distorted the modern scientific image of man and of the world:

The concept of the resurrection of the body is nonsense and comes from the introspective knowledge of the time when such a thing as strictness in the natural sciences was unheard of. At that time, human imagination fantasized about the most impossible impossibilities and everything that one saw in one’s imagination seemed to be the truest reality. One needs to understand very clearly, and teach the children, that the dead may not rise from the grave and never will, the body of the one who has died will never rise from the grave.²⁷

²³ L. Wernic, *Małżeństwo z punktu widzenia higieny społecznej i seksualnej*, *Czystość*, 6 (1907): 85–89.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ A., “Wróć do natury”, *Czystość*, 3 (1908): 45.

²⁶ Cf., From the Editor, a note to mark the 100th birthday of Charles Darwin, *Czystość*, 8 (1909): 113; “Charles Darwin”, *Czystość*, 19 (1909): 140–141.

²⁷ “Immortality”, *Czystość*, 41 (1909): 625. Cf. the continuation of the article in *Czystość*, 42 (1909): 643.

In another article, the writer revised the idea of the soul, which he defined as “a function of the entire mental apparatus, the functioning of the whole cerebral-nervous system”.²⁸

The ethical program *Czystość* strove to advance was presented most fully by Benedykt Dybowski in an extensive series of articles: “O nadwyznaniowości i religii” (On excessive religiosity and religion).²⁹ The author proposed the thesis that alcoholism, nationalism, and religiosity were the obstacles standing in the way of achieving progress in social life. Abstinence societies had started combating alcoholism, Esperanto societies had started combating nationalism, and freethinkers’ societies had started combating religiosity. According to Dybowski, the most difficult task was to eradicate thinking in religious terms, which is a mainstay of all kinds of prejudice, superstition, and ignorance. Knowledge, by contrast, “does not impose any ties... Instead of keeping people in ignorance, it calls them towards the light, towards the truth; instead of fanaticism and exclusiveness, it heralds tolerance and understanding; instead of hatred and contempt, it recommends love, unity and harmony”.³⁰

Sexual laxity, encouraged by pornography and prostitution, was regarded as the greatest threat to the new ethical order. Abortion was condemned as a procedure “negating the sacred laws of nature and cardinal ethical commandments”; women themselves (regarded as double victims: of the abortion underground and of the double morality) were not condemned, however.³¹ In those circles, sexual discipline applying to both sexes, premarital chastity and the lowering of the age of marriage were believed to be the proper means of preventing the spread of venereal diseases and backstreet abortions. In particular, combating pornography and providing sex education for young people were the new slogans of the moral reform movement.³²

²⁸ “Dusza”, *Czystość*, 43 (1909): 666.

²⁹ B. Dybowski, “O nadwyznaniowości i religii”, *Czystość*, 33–34 (1909): 513; a continuation of the article in *Czystość*, 35–36 (1909): 543.

³⁰ Id., “O nadwyznaniowości”, *Czystość*, 35–36 (1909): 545.

³¹ Regular Reader, *Niepokojący rozdział ciekawej książki*, *Czystość*, 6 (1908): 84–87; untitled, *Czystość* 6 (1908): 88; P.S. Korespondencje, *Czystość*, 9 (1908): 142–143; A. Beren, “Aborty”, *Czystość*, 1 (1909): 4–6, “W sprawie walki Sclavusa o prawo zabijania płodu”s’, *Czystość*, 10 (1909): 157–159.

³² “Świat płciowy”, *Czystość*, 13–14 (1905): 171–172; “Bocian”, *Czystość*, 6 (1907): 9; “Do panów dziennikarzy”, *Czystość*, 7 (1907): 98; “Bocian”, *Czystość*, 8: 127; S. Auerbach, “Pozornie błaha sprawa”, *Czystość*, 11 (1909): 169–170; *Czystość*, 17 (1905); *Czystość*, 18 (1905): 237.

6. SEX EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The first survey on the sex life of young people was carried out in Warsaw in 1903 by the Polish physician Robert Bernhardt. He sent a questionnaire containing questions regarding sex life to the students of two higher education institutions: the Technological University of Warsaw and the Imperial University of Warsaw. Some 266 questionnaires (filled out by male respondents only) were returned, albeit some of them incompletely. The results were analyzed by Tadeusz J. Łazowski and Konrad Sawicki, and published in the form of multipartite articles entitled “*Życie płciowe warszawskiej młodzieży akademickiej*” (The sex life of the Warsaw academic youth) in the periodicals *Zdrowie*,³³ and *Czystość*.³⁴ The questionnaire included 38 questions concerning how the facts of life were learned, about sexual initiation, the frequency of sexual intercourse, masturbation, contraceptives, abstinence, alcohol consumption, venereal diseases (extensively and in great detail), sanitation at home, and personal hygiene.

The findings were predictable: a vast majority of the respondents answered that they had been informed about the facts of life by domestic servants or by their peers. Sexual initiation mostly occurred between the ages of 16 and 19. Half of the sexually active youth suffered from venereal diseases.

Leon Wernic regarded the findings of the survey as alarming enough to make explaining the facts of life to young people a matter of special importance.³⁵ The subject was ever present on the pages of the *Zdrowie*, *Czystość*, and *Przegląd Higieniczny*.³⁶ Even in the medical debate, where arguments from the field of biology rather than from the fields of psychology and moral education were invoked, *Czystość* stood out by its extremely rationalist stance. An anonymous author advised parents to teach their children “to think...

³³ Cf. *Czystość*, 11(1905): 919–931; and *Czystość*, 12: 1003–1010; as well as Z. Srebrny, “Sprawy seksualne w higienie szkolnej”, *Zdrowie*, 8 (1905): 649–662.

³⁴ Cf. *Czystość*, 12 (1906): 139–144; 13 and 14: 172–175; 15: 181–187; 16: 205–208; 17: 214–218; 18: 234–236; 20: 258–258; 21: 282–288; 22–23: 294–303.

³⁵ L. Wernic, “O uświadomieniu płciowym młodzieży w okresie szkolnym i przedszkolnym”, *Zdrowie*, 8 (1907): 455.

³⁶ Cf. L. Wernic, “O przyczynach pobudzenia sfery płciowej u dzieci najmniejszych”, *Czystość*, 1 (1907): 4–7; id., “Kary cielesne a rozwój instynktów seksualnych”, *Czystość*, 4 (1907): 52–54; id., “Podstawowe drogi do walki z chorobami wenerycznymi”, *Zdrowie*, 8 (1906): 117; Z. Srebrny, “Sprawy seksualne w higienie szkolnej”, *Zdrowie*, 8 (1905): 649–662; H. Lichtenbaum, “Uświadomienie płciowe”, *Czystość*, 38 (1909): 575–584; E. Piasecki, “W sprawie higieny płciowej młodzieży szkolnej”, *Przegląd Higieniczny*, 5 (1906): 113–121; A. Karwowski, “O seksualnym wychowaniu młodzieży”, *Przegląd Higieniczny*, 5 (1909): 129–137; “Czy rozsądne uświadamianie dzieci w kwestii płciowej jest czynnikiem umoralniającym?”, *Nowiny Lekarskie*, 9 (1906): 401–411.

chastely about sexual matters, impregnation, or even human copulation, the way a doctor of sexually transmitted diseases, a farmer occupied with the breeding of his herd, or an artist executing a sculpture think about them”.³⁷

There was a number of pamphlets circulating on the market that offered practical guidance to parents on when and how to explain the facts of life to children, written by both physicians and teachers.³⁸ In the background, however, a conflict was brewing between the medical circles and the liberal segment of the intelligentsia that agreed with the former on the need to combat venereal diseases and the positive role of parents explaining the facts of life to their children, but who, at the same time, emphasized the importance of individual happiness. The outstanding liberal commentator and suffragette Izabela Moszczeńska admitted that it was the mothers who should take it upon themselves to gradually introduce their daughters to the secrets of human sexuality, so as to ensure that their daughters enjoy their lives and properly fulfill their social roles as wives and mothers. She also stressed the importance of forging bonds based on respect, friendship, and sincerity between parents and children.³⁹ Whereas “individual happiness” appeared in the writings of liberal commentators, physicians in turn would write about the welfare of the “future generations”. The doctors from *Czystość* seemingly agreed with feminist demands, but it was actually becoming increasingly clear to feminists themselves that the medical circles were treating women like objects, reducing their roles to the purely biological functions of giving life. Based on his research and on interviews with his patients, Doctor Waław Miklaszewski found that barely 10 percent of women covered by his study experienced sexual bliss. The other ones, he maintained, are cold-blooded women, geared exclusively towards producing offspring. Thus, the physician claimed, female sexuality was basically procreation-oriented.

³⁷ “Parę uwag o metodzie uświadamiania w sprawach płciowych”, *Czystość*, 3 (1908): 46–47. On the same subject: *Czystość*, 4 (1908): 60–62.

³⁸ See pamphlets by: Izabela Moszczeńska: *Czego nie wiemy o naszych synach?* (What is it that we do not know about our sons?) (1904); *Co każda matka swojej dorastającej córce powiedzieć powinna?* (What should every mother tell her adolescent daughter?) (1904); *Jak rozmawiać z dziećmi o kwestiach drażliwych* (How to discuss sensitive issues with our children) (1904); by Aleksander Herzen, *Odezwa do młodzieży męskiej* (An appeal to young men) (1904); Paul Good, *Higiena i moralność* (Hygiene and morality), an offprint from *Czystość* (no year of publication); by Z. Julian Kowalski, *Higiena i etyka życia płciowego* (The hygiene and ethics of sex life) (1901); by Waław Miklaszewski, *Odezwa do młodzieży dojrzewającej* (An appeal to adolescents), *Odezwa do młodzieży dojrzałej* (An appeal to young adults) (1905).

³⁹ For more on sex education see: M. Gawin, “The Social Politics and Experience of Sex Education in Early Twentieth Century Poland (1905–1939)”, in: *Shaping Sexual Knowledge: A Cultural History of Sex Education in Twentieth Century Europe*. *Routledge Studies in the Social History of Medicine*, ed. L.H. Sauerteig, R. Davidson, pp. 217–235.

As long as the traditional bourgeois morality and its effects in the form of prostitution and venereal diseases were criticized, the feminist and medical circles spoke with one voice. This unity broke down, however, as a result of opinions offered by physicians on the place and role of women in modern society. The arena in which the opposing opinions clashed was the Congress of Polish Women held in Warsaw in 1907.

7. CONFLICT OVER NEW ETHICS IN THE MILIEUX OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS ADVOCATES

The organizer of the congress and the head of the Union for Equal Rights for Polish Women, Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit, made sure that it was attended by prominent figures to give it proper importance. The congress was held at the union's office in the very heart of Warsaw, on Nowy Świat avenue. The guests of honor were the poet Maria Konopnicka and a leader of the young generation, Aleksander Świętochowski. The contributions were divided into sections. The subjects addressed at the congress included the political rights of women, universal suffrage, social democratization, and new ethics. Chastity, sexual abstinence, the welfare of the next generations, and health were declined by all possible cases.

The vision of new ethics attracted the attention of one of the youngest congress participants, Zofia Rygier (1884–1954), who was to enter the history of Polish literature as Zofia Nałkowska a few years later.⁴⁰ She had been allotted barely 10 minutes for her speech. When she began speaking in a high and strong voice, the din in the audience intensified with every sentence she uttered. At one point Maria Konopnicka rose and ostentatiously left the congress hall. Time and again, a bell rang reminding the speaker that she was in breach of the rules, having exceeded the time allotted to her. Nałkowska did not allow herself to be interrupted, and finished her address with a strong declaration: “We want the whole of life!”

In her speech, Nałkowska stressed the independent status of women, individualism, freedom of choice, and the right to live a full, creative life.

⁴⁰ Z. Nałkowska, “Uwagi o etycznych zadaniach ruchu kobiecego. Przemówienie wygłoszone na Zjeździe Kobiet”, in: *Widzenie bliskie i dalekie* (Warszawa, 1957), pp. 235–240; a further debate on Nałkowska's speech: W. Miklaszewski, “Kobieta wyzwolona a miłość. Odpowiedź p. Z. Rygier Nałkowskiej na ‘Uwagi o etycznych zadaniach ruchu kobiecego’”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 241–245; M. Turzyna, “O miłość. Jeszcze w sprawie referatu p. Rygier-Nałkowskiej”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 246–251; I. Moszczeńska, “W kwestii miłości”, *ibid.*, pp. 254–255; W. Miklaszewski, “Jeszcze w sprawie miłości. Odpowiedź pani M. Turzynie i I. Moszczeńskiej”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 256–261; Z. Nałkowska, “Konkluzja. Dawne sprawy”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 262–264.

She challenged the predominant medical discourse which denied women the right to eroticism, sexuality, and to the beauty and pleasures of life. Like the preceding speaker Izabela Moszczeńska, Nałkowska spoke critically of the “propaganda for a purity of morals”. She accused the congress participants of excessive simplifications in interpreting the issue of prostitution. Prostitution, Nałkowska argued, is not limited to women from the proletariat, providing their services in the streets of Warsaw. Actually, prostitution also covers a circle of respectable-looking people, kept women living in warmth and security. There are also women, she further argued, living in extramarital relationships, who do not propagate free love, but simply live it. It is not poverty that is the root cause of prostitution, but the misconception of chastity that degrades every woman who abandons her husband, reducing her to the status of a “fallen woman”. Why is it, she went on provokingly, that there is not a single prostitute in the congress hall, even though the members of the women’s rights movement are so eager to discuss their lives? Is it not because women themselves have allowed themselves to be divided into “society women” and “non-society women”, “adopting passively and slavishly the prevalent definition of virtue?” Like the old ethics, the new ethics strike a false note, Nałkowska concluded. The new ethics, based on absolute chastity, scientific recommendations, and the welfare of the future generations, will not be a liberation for, but rather a new form of tyranny against women.

A number of people from the audience, including Konopnicka, saw Nałkowska as a proponent of free love. Nałkowska concluded that progeny was not the proper aim of sexuality, but rather its effect. The chastity of women is not the result of women’s moral superiority, but rather a product of “adjustment to the conditions of slavery”. Let us take a closer look at a fragment of her speech:

That striving towards chastity has its source in a man’s sense of *excessive satiety* and tiredness with life. Today he imposes his longing for health and normalcy on the woman in the name of the welfare of the future generations. It is not love but health that is supposed to be the touchstone of the morality of a married union. We are expected to sacrifice all our individual erotic desires for the welfare of the children, so that these children may in turn similarly sacrifice themselves for the welfare of the next generations. Thus, by eliminating all beauty, all passion, and emotional upheavals from life, we will turn the world into one big stable for the rational breeding of human animals. All the sophistication, all the quintessence of life, the whole so-called “unhealthy” culture, all nervousness and sensitivity will be eliminated from the creation of the future generation by means of prenuptial medical certificates [...] The new woman should play no part in such an ethical metamorphosis of

life. Physical health must not be the aim of our universal human aspirations, but merely a means of achieving those aims.⁴¹

Dr Miklaszewski polemicized with Nałkowska's opinion, invoking arguments on the unshakeable position of science in the contemporary world. Moszczeńska responded that his ethics: "is reduced to the rational breeding of humans. This is an ethics fit for a stable or a barn".⁴² Maria Turzyma pointed out that the ethical movement, seeking to reduce the woman's whole life to motherhood, is as much against nature as the moral law preceding it, imposing the martial obligation on the woman. For, Turzyma observed, childless people often love each other, absolutely regardless of that fact. Should they separate just because their love fails to produce fruit? Or should it be the privilege of sterile people to be able to love each other for the sake of themselves, for the sake of mutual happiness? Turzyma's and Moszczeńska's responses were about something more than the status of women and social mores. Theirs should be regarded as important voices concerning the new ethics and the socio-biological discourse involved in it, which preceded the advent of eugenics. The dispute between the women's rights movement and doctors had long-term consequences. Among the audience listening to the debate was the young physician Julia Blay, a member of the Movement for the Equal Rights of Polish Women, involved in combating human trafficking.⁴³ In the 1920s, she would be one of the few doctors to openly protest against the idea of prenuptial certificates. The advocates of the emancipation of women, such as Izabela Moszczeńska and Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, would completely reject eugenic rhetoric. Beginning from the 1907 congress, the feminist movement was clearly divided on that issue. The seeds of distrust toward the new sexual ethics had been sown.

8. THE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUGENICS MOVEMENT

The contributors to *Czystość* were involved in the establishment of at least three associations for combating venereal diseases and prostitution: the Youth Association Ethos (founded in Kraków in 1905),⁴⁴ a Society for the Purity of Morals set up in Kraków in 1905, and in which well-known

⁴¹ Nałkowska, "Uwagi", p. 239.

⁴² Moszczeńska, "W kwestii miłości", p. 253.

⁴³ Cf. note "Związek Równouprawnienia Kobiet Polskich", *Ster*, 8 (1912): 3–4.

⁴⁴ Cf. "Towarzystwo Młodzieży Ethos w Krakowie", the Jagiellonian Library Archive, cat. no. KP 639981.

feminists were active,⁴⁵ and the Society for Combating Secret Diseases and Propagation of the Principles of Abolitionism, founded in Warsaw in 1907 under Wernic's leadership.⁴⁶ Without exception, feminists were proponents of abolitionism. They wanted an abolition of brothels, severe punishments for procurers, and a broad-based public awareness campaign. Physicians were less idealistic, arguing that since it is impossible to eliminate prostitution, it is better to maintain legal brothels with sanitary supervision, i.e., compulsory medical check-ups for the prostitutes. Wernic pinned his hopes on the third association, but once again physicians came into conflict with feminists. In practice, the association's activities were none too impressive. In the first year of its existence, the society organized several lectures on venereal diseases and published two pamphlets by W. Miklaszewski: *Życie płciowe naszego ludu miejskiego* (The sex life of our urban common people) and, a year later, *Małżeństwo kobiet uprzywilejowanych a ich choroby nerwowe* (The marriages of privileged women and their neurological disorders). In 1909, membership stood at just above 60.⁴⁷ After one year as the society's chairman, Wernic was replaced by Augustyn Wróblewski, who intended to reorganize the society and boost its activities. He planned to divide the Society into two sections, one concerned with medical matters and the other with social activism. Wernic understood that it took a doctor and a social activist as well as a lawyer to introduce the principles of hygiene and eugenics. That is why he proposed to organize three sections: social and legal, educational, and medical. One of the tasks of the first section was to exert pressure on the authorities in order to abolish rationing and to introduce compulsory prenuptial medical checkups. At that point, Wernic mentioned the need to broaden the doctor's scope of competence: "For that reason", he wrote, "one should eliminate certain anomalies from medical regulations, as when decisive intervention is prohibited in a situation when an ill individual marries a healthy person".⁴⁸ He set a variety of tasks for the educational section: to draw up precise statistics on puberty and sexually transmitted diseases, to follow the impact of co-education on the behaviour of girls and boys, to provide care for children

⁴⁵ Izabela Moszczeńska, Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska, Teodora Męczkowska, Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, Kazimiera Bujwidowa.

⁴⁶ A. Wróblewski, "Towarzystwo dla zwalczania chorób płciowych", *Czystość*, 29 (1909): 458–454; *ibid.*, "Towarzystwo dla zwalczania chorób płciowych", *Czystość*, 28: 433–434.

⁴⁷ A. Wróblewski, "Towarzystwo dla zwalczania chorób płciowych" (The Society for the Combating of Sexually Transmitted Diseases), *Czystość*, 30: 470–472; S. Auerbach, "Przed zebraniem Towarzystwa dla zwalczania chorób płciowych", *Czystość*, 31 (1909): 489. In this issue, the full number of the Society's members was given.

⁴⁸ L. Wernic, "Cel i zadanie Towarzystwa dla zwalczania chorób płciowych", *Czystość*, 39 (1909): 602.

from proletarian families, and to research the phenomenon of heredity.⁴⁹ The medical section was to deal with preventive medicine and treatment in the workplace (mainly in working-class environments: at railways, in factories, and at mines) and at school.

Unable to expand the Society's activities under his leadership, Wernic ultimately turned to the vibrant Bolesław Prus Society for Practical Hygiene.⁵⁰ The Bolesław Prus Society for Practical Hygiene pursued a variety of activities; many of the people working in it had nothing to do with eugenics. The society distributed foodstuffs, toiletries, and clean underwear among the poorest social strata. The society organized vaccination campaigns against infectious diseases, ran kindergartens, built public baths, and disinfected clothes and flats. Among its best known initiatives was the "Drop of Milk" campaign, which contributed to reducing infant and toddler mortality. In 1910, society members organized a "Purity is Health" exhibition, which attracted 70,000 visitors. The society was particularly active during the First World War. Leon Wernic distinguished himself in a 1914 lecture campaign on infectious diseases.⁵¹

After the Russians withdrew from the Congress Kingdom of Poland, Wernic organized a Vice Department of the Civic Guard of the City of Warsaw, subsequently transformed into vice police departments. The departments were in charge of medical checkups of registered prostitutes for fear of a spread of venereal diseases among the German troops stationed in the Congress Kingdom of Poland. Following the withdrawal of the Germans in November 1918, the vice police departments were transformed into sanitary and vice offices,⁵² supervised by the Health Service Directorate. In 1918 Wernic was appointed head of the Second Department in the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, which was responsible for combating venereal diseases in the entire territory of the Second Republic of Poland.

In 1915, Wernic established a Department for Combating Prostitution and Venereal Diseases, which remained within the framework of the Bolesław Prus Society for Practical Hygiene for the following two years. In 1917, the department was transformed into the Polish Society for Combating

⁴⁹ *Wiadomości, Czystość*, 42 (1909): 654.

⁵⁰ The Society for Practical Hygiene was an offshoot of the Warsaw Hygiene Society. See M. Biehler, "Zarys działalności Towarzystwa Higieny Praktycznej im. B. Prusa", *Zdrowie*, 11–12 (1933): 562–600.

⁵¹ Cf. Biehler, "Zarys działalności", pp. 592–600.

⁵² Cf. L. Wernic, "O zwalczaniu chorób wenerycznych w państwie polskim", *Biuletyn Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego*, 1 (1 February 1921): 103; and information on these measures in: Gabinet Cywilny Rady Regencyjnej (The Civilian Cabinet of the Regency Council), *Archiwum Akt Nowych* (Central Archives of Modern Records, Warsaw), no. B 4917.

Prostitution and Venereal Diseases, which was renamed the Polish Eugenics Society after incorporating a similar society from Poznań in 1921.⁵³ Leon Wernic had reasons for satisfaction. He had succeeded in establishing relations with the administration of the nascent state and become the head of a eugenics society.

9. THE FIRST EUGENIC CONGRESS: NOVEMBER 1918

At the initiative of Leon Wernic, assisted by other physician-hygienists, a Congress on the Depopulation of the Country, involving physicians, social activists, and representatives of the administration of the nascent Second Republic of Poland was organized in Warsaw on 1–3 November 1918, with the support and under the patronage of the Ministry of Public Health.⁵⁴ Afterwards it came to be called the first eugenic congress, but a major part of the audience certainly did not know what they were participating in.

The deliberations were opened by the chairman of the organizing committee, the sociology professor Ludwik Krzywicki. Afterwards, Józef Jaworski spoke on behalf of the Ministry of Health, followed by representatives of the University of Warsaw, Kraków University, medical associations, municipal authorities, etc. Sitting on the presidium of the congress were well-known doctors, including the psychiatry professor Witold Chodźko (from Warsaw) and the phthysiology professor Tomasz Janiszewski (from Kraków). Women's rights activists, including Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska and Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, were also active participants of the congress. The deliberations were held in sections, as was usual.

Section I was devoted to combating diseases caused by the war and malnutrition, Section II to combating venereal diseases and prostitution, and Section III to mother and infant care, illegitimate children, orphans, social insurance, and combating "intentional limiting of the number of offspring".⁵⁵

In Section III serious differences of opinion emerged between the participants of the debate on the criminalization of abortion. Women's rights activists spoke out for the permissibility of abortion. The other participants of the congress, led by Wernic, resolutely demanded that the criminality of abortion be maintained, and at the same time stressed the dangerous social

⁵³ Cf. M. Szczodrowska, "O Polskim Towarzystwie Eugenicznym i działalności oddziału warszawskiego", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 8–9 (1924): 10.

⁵⁴ Cf. "Zjazd w sprawie wyludnienia kraju", *Biuletyn Dyrekcji Służby Zdrowia Publicznego*, 5 (15 December 1918): 27.

⁵⁵ "Editor's note", *Zdrowie*, 2 (1918): 27.

consequences of contraception. The issues addressed in this section included the proper government tax policy to encourage childbearing and the circumstances conducive to producing healthy offspring. All the participants of the debate agreed on the need to grant equal rights to legitimate and illegitimate children and to extend state protection to orphans and abandoned children. Interestingly, in *Biuletyn Dyrekcji Służby Zdrowia Publicznego* of December 15, 1918, reporting on the congress, the conclusions from Section II are not given. They were reprinted exclusively by *Zagadnienia Rasy*, a new state-subsidized medical journal, the first issue of which, edited by Leon Wernic and Waclaw Wesołowski, was published as early as July 1918. In the following issue of the journal we may read the resolutions taken by Section II:

The Congress recognizes the need for the State to start combating not only factors causing depopulation, but also ones causing race degeneration. The congress stresses the importance of the influence of hereditary susceptibility to diseases (both in the mental and physical aspects) on race degeneration and the need to combat such susceptibility. To this end, the Congress authorizes the executive committee to apply to the relevant authorities to enact: a) legislation to castrate or sterilize all habitual criminals, degenerate individuals, and patients suffering from incurable mental illnesses in penitentiary institutions and state-owned and municipal healthcare institutions; b) legislation to allow castration [...] or sterilization [...], subject to the consent of the parties concerned, of all those who would not be subject to obligatory castration/sterilization under the above legislation, but who either have a hereditary susceptibility to diseases themselves or who could possibly cause such susceptibility or dwarfism in the offspring. [...] c) legislation to legalize exclusively marriages between healthy individuals.⁵⁶

The resolutions of the Congress on the Depopulation of the Country mark the end of the formative stage of the eugenic movement in Poland. The revolution of 1905, which created the possibility of association, and later the First World War marked the main stages in the formation of the eugenic movement in Poland. Wartime devastation, epidemics of infectious diseases, hunger, mass migrations, impoverishment, and the spread of social pathologies such as prostitution and the related phenomenon of venereal diseases – all these processes paved the way for the belief in the need to implement a rational health policy. It was no accident that the first proposals for social segregation and sterilization surfaced during the restoration of the Polish state. The speakers at the Congress on the Depopulation of the Country invoked the state as an institution regulating the citizens' lives both at the public and private levels. They counted combating social pathologies, mother and infant care, social insurance, and preventive measures (population

⁵⁶ Z. Zakrzewski, "Walka ze zwyrodnieniem", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 11 (1921): 8–9.

regulation and control) among the responsibilities of the state. Thus, the demands for eugenic selection emerged as a manifestation of modernization trends, advocated mainly by doctors and the broadly defined milieu of the progressive intelligentsia. Yet already during that formative stage, differences over neo-Malthusianism, the role and place of women, ethics, and the degree of state intervention into citizens' lives emerged. They would become stark in the following decades.

The eugenic idea sprang from the deep secularization of society. The belief in the degenerative influence of industrial civilization and the spread of social pathologies evoked the role of the state as a force that had the right to apply artificial selection measures in the name of public interest. The modern bureaucratic state was the basis for pursuing further eugenic policies. Only within a state, with the active involvement of government administration, was a eugenic selection of the population possible. This is why in the next chapter the relations between the institution of the state and the eugenic idea will be the central issue for discussion.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STATE AND THE EUGENIC IDEA: THE 1920S

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The interwar period was the heyday of eugenics the world over. In 1924, the Permanent International Eugenics Committee included fifteen states: Argentina, Belgium, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Holland, Italy, Germany, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. A further seven states: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Columbia, Mexico, New Zealand, and Venezuela were queuing up to be admitted. In order to understand the phenomenon of the popularity of eugenics after the First World War, one needs to draw on Max Weber's theory of the modern state and bureaucracy.¹

Weber mentions several crucial characteristics of the modern state, including the expansion and integration of the bureaucracy, comprising the standardization and routinization of administrative work along with the employment of experts to define and manage the system. Uniformization and unification are the fundamental features of a rational society as opposed to a traditional society. A rational system aspires to a unity imposed by bureaucratic planning and administration. Weber stressed that the calculating and assessing nature of the thinking of rational societies legitimizes extending bureaucratic structures even to the intimate sphere of private life.

Weber saw a prefiguration of the bureaucratic order of the modern state in the military. It was none other than modern armies that were characterized by hierarchy, a rigorous subordination to superiors, concentration of power in the hands of commanders, and the struggle towards perfection, precision, speed, and efficiency.

Weber's theory on the modernizing character of wars has inspired a number of historians.² They have observed that, beginning in the late

¹ Cf. M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, eds. G. Roth, C. Wittich, vol. 3 (New York, 1968).

² One of the most recent historical studies on the subject is the collective work: *War, Medicine and Modernity*, eds. R. Cooter, M. Harrison, and S. Sturdy (Bookcraft, Midsomer Norton, Somerset, 1998).

eighteenth century, the greatest armed conflicts – the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, the American Civil War, the *Franco-Prussian* War of 1870–1871 – all accelerated social development and changed the character of state structures. Some of the wars, for example the American Civil War, were of paramount importance to the whole civilized world. For that war employed the latest technological developments: railways, steamers, and early types of rapid-fire weapons – even aerial reconnaissance balloons. In the course of those hostilities, new military inspection techniques were invented, as well as new methods of gathering intelligence on the wounded and the fallen that were later copied in subsequent armed conflicts. As weapons became modernized and standardized, the killing process was perfected. Daniel Pick compared the technique of killing people in the *Franco-Prussian* War to a systematic, planned slaughter of animals in the modern slaughterhouses of Paris in the 1860s.³ It was during the above wars that specialized medical services were organized, ones which went on to play major roles in peacetime. In his interesting essay *The Red Cross Flag in the Franco-Prussian War: Civilians, Humanitarians and War in the “Modern Age”*,⁴ Bertrand Taithe observed that the Red Cross agencies set up to alleviate the brutal effects of warfare and to stand above national divides, had been – contrary to their founders’ intentions – pressed into the service of national war efforts. As a result, Red Cross agencies facilitated the social acceptance of war as an expression of particular national interests. Medical services, officially motivated by nothing but humanitarianism, were in fact able to secure for themselves a high position in the modern management system.

The First World War was the culmination of the nineteenth-century’s modernization processes. In most European states, million-strong armies were levied. Trenches, mud, combat gases, and incessant artillery shelling came to be symbols of modern warfare. The number of casualties was equally significant. In 1915, the US ambassador wrote in a letter from London: “When there’s ‘nothing to report’ from France, that means the regular 5,000 casualties that happen every day”.⁵ The Great War was exceptional in terms of the speed and efficiency of the flow of information. Telegraph lines, railways, and specialized medical and technical services ensured assistance and communication with the civilian sphere. The historians Roger Cooter, Mark Harrison, and Steve Sturdy share the view that the First World War accelerated the process of integrating the military and civilian

³ D. Pick, *War Machine: The Rationalisation of Slaughter in The Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

⁴ *War, Medicine*, p. 22.

⁵ A letter to Frank N. Doubleday, Christmas 1915, B.J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, vol. 1–2 (Garden City, New York, 1923), vol. 2, p. 111.

spheres.⁶ In these historians' opinion, this process intensified in the interwar years and was particularly evident in the organization of welfare states. Nearly all of the industrialized Western states were expanding the scope of public care, and seeking economic as well as military advantages. The above historians claim that through a combination of two factors – mass mobilization and state interventionism – the First World War provided unprecedented opportunities for the creation of a healthcare and administrative system that efficiently serviced the combined military and civilian spheres. As a result of the First World War, the main scientific medical disciplines found themselves at the centre of the efforts of the modern state to improve the productivity and health of the population.

A radicalization of eugenics milieu across Europe, including those in Poland, was connected with the new tasks that were imposed on individual medical disciplines in the wake of the First World War. This was reflected by the numerous congresses of physicians, hygienists, and social activists organized in 1917–1918. Characteristically, demands for a eugenic selection of the population appeared in Poland as early as the Second Congress of Polish Hygienists in Warsaw in 1917. In his paper “Zadania eugeniczne w Polsce” (Eugenic tasks in Poland) Jan Boguszewski called for an “institute for the study of race development” to be established in free Poland: “[...] one of the tasks of the nascent Polish state”, he argued, “is to deliberately breed a homogenous and healthy type of Polish citizen. For a state to exist, it is not enough to have territory, a government, and an army. One needs to have... a national type capable of embracing and perpetuating statehood”.⁷

The Congress on the Depopulation of the Country organized by Leon Wernic in 1918 formulated demands for a statutory marriage ban as well as internment and compulsory sterilization for individuals with hereditary diseases. The congress' proposals are not, however, part of any process defined as a series of developments *following one upon another*. In fact, the congress' proposals ignored a number of intermediate forms of applying eugenics to social life (social education, various forms of eugenic propaganda), opting for the most extreme option, instead. Never before, i.e., prior to 1917–1918, had the community gathered around Wernic proposed such drastic methods of combating social ills.

The only explanation for the rapid metamorphosis that the physicians had undergone (namely, from mild propagators of hygiene to fanatical guardians of the health of the race in the final years of the war) is that of the immediate prospect for regaining independence and restoring

⁶ *War, Medicine*, p. 22.

⁷ J. Boguszewski, “Zadania eugeniczne w Polsce”, *Walka o Zdrowie*, 6–7 (1918): 239.

the Polish state. The advocates of eugenics understood that social engineering of the kind that they wanted to introduce required state structures: administration and police. Merely drawing up a list of “individuals of little worth” (i.e., alcoholics, tuberculosis patients, vagrants, prostitutes, the mentally ill and mentally retarded) required employing an army of clerical workers. And solid funding from the state budget was needed to build special isolation facilities with qualified personnel. In addition to funding and the bureaucratic apparatus, the modern state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical violence.

“Rather, one can ultimately only define the modern state sociologically”, Max Weber writes, “by reference to a specific *means* that is proper to it, as it is to every political association, namely, physical force [...] Force is not the normal or sole means available to the state. There can be no question of that. It is, however, specific to it. Today, the relationship of the state to force is a particularly intimate one. In the past, many different associations, from the clan onward, have regarded force as a quite normal means. Today, by contrast, we must say: The state is the human community that, within a defined territory [...] (successfully) claims the *monopoly of legitimate force* for itself. The specific characteristic of the present is that the right to use physical force is only granted to any other associations or individuals to the extent that the *state* itself permits this. The state is seen as the sole source of the ‘right’ to use force [...]”.⁸

The postulated sterilization was to be compulsory, meaning that special sanitary police units equipped with means of legitimate compulsion were to be put in charge of the sterilization process. The central point of this chapter will therefore be the impact of the eugenic idea on the healthcare and social welfare system emerging within the framework of a reconstructed, modern state.

We will ask ourselves the following precise questions: 1) What did physicians and high government officials say about the character of healthcare in the resurrected state?; 2) What were the aims and tasks of the healthcare system?; 3) What was the relationship between healthcare and compulsion in the presented conceptions of healthcare systems? Did eugenic ideas get through to the government spheres?; 4) What was the direction in which the state influenced the position of all physicians in society? What kind of demands were put forward by medical circles, and what was the social position they were aspiring to?; 5) What was the standing and clout of the eugenics lobby with the government in the 1920s?

⁸ M. Weber, “Politics as a Vocation”, in: *Max Weber’s Complete Writings on Academic and Political Vocations*, ed. J. Dreijmanis, trans. G.C. Wells (New York, 2008), p. 156.

2. THE EUGENIC IDEA AND THE BUILDING OF A HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IN THE SECOND POLISH REPUBLIC, 1918–1939

Beginning from 1916, as the Polish question was increasingly becoming an international one, physicians spoke ever more frequently on matters of the reconstruction of an independent Polish state. Two associations were particularly active in the wartime years: the Warsaw Hygienic Society (Warszawskie Towarzystwo Higieniczne, abbr. WHS), whose origins went back to the end of the nineteenth century (1898), and the newly established (1916) Polish Society for Social Medicine (Polskie Towarzystwo Medycyny Społecznej, abbr. PSSM). The PSSM's membership included such physicians as, for example: Prof. Witold Chodźko (b. 1875), one of the most outstanding Polish psychiatrists; the well-known commentator and social activist (ophthalmologist) Zygmunt Kramsztyk (b. 1848); Władysław Szenajch (b. 1897), involved in the construction of a healthcare system; Marcin Kacprzak (b. 1888); and Leon Wernic, serving from 1916 as chairman of the PSSM Hospital Committee.⁹ His responsibilities included drafting laws on hospitals and outpatient clinics, as well as the principles for the provision of specialist care. As described in the previous chapter, Wernic combined these activities with intensive public lecturing on venereal diseases.

Contacts between the three partitions of Poland were growing ever closer during the war in keeping with earlier practices. There was a constant flow of persons and institutions between the Congress Kingdom of Poland and the district of Galicia – with Wielkopolska, however, remaining isolated to some degree. The character of these relations was influenced by the different developmental paths of the particular partitions. In terms of civilization, Wielkopolska was the most advanced region, and yet, at the same time, it was the most impaired in terms of intellectual life. Until the outbreak of the First World War, all the initiatives aimed at establishing a university in Poznań were torpedoed by the German authorities, and the existing institutions of higher education, such as the Technological University, had a purely German character. Thus, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the humanistic intelligentsia migrated to the other two partitions: Galicia or the Congress Kingdom of Poland. It was there that its members were able to pursue their journalistic careers, and it was there they organized large-scale social work. At their joint meetings in the final years of the First World War, physicians from Galicia and the Congress Kingdom of Poland put forward

⁹ Cf. *Słownik Polskich Towarzystw Naukowych*, eds. B. Sordylowa, Barbara Krajewska-Tartakowska et al. (Warszawa, 1990), vol. 2, part 1, p. 371.

a variety of proposals concerning the shape and the basic guidelines for healthcare, thereby defining the priorities for the reconstruction of a country devastated by years of neglect. Hygiene featured prominently in these debates. Prof. Tomasz Janiszewski, an outstanding phthisiologist (pulmonologist), was among the most active physicians in the organization of the healthcare system and the reconstruction of the country. Born in Warsaw in 1867, he studied medicine in Warsaw, Berne, Freiburg, Zurich, and Vienna. He served scientific traineeships in England and Switzerland. Arrested several times for patriotic activism, he moved from the Congress Kingdom of Poland to Galicia. In 1896, Janiszewski passed his doctoral viva at Kraków's Jagiellonian University. Several years later he passed his *habilitation* exam. In 1909, he assumed the post of surgeon general of the city of Kraków. At his initiative, a bacteriological laboratory and a disinfection facility were established there. Janiszewski played a special role in Polish culture. His persona fascinated one of the best known Polish writers, Stefan Żeromski. A meeting between Żeromski and Janiszewski in Zakopane in 1899 went down in the annals of history.¹⁰ One year later, Żeromski published his novel *Homeless People*, whose main character Dr Judym, modelled on Janiszewski, treats the urban poor and gives up personal happiness for the sake of community work. The novel *Homeless People* was made obligatory school reading for young people in the 20th century, and Dr Judym became the paragon of the member of the intelligentsia who uncompromisingly combated social injustice.

The path followed by Doctor Judym's model in independent Poland is puzzling, for he became one of the most radical eugenicists. Nobody from the Polish medical community matched the determination and ruthlessness with which Janiszewski called for the institution of all compulsory eugenic measures: selection, compulsory sterilization, a marriage ban, and a limitation of funding for medical care for the old and the ill. He was an excellent organizer, propagator of the idea of the garden city, and a persuasive commentator.¹¹ Intellectually, he rose above his milieu; his articles stand out among other texts in terms of both argument and writing style. In 1916, he became the head of the Medical Society of Galicia. As a member of the National Union (*Zjednoczenie Narodowe*),¹² an organization calling for the consolidation

¹⁰ On the acquaintance between Janiszewski and Żeromski cf. M. Bajer, "Pod Giewontem i nad Bugiem", in: *Rody uczone. Kreski do szkicu* (Warszawa–Toruń, 2013), pp. 173–179; M. Zaremba Bielawski, *Higienisci: z dziejów eugeniki*, trans. W. Chudoba (Wołowiec, 2011).

¹¹ On the Polish reception of the garden city idea in the medical and social activist circles cf. A. Czyżewski, *Trzewia Lewiatana. Miasta-ogrody i narodziny przedmieścia kulturalnego* / Sir E. Howard, *Miasta ogrody przyszłości*, trans. P. Borman, A. Czyżewski (Warszawa, 2009).

¹² Cf. Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (*Archiwum Akt Nowych*, hereinafter: AAN), *Tymczasowa Rada Stanu. Komunikaty Biura Prasowego przy Departamencie Spraw*

of the intelligentsia in the cause of regaining independence, he delivered a lecture at a meeting of the Warsaw Hygienic Society entitled, "O wymogach zdrowotnych przy odbudowie kraju" (On the health requirements in the reconstruction of the country), in which he presented the basic tenets for plans for the spatial development of Polish cities in terms of hygiene.¹³ He favoured zone development, with marked off residential, recreational, industrial, service, and other compounds. According to Janiszewski's plan, each of the city areas should have separate regulations concerning the height of houses, the proportion of built-up areas, the width and direction of streets, so as to ensure unimpeded access to fresh air and light for residents. Janiszewski considered the construction of sewage and water supply systems in cities to be one of the foremost social tasks of a new Poland. Janiszewski drew up general guidelines for the construction of new residential districts. Each flat should have at least one bright room and a bathroom. The building of rooms smaller than 12 square meters should be forbidden by law. Drinking water should be tested on a regular basis by specially appointed organizational units. Many Warsaw Hygiene Society members welcomed these plans enthusiastically. Witold Chodźko¹⁴ as well as long-serving WHS president Józef Polak, who focused on the modernization of Polish rural areas, took an active stance on the reconstruction of the country.¹⁵

Obviously, the priorities of a modern health service were to arouse the strongest emotions during the heated debates waged among physicians. As early as 1917, the Polish Society for Social Medicine issued an official memorial on the establishment of a Ministry of Public Health. The concept for a healthcare system it proposed was based on a multi-sector division with a predominance of the public sectors, i.e., the state, municipal (local government), and insurance sectors over the private sector. In addition to the provision of treatment, the tasks of the healthcare system of a future Poland were to include (in the language of the time) mother and infant care, the care of orphans, illegitimate children, cripples, and war casualties. It was emphasized that prevention is just as important a task of the health service as treatment. In the doctors' opinion, the state should run a broad-based

Politycznych 1917, vol. 1, microfilm no. B7562, 84. The information given there is that besides Janiszewski, Franciszek Bujak was also a member of the National Union (*Zjednoczenie Narodowe*). The organization called for the consolidation of the Polish society on the eve of Poland's regaining of independence.

¹³ Cf. T. Janiszewski, *O wymogach zdrowotnych w sprawie odbudowy kraju* (Krakow, 1916).

¹⁴ Cf. W. Chodźko, *Organizacja służby zdrowia publicznego w m. stołecznym Warszawie* (Warszawa, 1916); *Polskie prawodawstwo sanitarne w rozwoju historycznym* (Warszawa, 1917).

¹⁵ Cf. J. Polak, *W sprawie odbudowy kraju* (Warszawa, no date), an offprint from *Zdrowie 4* (1917): 214.

preventive campaign against infectious and venereal diseases that were considered to pose a particular threat to the health of the general population. In some of the statements by the authors of the memorial, characteristic features of eugenic thinking were evident, e.g., an announcement of a new healthcare model in which the state's health policy was effected not through "the protection of the sick and the weak, but precisely through the protection of the healthy and the strong". Elsewhere, the authors of the memorial called for: "including among the tasks of this [health] service anything that is a matter of social and racial hygiene, the two youngest divisions of hygiene, the development of which is matter for the future".¹⁶

With the responsibilities of the health service so broadly defined, the idea arose of a separate ministry, independent from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Polish Society for Social Medicine's memorial reads: "the matters of public health are so momentous that entrusting them to non-professionals, even if they be ministers of internal affairs, seems no longer possible today [...] The central public health administration must not be one of the many various responsibilities of one non-ministerial, unprofessional office".¹⁷

It is worth noting that in Western European countries at that time health service agendas generally did not belong to an independent health ministry, but were dispersed among various agencies from the ministries of internal affairs, education, and agriculture.¹⁸ In proposing the establishment of an independent Ministry of Health in 1917–1918 in a state under reconstruction, Polish physicians were forerunners of the trend. At the same time, Wilhelm Schallmayer in Germany and the sexologist Havelock Ellis in Britain called for an independent health agency. Polish advocates of an independent Health Ministry and systemic care (combining health and social care) used arguments inspired by eugenic readings.

The names of Schallmayer and Ellis are mentioned in the pamphlet *Polskie Ministerstwo Zdrowia Publicznego* (The Polish Ministry of Public Health) by Tomasz Janiszewski, published in Kraków in 1917, which also resembles the Polish Society for Social Medicine's memorial in many other respects.¹⁹ In it, the author advocated an independent ministry, with an extensive scope of competence not only in the area of health, but also in social welfare, as this would make it possible to control the size and quality of the population. In

¹⁶ *Medycyna Społeczna*, 2 (1917/1918): 26.

¹⁷ "Memoriał Polskiego Towarzystwa Medycyny Społecznej w sprawie utworzenia Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego", *Medycyna Społeczna*, 2 (1917/1918): 26.

¹⁸ Health matters were the responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs e.g., in France, Prussia, Romania, Italy, and Austria, of the Education Ministry in Sweden, and of the Agriculture Ministry in Belgium.

¹⁹ Cf. T. Janiszewski, *Polskie Ministerstwo Zdrowia Publicznego* (Kraków, 1917), p. 7.

his brochure, Janiszewski explicitly pointed to the need for applying eugenic measures to the Polish population. A public health service should promote “an increased reproduction of intelligent and outstanding individuals” and the production of a “higher quality population”. Janiszewski labels the protection of individuals against degenerative factors and efforts to ensure their proper sexual selection as “population policy”, “social policy”, and “race hygiene”. At the individual level, the state should promote the creation of talented individuals – and at the collective level, it should produce a healthy, economically efficient society.

The health service objectives in the Polish state as defined by Janiszewski necessitated deeper systemic changes. Janiszewski was a proponent of the welfare state, based on state intervention in the economy. He did not conceal his disapproval of free-market competition. In Janiszewski’s opinion, free-market egoism results in “wasting human capital” and “improper workforce exploitation”. In this system, the employer’s interest stands in contradiction to social interest, as the employer does not care about the price at which he earns a profit for himself. The task that the lawmakers and civil servants are faced with is that of creating a labour system to eliminate this contradiction: “Administration must be permeated by the spirit of popular economy, and popular economy is an economy of human material, its uppermost task is the profitability of human life [...] The foremost concern of the administration is the protection of this capital, its preservation, and ensuring that it returns good interest. This can only be achieved if every individual produces more than his upbringing has cost, if human vital force is properly used, duly protected and nurtured, and its wear and tear is properly written off”.²⁰

Janiszewski cited Karl Pearson, after whom he repeated: “It is health, and solely physical and moral health that absolutely determines the existence of nations and states”.²¹ Janiszewski saw two aspects of the importance of health: labour efficiency and economic profit in the civilian sphere, and military power and state security in the military sphere. A combination of the civilian and military spheres by the author of the project was also reflected in a plan for the scope of competencies for the future ministry, which said that “a civilian sanitary administration is combined with a military sanitary administration under one management; both are governed by the same sanitary laws and regulations”.²²

If, as was Janiszewski’s opinion, health issues became a “foremost” state interest, the position of physicians in society was undoubtedly an equally

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., p. 10.

²² Ibid., p. 22.

important matter. He believed that they needed to assume a fitting place in the administrative state apparatus, and that the ministry should be headed by a doctor. His insistence on these two demands resulted from his experience of working in the autonomous district of Galicia. Janiszewski's detested type of clerical worker was a lawyer, usually a superior, under whom a doctor is "deprived of any initiative and executive whatsoever, degraded to the role of a professional advisor".²³ Such a hierarchy, he wrote, "kills all initiative, prevents new specialists from acquiring experience [...] dilettantism is being formed".²⁴

The Warsaw Hygienic Society (WHS) advocated a different conception of the health service. The WHS organ, *Zdrowie*, published installments presenting various legal healthcare solutions in particular European countries, ultimately working out its own outline proposal.²⁵ According to the Society, health issues should belong to the Ministry of Internal Affairs with a broad scope of competence for local government in this domain.

Contrary to the proposals presented by the Warsaw Hygienic Society, the decree of 4 April 1918 established a separate and independent Ministry of Public Health, Social Welfare, and Labour Protection headed by Professor Witold Chodźko.²⁶ The whole regulation clearly showed that it was the conception of Janiszewski and the Polish Society for Social Medicine that had eventually been adopted. This is also demonstrated by the very broad scope of competence granted to the new ministry:

The Public Health Protection and Social Welfare section included the following divisions:

Department I – Public Hygiene

Department II – Combating infectious diseases

Department III – Foodstuff supervision

Department IV – Treatment facilities, spas and health resorts

Department V – State mother and infant care

Department VI – State care of the mentally ill

Department VII – Handicraft, industrial, and transport hygiene

²³ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 18

²⁵ J. Jaworski, "Podstawy organizacji sanitarnej w różnych państwach", *Zdrowie*, 11 (1916): 477; J. Polak, "Wstęp do projektu prawa o ochronie zdrowia publicznego w Polsce", *Zdrowie*, 1 (1917): 27; *ibid.*, 2 (1917): 89.

²⁶ The Office for Public Health, established by the Interim Council of State of the Kingdom of Poland, was the predecessor of the Health Ministry. The office was later transformed into a department, afterwards into a section, and eventually into a directorate of the Public Health Service. Cf. *Dwadzieścia lat publicznej służby zdrowia w Polsce Odrodzonej 1918–1938* (Warszawa, 1939), p. 15.

Department VIII – Living quarters hygiene and inspection
 Department IX – Care of the disabled and cripples
 Department X – Social welfare for the poor
 Department XI – Pharmaceuticals
 Department XII – Veterinary sanitary inspection
 Department XIII – Secretariat of the Public Health Service Directorate

The Labour Protection Section was made up of the following departments:

Department XIV – Labour protection and labour inspection
 Department XV – Workers' emigration and labour agency
 Department XVI – Health insurance funds
 Department XVII – Social insurance
 Department XVIII – Workers' cooperatives
 Department XIX – Secretariat of the Labour Protection Section²⁷

The establishment of a separate Ministry of Health was ill received by physicians from the Warsaw Hygienic Society. Apart from substantive arguments and different views on the health service, ambition played no small role in this respect. Without concealing his disappointment at that turn of events, Józef Polak wrote: "We deeply regret that matters of such paramount importance to the organization of public hygiene in the state are being decided without the participation of voluntary institutions concerned with these issues and that our Society has not been involved in the relevant work, which for a whole year has been drafting bills on public health in Poland, ensuring the cooperation of other voluntary organizations, medical, legal, and technical societies – as well as the Welfare Council – and taking advantage of the observations of the most competent individuals, including the former and incumbent ministers".²⁸ Polak accused the government circles of putting the commission of delegates of medical societies before a *fait accompli*. He criticized Janiszewski's conception laid out in the brochure *The Polish Ministry of Public Health*. He believed that the Ministry had been charged with too many responsibilities.²⁹ Polak saw it as a temptation for doctors to

²⁷ Cf. Regulation of the Minister of Public Health, Social Welfare and Labour Protection on the temporary organization of the Ministry of Public Health, Social Welfare and Labour Protection: "Rozporządzenie Ministra Zdrowia Publicznego, Opieki Społecznej i Ochrony Pracy o organizacji tymczasowej Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego, Opieki Społecznej i Ochrony Pracy", *Biuletyn Dyrekcji Służby Zdrowia Publicznego*, 2 (1 July 1918): 4.

²⁸ J. Polak, "W sprawie organizacji Państwowej Służby Zdrowia Publicznego", *Zdrowie*, 5 (1918): 87.

²⁹ The ministry was made directly responsible for institutions and projects as diverse as scientific establishments, treatment facilities, charity-run facilities, summer camps, nurs-

secure prominent positions in the state's bureaucratic apparatus and seize as much power as possible. He believed it was necessary to involve other professionals: engineers, educators, administrators, etc., in decision-making on health matters so as to ensure a proper functioning of medical care in Poland. He openly criticized Janiszewski for "complaining [...] that lawyers too often prevail over physicians on sanitary matters".³⁰

Polak also criticized the Ministry's independent status. He believed this led to an excessive centralization of health policy on the national scale. Accordingly, he proposed that public health issues should be handed over to local government authorities under national government supervision. "The tasks of the local government authorities [...]", he wrote, "cover the whole of social life, going far beyond the bounds of medicine, and still for the most part having to do with the domain of public health; there is no separating one from the others: the very same local authorities that organize hospitals and disinfection facilities, streets, plantations, and slaughterhouses are in charge of food supplies, museums, libraries, lay down sewage systems, organize fire brigades, and determine budgets for all these and any other economic matters. To accomplish these tasks, they must engage doctors, engineers, gardeners, and other specialists. One may therefore dispute whether sanitary supervision should also be entrusted to them or to central government officials, but one may not delude oneself that it is those officials who are in charge of the important task of improving the population's health: improving the living conditions, food, and treatment provided to the general public and organizing the isolation of the sick and disinfection will always rest primarily with local government authorities as long as they remain local government authorities".³¹ Following the British model, he proposed establishing a separate ministry for local government whose responsibilities would include public health. In this organizational healthcare model, the role of the state is limited to determining the general direction of health policy, coordinating local government tasks, and exercising supervision over their proper discharge.

The conception of appointing doctors to high offices was advocated by Leonard Bier, a Kraków hygienist and research worker at the Jagiellonian University. *Zdrowie* printed his polemic against Polak's article. In his article he argued that in the process of building a modern state, one should have "regard for the wishes of the medical estate [...]" to give that profession a post in government administration commensurate with the services rendered

eries and kindergartens, health insurance, preventive medicine, and the reconstruction of cities and villages.

³⁰ Polak, "W sprawie organizacji", p. 90.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

by it to public health”.³² And immediately thereafter he added: “Can only a mind with a legal education show organizational skills in defining various complicated tasks concerning collective life from the standpoint of state interest? If skills of this kind have been displayed by engineers and other technical professions, and the relevant departments in state administration have been entrusted to their management, why should not these skills and prerogatives be accorded to doctors as well [...]”.³³ Bier also suggested that Polak’s criticism was motivated by his personal aversion to Witold Chodźko. Polak immediately responded that reducing the theses presented in his article to personal matters was a misconstruction.³⁴

Bier’s polemic against Polak’s article was a mere introduction to Tomasz Janiszewski’s frontal attack. His undoubted advantage over the long-serving *Zdrowie* editor was his solid knowledge of foreign realities and his experience working in the autonomous region of Galicia. While Józef Polak invoked the old ethos of a doctor-social activist, Janiszewski represented the modern type of doctor-specialist. The differences in the way of thinking of the two physicians found their reflection in language. Józef Polak’s baroque style, characteristic of a social activist, at times lengthy and tiresome, stood in sharp contrast to Janiszewski’s dry matter-of-factness. “If the state’s system of government has a duty to take into account the nation’s soul and history”, Polak wrote, “then indeed we must base the country’s administration on local government authorities, and even though in our history liberty has often displayed, and continues to display even now, to a certain extent, a tendency to overstep the limits of freedom into the domain of disorder and insubordination, we should respect the constitutive spirit of the nation, while at the same time building a powerful barrier between it and anarchy”.³⁵ Janiszewski spoke out on the same issue much more resolutely: “Writing my work, entitled *The Polish Ministry of Public Health*, in 1916, I presented not theoretical arguments, but thoughts that had been constantly recurring for twenty-some years of working in the field of social hygiene [...] I divided all issues into three sections: 1) administrative, 2) technical [...] 3) legal”.³⁶ In the petty, malicious remarks that Janiszewski did not spare the editor of *Zdrowie*, one can feel his impatience, something that gradually became open hostility. The “intelligentsia vs. specialist” conflict that was playing itself out

³² L. Bier, “Z powodu utworzenia w Polsce Ministerstwa Zdrowia, Opieki Społecznej i Ochrony Pracy”, *Zdrowie*, 6 (1918): 184.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

³⁴ J. Polak, “Odpowiedź na powyższe uwagi”, *Zdrowie*, 6 (1918): 189.

³⁵ J. Polak, “Wstęp do projektu prawa o ochronie zdrowia publicznego w Polsce”, *Zdrowie*, 2 (1918): 89.

³⁶ Janiszewski, *Polskie Ministerstwo Zdrowia Publicznego*, p. 38.

between Polak and Janiszewski was further exacerbated by a characterological conflict. There was agreement concerning Janiszewski in the medical circles: a competent doctor, an excellent organizer, but at the same time a despot refusing to tolerate the slightest opposition.

In his polemic Janiszewski disclosed several important details concerning the establishment of the Ministry of Public Health. Having heard of the plan to place the Ministry of Internal Affairs in charge of health issues, he immediately went to Warsaw and persuaded Józef Brudziński³⁷ that it was necessary to organize a committee to promote the idea of a separate health ministry. Thus he was personally responsible for the rejection of Polak's project. The source of Janiszewski's perseverance in propagating the idea of an independent health ministry was his belief that only a single agency can pursue a consistent sanitary policy on a national scale and thus contribute to the progress of hygiene nationwide. Janiszewski did not conceal that there were completely new ideas connected with a health ministry: "In the Polish state it is not enough for the chief health agency to deal, as has been the case in almost all other countries thus far, only with matters of sanitary police and with health service management, but it should bravely enter the path of racial hygiene, and pursue an economical and prudent population policy, both quantitative and qualitative. Already before the war I deemed such a change advisable, and after the war that has taken away from us so much of the most valuable human material, a reform of this kind has become necessary if we are to stand up successfully to international competition".³⁸ He emphasized that besides social insurance, a "prudent, forward-looking population policy" and "racial hygiene" were the Health Ministry's foremost tasks.

As regards the place of physicians in the Polish state, he held an opinion contrary to that of Józef Polak. Invoking his experiences from Galicia he concluded that the collapse of the doctors' authority was caused by the passivity of physicians who were stuck "in the comfortable position of advisors bearing no responsibility".³⁹ "Whoever wants to organize something on a broader scale", he wrote, "needs to have an appropriate position and authority in the first place [...]"⁴⁰

In the course of the dispute on the shape of the health service, the scope of the competencies of the Health Ministry was seriously limited. On 30 October 1918 an independent Labour Ministry was established.

³⁷ Józef Polikarp Brudziński (1874–1917), pediatrician and neurologist, vice-chancellor of the University of Warsaw, the first president of the Warsaw Municipal Council (1916), author of numerous scientific works.

³⁸ Janiszewski, *Polskie Ministerstwo Zdrowia Publicznego*, p. 36.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

A reorganized Health Ministry was now divided into the following sections and departments:

Section I: Treatment

- Department I – Combating infectious diseases
- Department II – Combating venereal diseases and prostitution
- Department III – Treatment facilities
- Department IV – Psychiatric
- Department V – Medical personnel

Section II: Public Hygiene and Social Medicine

- Department VI – Municipal and rural hygiene
- Department VII – Living quarters hygiene and inspection
- Department VIII – Medicinal spas and medicinal resorts
- Department IX – Foodstuff supervision
- Department X – Veterinary sanitary inspection
- Department XI – Occupational hygiene
- Department XII – Invalid and cripple care
- Department XIII – Mother and infant care
- Department XIV – School hygiene

Section III: Pharmaceutical

- Department XV – Pharmacy and pharmaceutical storehouse control
- Department XVI – Planting of medicinal plants
- Department XVII – Sanitary supplies

Section IV: General

- Department XVIII – Secretariat
- Department XIX – Medical statistics
- Department XX – Liquidation⁴¹

On 16 January 1919, Janiszewski assumed the post of health minister in Ignacy Paderewski's cabinet. During that same month, elections to the Legislative Sejm were held. In his address to the new Sejm on 14 March 1919, Janiszewski pointed out that the ministry's foremost task was combating the "selfish" and "individualistic" understanding of the problem of human life and health. Ensuring healthcare for its citizens was among the "foremost responsibilities of the state".⁴² In April 1919, with Paderewski's knowledge

⁴¹ Cf. *Biuletyn Ministerstwa Zdrowia i Opieki Społecznej*, 6 (1919).

⁴² Cf. "Przemowa Ministra Zdrowia Publicznego Tomasza Janiszewskiego na 14 posiedzeniu Sejmu Ustawodawczego z dn. 14 marca 1919 r.", *Biuletyn Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego*, 7 (1919–1920): 3–8.

and consent, Janiszewski sent a letter in which he reiterated the theses of his parliamentary speech to the president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson.⁴³ Despite Janiszewski's bitter opposition, the Health Ministry soon lost control of its social welfare section, which was transferred to the Labour Ministry. More and more areas of responsibility were taken away from the Health Ministry: school hygiene, physical education and sports, veterinary sanitary inspection, mother and infant care – these were absorbed one after the other by competing ministries.⁴⁴ Janiszewski protested by using the title of “Minister of Public Health and Social Welfare” throughout his term in office, i.e., until 13 December 1919.⁴⁵

Another person from the eugenic circles to actively join in the work of the Health Ministry was Leon Wernic. Commissioned by the Ministry of Public Health, a committee selected from the Society for Combating Prostitution and Racial Degeneration and made up of Adam Ciągliński, Wacław Wesołowski, Juliusz Wiśniewski, Albin Racinowski, and Leon Wernic conducted the first census of those affected by venereal diseases in June 1918.⁴⁶ Early in January 1919, Wernic was made chief of the ministry's Department II, established to combat venereal diseases and prostitution.⁴⁷ In June of the same year, Department II carried out a second census. The census covered the territories of all three former partitions; 1.1 million individuals suffering from venereal diseases were registered for Poland's population of 25 million.⁴⁸

At the initiative of the minister of internal affairs, Stanisław Thugutt, Department II organized a network of sanitary and vice offices in Warsaw, Łódź, Lublin, Częstochowa, Będzin, Radom, Włocławek, Płock, Kielce,

⁴³ Cf. *Zdrowie*, 12 (1922): 330. Janiszewski criticized the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, because in his opinion they ignored the problem of health. Cf. “Traktat wersalski a sprawa zdrowia publicznego”, *Zdrowie*, 12 (1922): 325.

⁴⁴ K. Marcinkowski, “Organizacja Służby Zdrowia w Polsce po zniesieniu Ministerstwa Zdrowia”, *Medycyna Społeczna*, 4 (1926): 199.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

⁴⁶ The census covered the territory of the Congress Kingdom of Poland under Prussian and Austrian occupation except for parts of the Siedlce and Lublin governorates. There were 394,952 individuals suffering from venereal diseases per 10 million residents. Cf. *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 4 (1919): 12; *Biuletyn Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego*, 1 (1920): 50.

⁴⁷ L. Wernic reports on the organization of the department in *Zagadnienia Rasy* 1 (1922): 15. His report is confirmed by articles published in *Biuletyn Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego* (21 March 1920): 103 and (1 February 1921): 49.

⁴⁸ Other sources report that during the war a million affected individuals were noted in Galicia alone, and as many as two million in the Congress Kingdom of Poland. Cf. *Dwadzieścia lat publicznej służby zdrowia w Polsce Odrodzonej 1918-1938* (Twenty years of the public health service in Reborn Poland) (Warszawa, 1939), 63.

Siedlce, Piotrków, Pabianice, Kalisz, and Łomża.⁴⁹ In 1920, further offices were established in the cities and towns of Małopolska and the former Congress Kingdom of Poland. The next undertaking was the organization of free specialist courses for doctors and civil servants on the identification of skin and venereal diseases, exercises in bacteriology, serology, etc.⁵⁰

On behalf of the Health Ministry, Wernic drafted a bill: “On Combating Venereal Diseases”, which was submitted to the Council of Ministers. The draft law provided for the following:

1) Subjecting individuals infected with a venereal disease to obligatory treatment.

2) Introduction of obligatory premarital certificates, “in the area of venereal diseases for men to begin with”.⁵¹

3) Compulsory examination of “individuals not responsible for their actions who are a constant source of infection”, among whom were counted: unsupervised children, the mentally ill, criminals, and prostitutes.⁵²

A brief note on Wernic’s report was printed in the Britain’s *Eugenics Review*.⁵³ It was also thanks to Wernic’s effort that a “Regulation of the Minister of Public Health in Agreement with the Minister of Internal Affairs on the Supervision of Prostitution” of 6 September 1922 was issued, under which all bawdy houses in the Second Republic of Poland were closed down.⁵⁴ Medical clinics attached to the sanitary and vice offices were set up (18 were noted in 1921 for the Congress Kingdom of Poland), as were laboratories and temporary shelters for women suspected of prostitution.⁵⁵

Wernic presented these broad-based measures as part of a eugenic project designed to prevent racial degeneration. The ministry, headed first by Janiszewski and, from 13 December 1919, by Witold Chodźko, lent its vigorous support to the activities pursued by the Society for Combating Racial Degeneration, e.g., by sponsoring its publications and brochures.

⁴⁹ Cf. L. Wernic, “O zwalczaniu chorób wenerycznych w państwie polskim”, *Biuletyn Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego* (1 February 1921): 52.

⁵⁰ At these courses, Wernic delivered lectures on combating venereal diseases and prostitution, while another contributor to *Zagadnienia Rasy*, Władysław Szenajch, spoke on infant mortality and childcare. Cf. AAN, *Gabinet Cynwilny Rady Regencyjnej*, file no. B 4897-B4917.

⁵¹ Wernic, “O zwalczaniu chorób wenerycznych”, p. 53.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Cf. *Eugenics Review* (April 1920–January 1921): 24.

⁵⁴ Cf. information on Wernic’s role in the closure of bawdy houses in the Second Polish Republic in *Lekarz Polski*, 7 (1927): 20.

⁵⁵ Cf. Wernic, “O zwalczaniu chorób wenerycznych”, p. 53.

3. EUGENIC PROPAGANDA

Cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health encouraged Wernic to seek contacts with politicians. On 28 May 1919, Polish MPs invited by Wernic listened to the deliberations of the Polish Society for Combating Racial Degeneration.⁵⁶

Eugenic problems were also discussed in government newspapers. In 1920, a several-page-long article on eugenics and racial hygiene, translated from Serbo-Croatian, was published in *Biuletyn Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego* (Bulletin of the Ministry of Public Health). It sketched the origins of eugenics, and its aims and means. The authors concluded that eugenic measures were a natural consequence of the progress of civilization: “As society evolves, as social organizations get stronger, a need must emerge for state intervention into individual interests, for influencing individual will and individual freedom for the sake of security and in the interest of society as a whole”.⁵⁷ An analogy was drawn in the article: if the state levies taxes on its citizens and deprives wrongdoers of freedom, it may therefore limit the reproduction of the ill and the weak, those who pose a threat to those working and to the healthy. While the authors admitted that sterilization is an effective measure, they warned against applying it too rashly. The success of eugenic programs was conditional upon broad-based propaganda and an awareness-raising campaign addressed to the general public.⁵⁸ No comment was offered on the article.

Already by May 1920, Wernic’s position in the Ministry had begun to deteriorate. In April 1921, Department II was formally dissolved.⁵⁹ Wernic felt that the department’s dissolution was a defeat of the eugenic idea. He believed that the move was due not to reasons of economy, but rather to the lack of understanding among politicians and doctors alike for the role that “eugenic tasks” should play in the postwar period.⁶⁰ The lesson he drew from this experience was that any attempt to introduce eugenics solely by means of top-down regulations was doomed: “[...] in order to implement lasting reform, one needs to turn elsewhere, one needs to lay the ground for it in public opinion itself. One needs to go down to the grass roots, to involve society as a whole in this work [...]”⁶¹

The undermining of Wernic’s position was connected with the dwindling influence of the doctors from the Health Ministry with the government. An

⁵⁶ Cf. a note on the subject in *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 5 (1919): 17.

⁵⁷ *Biuletyn Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego*, 5 (1 December, 1920), p. 74.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1922): 15.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

independent Ministry of Labour drafted laws on social insurance that Janiszewski severely criticized. The laws of 13 July 1920 “On the Remuneration of Clerical Workers and Minor Civil Servants”, and of 16 July 1920 “On the State Income Tax and Property Tax” were interpreted by Janiszewski as contrary to the policies of the Health Ministry and the idea of racial hygiene. In his opinion the laws favoured bachelors and childless married couples while disadvantaging big families.⁶² Apart from the substantive side of the conflict, there was also another aspect, one that concerned the operation of the Health Ministry. Ever more often opinions were voiced that, given the financial problems of the reviving state, an independent Health Ministry represented an excessive burden on the budget. Janiszewski felt that the threat of the ministry’s dissolution was looming. His violent attack on the government laws manifested his determination to win a permanent place for the ministry in public debates. He wrote about this explicitly: “As the general public has not yet grown accustomed to the existence of a Ministry of Public Health, it is not aware, for the most part, of its tasks and objectives or the measures it employs to achieve those objectives; hence the Ministry of Public Health must take an active stance, it must win for itself the right to existence and recognition [emphasis mine – M.G.]”.⁶³

In the following years of the development of the Polish health service, the professionalization of the medical sector advanced; the profession of medical assistant started to be eliminated, a requirement was introduced for dentists to have a university degree, and dental technicians were forbidden from engaging in dentistry treatment.⁶⁴ As this process unfolded, the number of specialized medical and research societies kept growing. In 1923, a Polish Gynaecological Society was founded, followed by an Anti-Tuberculosis Association in 1924, a Radiological Society in 1925, a Microbiological Society in 1928, and an Orthopaedic Society in 1929. Changes also occurred in eugenic circles. In 1922, the Polish Society for Combating Prostitution and Venereal Diseases changed its name, pursuant to its new statute, to the Polish Eugenics Society. Besides the National Institute of Hygiene and the Warsaw Hygienic Society, the Polish Committee for Combating Cancer and the Anti-Tuberculosis Society, it is listed as one of the foremost voluntary associations supporting government efforts in the area of public health.⁶⁵

⁶² Cf. T. Janiszewski, “Jakie znaczenie ma nasza ilość i nasza jakość”, *Wychowanie Fizyczne*, 1 (1922): 4; *ibid.*, 7–9 (1922): 73.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁶⁴ Cf. J. Żarnowski, *Polska 1918–1939. Praca – Technika – Społeczeństwo* (Warszawa, 1999), pp. 275–280..

⁶⁵ Cf. S. Tubiasz, “Zdrowie Publiczne w Polsce”, *Lekarz Polski*, 6 (1927): 3; *Dwadzieścia lat publicznej służby zdrowia w Polsce Odrodzonej 1918–1938*, p. 67.

Eugenicists persisted in their propaganda attempts targeting politicians and deputies to the Legislative Sejm. In March 1921, they organized a lecture for political parties: the Polish Peasant Party (probably the Polish Peasant Party “Piast”), the National Union, and the Popular National Union, entitled “The power of the state and population policy”.⁶⁶ The lecture was to be repeated for the benefit of the left-wing parliamentary caucuses. That same month, eugenicists met with female MPs, for whom a lecture was delivered: “Historical and present-day progress in the struggle for the liberation of women from the shackles of bondage and the future of the nation”.⁶⁷ At the same time, lectures were delivered for the benefit of workers at Wawelberg’s workers’ hostels in Górczewska Street, and for the intelligentsia in the hall of the Society of Journalists and Writers at 5 Bracka Street in Warsaw.

On 30–31 October 1921, eugenicists organized the Second Eugenic Congress in Warsaw with the participation of anthropologists, naturalists, physicians, and social activists. Present were representatives of three ministries: the Health Ministry, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, and the Ministry of Religious Beliefs and Public Education, along with ones from scientific establishments (University of Warsaw, Military Sanitary Institute, Academy of Medical Sciences) and voluntary organizations: the Warsaw Hygienic Society (headed by Józef Polak), the Bolesław Prus Society for Practical Hygiene (represented by the well-known feminist Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka) and the “Sobriety” Society for Combating Alcoholism (socialist and senator Stanisław Posner). The bacteriologist Professor Odo Bujwid (representing the Military Sanitary Institute), the naturalist Professor Benedykt Dybowski, Professor Maria Curie-Skłodowska, and the anthropologist Professor Talko-Hryniewicz were appointed honorary chairpersons of the congress.⁶⁸ The congress’ participants included Professor Edward Loth, the anthropologist Professor Kazimierz Stołyhwo, Dr W. Szenajch (Eugenics Section), Dr Stefan Kramsztyk, Antonina Walicka, Tadeusz Łazowski (Sex and Ethical Education Section), the lawyer Stanisław Kijeński (Social and Legal Section), Waclaw Sterling, Henryk Szczodrowski, and Leon Wernic (Section for Combating Venereal Diseases and Prostitution). A major part of the guests gathered at the congress had first met at the editorial office of Augustyn Wróblewski’s journal *Czystość* (Purity), published between 1905 and 1909.⁶⁹ Wernic took advantage of the presence of politicians to remind them of the bill “On the Combating of Venereal Diseases” which

⁶⁶ Cf. *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3 (1921): 18.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Cf. *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1922): 1.

⁶⁹ Cf. Chapter 2.

had been submitted to the government. At a meeting of the Eugenics Section he also presented his own plan for the treatment and rehabilitation facility for prostitutes. A female educator and two doctors, a venerologist and a psychiatrist, were to be put in charge of the facility. For the first year, the inmates would not be allowed to leave the premises. Afterwards, they would be granted leaves. Throughout their stay, all the inmates were to be under constant medical supervision and were to be employed at special workshops.

The first rehabilitation facility was to be organized in Warsaw. According to Wernic's plans, it was to accommodate between 50 and 100 patients. The plan was submitted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. In the plan one could discern inspirations from the Scandinavian countries, where similar facilities had been established to receive prostitutes and other people from the underclass. In the 1930s, the proposal for sterilization was made to both male and female patients of such institutions as a condition for discharge.

During the same congress Wernic congratulated Witold Chodźko on the fifth anniversary of his civil service work: "The Polish Society for Combating Racial Degeneration hopes that Dr Chodźko will be able to overcome in the future the obstacles that he has encountered in his hard work, forcing him against his will to concessions for the sake of state economies. This will result in an intensification of state actions and a stronger financial support for the cause of eugenics and combating the degenerative diseases".⁷⁰

From 1921, the name of Professor Tomasz Janiszewski, who had been pursuing intensive eugenic propaganda at home and abroad, appears on the editorial board of *Zagadnienia Rasy*. In 1922, in the rank of deputy health minister, he presented on behalf of Poland a plan to complement the Treaty of Versailles with the right of citizens to health at a meeting of the League of Nations in Geneva. Janiszewski justified the proposed additions to the Treaty by saying that "human health and life can no longer be regarded as an individual good, as it is of primary importance to the state and to humanity".⁷¹ The League rejected his proposal.

4. THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Janiszewski's appeal for active support for the Ministry of Public Health, whose very existence was under threat, met with a rather cold reception in medical circles.

⁷⁰ *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1922): 40.

⁷¹ Quoted after: *Historia Medycyny*, ed. T. Brzeziński (Warszawa, 1995), p. 393.

In 1920–1922, more or less camouflaged criticisms of government activities appeared in the journal *Zdrowie*. Józef Polak complained about the high prices of paper, printing house services, and the lack of funds for editing the journal. In an article of 1922 he wrote:

The glorious period of the resurrection of an independent and united Poland was a time of difficult trials [...] Having woken from a lethargy, the state began to absorb everything and everyone. Very little was left for voluntary associations, everything wanted to become a government office, everybody wanted to become a civil servant. The state performed functions normally not belonging to the state, it occupied offices and employed all the printing houses. Voluntary associations have stayed out of the way, journals [...] have been suspended.⁷²

Members of the board of the Warsaw Hygienic Society complained in a similar spirit: “As if wishing to make up for the century-long idleness in a single moment, the Polish state tried to incorporate everything, and politics, released from an iron cage, desired to absorb social initiative, tearing numerous tasks away from the hands of voluntary organizations whose work thereby receded into the background”.⁷³

While doctor-hygienists remained respectful of ideas such as national independence and sovereignty, the state in the sense of an organized administrative structure appeared in their articles with negative connotations. Criticisms were formulated against the state that it “slows down”, “impedes”, “makes impossible”, “does not understand”, “appropriates”, etc. This ambivalent attitude vis-à-vis state administration prevented physicians involved in social work from forming a strong pressure group to effectively oppose the dissolution of the Ministry of Health as part of budgetary austerity measures.

On 19 December 1923, Prime Minister Władysław Grabski’s extra-parliamentary cabinet was appointed. Its foremost task was to carry out tax reform. A policy of austerity was one of the measures designed to achieve a balanced budget. Under a Council of Ministers regulation of January 14, 1924, the Ministry of Health was dissolved and a General Health Service Directorate was established in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Thus, health matters were assigned to seven ministries:

- 1) the Ministry of Internal Affairs (General Health Service Directorate)
- 2) the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
- 3) the Ministry of Religious Beliefs and Public Education
- 4) the Ministry of Justice

⁷² J. Polak, “Artykuł wstępny”, *Zdrowie*, 1 (1922): 1.

⁷³ Quoted after: *Historia Medycyny*, p. 393.

- 5) the Ministry of Public Works
- 6) the Ministry of Railways
- 7) the Ministry of Agriculture⁷⁴

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare was the agency to absorb most of the responsibilities of the former Health Ministry – namely, the departments for mother and infant care, industrial hygiene, and the care of cripples, war invalids, and emigrants. The General Directorate only retained those matters that had to do with sanitary and hygienic inspection. Doctors ensured the proper sanitary condition of hospitals, and the Ministry of Social Welfare took over the supervision and management of certain branches of medicine (such as combating tuberculosis and trachoma in children), together with the department for mother and infant care.

The dissolution of the Health Ministry without consulting medical circles and the distribution of its former responsibilities among various other ministries caused shock and belated protests among doctors. The dissolution was regarded as a degradation of the problem of public health in the state and an attack on the social status of doctors. The advocates of an independent Health Ministry were unexpectedly joined by their former opponents. The journal *Zdrowie* speculated: “To what end is this being done? For reasons of economic savings? [...] Should one begin cutbacks with what is the most important in the nation – that is, public health? ...Out of regard for the future generation, for national eugenics, no wise politician can be permitted to do that”.⁷⁵

Janiszewski was the one to respond most sharply to the decision to dissolve the Health Ministry. In his comments he described it as a manifestation of party politics and the demagoguery of the ruling circles.⁷⁶ In the existing situation he proposed to make the matters belonging to the Health Service General Directorate the responsibility of the Social Welfare Ministry, so as to “organically” combine health matters with social welfare. He proposed that a doctor of medicine should be placed at the helm of a reorganized ministry. This was a rather moderate proposal for reinstating the Health Ministry, as the author himself finally admitted: “It is a matter of lesser consequence whether we will call the agency in which we will combine health and social welfare matters with labour protection issues by its old name of Ministry of

⁷⁴ K. Marcinkowski, “Organizacja Służby Zdrowia w Polsce po zniesieniu Ministerstwa Zdrowia”, *Medycyna Społeczna*, 4 (1926): 198.

⁷⁵ See editorial: “Artykuł Wstępny”, W sprawie zniesienia Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego”, *Zdrowie*, 2–3 (1924): 36.

⁷⁶ Cf. T. Janiszewski, “Uwagi z powodu memoriału Izby Lekarskiej”, *Lekarz Polski*, 11 (1926): 1; “Sprawy Zdrowia publicznego wobec reformy administracji”, *Warszawskie Czasopismo Lekarskie*, 3 (1926): 143.

Social Welfare, or whether we will stretch the name to that of Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, or whether, as would be most apt, we will call this agency simply the Ministry of Health".⁷⁷

Similar resolutions were made by the participants of the Congress of Physicians and Local Government Activists in Kraków in 1925, and also by the participants of the Congress of Polish Naturalists deliberating in Warsaw in 1925. The determined response of medical circles came too late, however, and had no effect at all.

Immediately after the dissolution of the ministry, Janiszewski took part in the Third Congress of Polish Hygienists, at which he delivered the paper "On the importance of health". In which he tried to overcome the doctors' reluctant attitude towards the state's administrative structures.⁷⁸ In Janiszewski's paper, the vision of the "state idea" is completely identified with eugenic ideas. According to Janiszewski, the state cannot bear excessive economic burdens caused by the long-term treatment and premature mortality of its citizens. Each member of society should take care to execute a proper marital selection to ensure the physical and mental health of offspring. Liberating society from disease and disability, as well as from false humanitarianism, is among the state's most urgent tasks: "Does not the sight of the sick, the feeble-minded, the infirm or the crippled, of those excessively obese or emaciated, while inspiring in us mercy and compassion, arouse at the same a sense of revulsion?"⁷⁹ asked Janiszewski. He also considered the question whether the progress of hygiene that had occurred in the past decades had not weakened or even stopped the process of natural selection. Unlike Galton, he thought that homo sapiens unflaggingly goes on adapting to the new challenges of civilization. In his opinion, the human capacity to adapt had not lost in the battle against civilization.⁸⁰ This capacity was still strong, which was not to say that it should not be supported by appropriate social policies. He advocated a scientific "breeding" of humans, to be based on both genetics and eugenics. The natural evolution of health policy was the turn towards prevention and early diagnosing of diseases. Medical specialists would be the guardians of a scientifically organized society.

⁷⁷ Janiszewski, "Uwagi z powodu", p. 3.

⁷⁸ T. Janiszewski, "O znaczeniu zdrowia", *Zdrowie*, 9 (1924): 319.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ "Civilization creates constantly changing conditions to which man must adjust, and even though civilization and the progress of hygiene that goes hand in hand with it eliminate certain conditions that may thus far have played the role of natural selection, the very same civilization puts in their place new factors that substitute for the old ones, influencing race development either positively or negatively", *ibid.*, p. 367.

Throughout this time, Janiszewski supported the activities of doctors in the field of state administration. His position was in accord with the woeful opinions in the Polish Eugenics Society announcing the end of the doctor's traditional role in society. As early as 1921, one of the contributors to *Zagadnienia Rasy* concluded: "The doctor is increasingly becoming a priest [...] The activities of a doctor must not be limited to making out prescriptions and applying dressings".⁸¹

5. DEBATE ON THE DOCTORS' SOCIAL POSITION

Following the dissolution of the Health Ministry, a debate on the physician's position in the reborn Polish state flared up in the medical press. Another factor that sparked the debate was the amendment of the law on unemployment insurance of 18 July 1924. The amendment of 28 October 1925 extended compulsory insurance, so far covering physical workers only, to office workers.⁸² Furthermore, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare drafted a bill on insurance for office workers in case of inability to work, old age, and death. Office workers aged between 15 and 60, irrespective of their salary, were to be subject to compulsory insurance. Those for whom hired labour was an additional occupation, bringing a smaller income as compared to other sources of livelihood, were to be exempt from compulsory insurance. The bill also allowed exemption from compulsory insurance for physicians at their own request.

Insurance laws and bills met with either a cool reception or open criticism in medical circles. The provision that was found to be the most outrageous stipulated that unemployed doctors (as well as members of other equally respectable professions) be obliged, like manual labourers, to take up an occupation they had not been trained for. It was argued that this benefited physical workers only, as they paid half the rate of office workers and were the group with the highest risk of unemployment. Conflicts between doctors and the management of the Health Insurance Funds intensified.⁸³ Barbara Poznańska, the author of the sketch *Śródownisko lekarskie II Rzeczypospolitej* (The Medical Community in the Second Republic of Poland) believes that what lay at the root of these conflicts were different organizational structures in the public health service in various parts of the

⁸¹ T. Kaszubski, "Przerywanie ciąży z punktu widzenia higieny rasy", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 11 (1921): 9.

⁸² These restrictions were abolished by a decree of 1927.

⁸³ Cf. Dr I-i, "Zatarg lekarzy z Zarządem Kas Chorych w Warszawie", *Lekarz Polski*, 3 (1927): 16–18.

country, as well as the propaganda of numerous doctors against a public health service.⁸⁴

The dilemma between the mission of the intelligentsia and the desire to attain a high position in society with commensurate financial gratification was revealed in debates on the condition of the medical profession in interwar Poland that were going on in the medical press, i.e., the *Lekarz Polski* (Polish Physician), *Wiadomości Lekarskie* (Medical News) and *Nowiny Społeczno-Lekarskie* (Social and Medical News) journals, in the 1920s.

The debate was initiated in the journal *Lekarz Polski* by Jerzy Bujalski, a doctor who served as undersecretary of state in the Ministry of Public Health in 1921,⁸⁵ i.e., one who had been actively involved in the work on the shape of the country's health service.⁸⁶ His standpoint may be summarized in the form of the following theses: in the reborn Republic of Poland the steady impoverishment of doctors may be observed. This is accompanied by a decline in the prestige and moral authority of the medical profession in society. According to Bujalski, the attitude of the legislative, executive, and even local government authorities towards doctors is "not only unpleasant, but, even worse, it is dismissive".⁸⁷ The Health Insurance Funds "offend doctors' personal dignity", turn them into "workhorses" and "scapegoats", and subject them to the supervision of uneducated individuals. Bujalski believed that the doctors' situation was the worst of all the professions.

Bujalski's article set into motion an avalanche of other contributions. Most opinions were similar. There were widespread complaints about exploitation by the Health Insurance Funds, about disrespect from local authorities, and low salaries. There were dramatic warnings, such as those in an article by Władysław Judym: "I am warning our public against the great danger threatening our young State; the moral and material destruction of doctors, as those professionals whose mission it is to protect the race against degeneration and decline, may have horrible consequences for our future".⁸⁸

⁸⁴ B. Poznańska, "Środowisko lekarskie II Rzeczypospolitej", in: *Inteligencja polska XIX i XX wieku* (Warszawa, 1991), vol. 6, p. 259.

⁸⁵ Cf. AAN, *Ministerstwo Opieki Społecznej. Kancelaria Cywilna Naczelnika Państwa. Nominacje i dymisje na wniosek Ministra Zdrowia Publicznego za okres I 1919 – IV 1922*, file no. 111.

⁸⁶ Cf. J. Bujalski, "Zasady organizacji szpitali publicznych", *Warszawskie Czasopismo Lekarskie*, 3 (1924): 118; id., "Zdrowie publiczne w Sejmie i rządzie", *Warszawskie Czasopismo Lekarskie*, 9 (1924): 73.

⁸⁷ Cf. id., "Stan lekarski a społeczeństwo w dobie dzisiejszej", *Lekarz Polski*, 6 (1925): 1–4.

⁸⁸ W. Judym, "Stanowisko lekarza w demokracji współczesnej", *Lekarz Polski*, 12 (1927): 4; cf. in the same series: *Lekarz Polski*, 11 (1927): 5–8; *ibid.*, 1 (1928): 3–6; *ibid.*, 2 (1928): 29–30; *ibid.*, 3 (1928): 55–56; *ibid.*, 4 (1928): 78–80; *ibid.*, 6 (1928): 127–128; *ibid.*, 7 (1928): 152–153.

Medical circles commonly reproached themselves for their passivity in the first postwar years, a time they had failed to use for promoting their own interests. One participant of the debate asked rhetorically: "What is our participation in the Sejm and the Senate, in regional legislatures and municipal councils? Where are those who, by virtue of their profession, should have assumed these crucial political and social posts? [...] Why do we have high proportions of lawyers, engineers, and teachers in the Sejm, the Senate, and in local government bodies, but no or only few doctors?"⁸⁹

Indeed, doctors were among the least represented groups of the intelligentsia in the Sejm, while lawyers were among those most numerously represented. The number of doctors in each term of the Sejm did not exceed 10 or 11, accounting for a mere 2.5 percent of the overall number of members of parliament.⁹⁰

As I have pointed out above, the complaints addressed to the state were caused by the nationalization of the health sector. As the participants of the debate saw it, social insurance had reduced the market value of medical assistance. Only one participant of the debate pointed out that the impoverishment of doctors actually affected only part of the medical community.⁹¹ From among the four categories of doctors – county doctors, public school doctors, doctors from state-run facilities, and municipal doctors (hospital and prison doctors) – only the last group was underpaid. It was only that last group that deserved the description of "public health service pariahs". However, in addition to a Health Insurance Fund or hospital job, most doctors would open a private practice, so their earnings were not limited to a public health service salary.⁹²

As for wage differentials within the medical community, they were substantial indeed. The medical elite (professors and sought-after doctors with well-established practices) enjoyed the highest earnings. Some doctors were known to have been earning as much as 7,000 to 10,000 zloties, while the average income at that time was between 300 and 700 zloties. But generally, doctors in provincial towns enjoyed relatively high earnings, while their colleagues from major university centres had the lowest incomes. Doctors' earnings were also dependent on their specialty. Surgeons, gynecologists, dermatologists, neurologists, and pediatricians earned higher-than-average incomes, while ophthalmologists and ear, nose, and throat specialists had

⁸⁹ J. Zawadzki, "O przyszłość i byt zawodu lekarskiego", *Lekarz Polski*, 2 (1926): 11.

⁹⁰ Cf. Poznańska, *Środowisko lekarskie*, p. 273.

⁹¹ J. Pełczyński, "Pariasy medycyny społecznej", *Lekarz Polski*, 5 (1926): 9.

⁹² Cf. J. Żarnowski, *Struktura społeczna inteligencji w Polsce w latach 1918–1939* (Warszawa, 1964), p. 259.

lower-than-average earnings. Another characteristic feature of the medical profession was the disproportion between the high prestige of the position held and the related earnings. The chief of the internal medicine ward at the Christ Child Hospital in Warsaw had a monthly salary of 300 zlotys, equal to that of a qualified worker.

Table 1. Doctors' Earnings

Percentage of Doctors	Monthly income (zloties)
13.7	Under 250
3.7	250–300
48.5	300–700
21.8	700–1200
7.5	1200–1800
4.8	Over 1800

Source: A. Cieszyński, *Stan lekarski w czasach obecnych pod względem liczbowym i ekonomicznym. Przyszłość stanu lekarskiego w Polsce* (Lwów 1928), quoted after: Poznańska, "Środowisko lekarskie", p. 238.

However, the subject of the differentiation of doctors' incomes was never again raised in the debate. On the other hand, opinions were voiced that doctors should defend their interests in a single trade union: a Union of Doctors of the Polish State.⁹³ Only one doctor out of a dozen or so participants of the debate rejected the idea.⁹⁴ He believed that the idea was reminiscent of practices from the USSR, where doctors were obligatorily enrolled in a trade union, with those outside the union denied the right to hold any kind of physician's job. Thus, the author argued, the most crucial characteristic of the medical profession, as expressed by the term "liberal profession", is lost. The actual problem for doctors is not the lack of professional solidarity, but rather their excessive number.

The problem of the overproduction of doctors in the reborn Polish state ought to be viewed in a proper context. It was recognized by medical circles

⁹³ The Union of Physicians of the Polish State (*Związek Lekarzy Państwa Polskiego*) was a national medical association. There were also other national professional organizations: the Union of Physicians Employed by the Health Insurance Funds (*Związek Lekarzy Kas Chorych*) and the Association of Physicians Employed by the Social Insurance Fund (*Zrzeszenie Lekarzy Ubezpieczalni Społecznej*), as well as self-government professional organizations. The first union is the only one to appear in the debate, as it was universally identified with the interests of free-practicing doctors.

⁹⁴ M. Łężyński, "O zjednoczeniu zawodowym lekarzy", *Lekarz Polski*, 4 (1926): 19–23.

as early as 1923.⁹⁵ The numbers of graduates of medical departments were steadily growing, as illustrated by the following statistics: 4,978 physicians were registered in 1921 as compared to 12,917 in 1938. In 1921, there was one doctor per 4,672 residents of Poland, and one per 2,720 residents in 1939. For comparison, at the same time in industrialized European countries, such as England, Switzerland, and Germany, there was one doctor per 1,000–1,500 residents.⁹⁶ What distinguished Poland was the fact that most doctors lived and practiced in big cities. Although there were indeed better earning opportunities in the provinces, the lack of proper medical infrastructure, primitive living conditions, and the lack of roads and means of transport made young doctors prefer a less comfortable existence in a big city to profitable employment opportunities in the countryside.⁹⁷ Warsaw, Lvov, and Kraków were the cities with the highest numbers of doctors.

Table 2. Concentration of doctors in big cities

1. Lvov	One doctor per	324 residents
2. Kraków		375 residents
3. Warsaw		443 residents
4. Poznań		1000 residents
5. Łódź		1260 residents
6. Katowice		1600 residents

Source: Cieszyński, *Stan lekarski*, p. 234.

The factors presented above reflected Poland's backwardness in terms of civilization and the uneven progress of modernization rather than an actual overproduction of doctors. However, in the opinions of doctors, the Polish state was blamed for acting to "destroy" the medical profession rather than for ignoring the problems of the provinces.

No more than but a few participants of the debate saw the condition of their profession as a reflection of broader social processes. These exceptions included Tadeusz Kaszubski. He noted that after the First World War the role of the state, which was becoming the organizer of almost the entire life of society, was growing all over Europe. The author concluded:

And if that is indeed the case, the medical estate must come to terms with the thought that the state will organize medical assistance in one way or another,

⁹⁵ Cf. A. Cieszyński, *Czy i jak należy przeciwdziałać nadmiernemu przyrostowi w Polsce* (Lwów, 1923).

⁹⁶ Cf. Poznańska, *Środowisko lekarskie*, p. 234.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Pamiętniki Lekarzy* (Warszawa, 1939).

that it stands at a turning point between the era when medicine was indeed a liberal and independent profession and an era when the state commissions it to perform functions of one or another type [...] The medical estate may struggle for a longer or shorter time to preserve its position from before the war, it may influence the pace of that process, it may even modify it, but it will hardly change the very essence [...] If other professions were to be ‘nationalized’ at the same time, it would not be felt so acutely. Understandably, sickness insurance is always the first to be introduced.⁹⁸

Kaszubski pointed out that the changes experienced by the medical profession and that had attracted so much criticism from doctors were not caused by the ill will of civil servants, but rather resulted from the broad social and political context of the postwar years.

One more element that appeared in the debate is worth noting. The doctors described their professional community as the “medical estate”.⁹⁹ The term appears both in the titles of articles (including those by Jerzy Bujalski, Adam Jarosiński, and Tadeusz Kaszubski) and in the body of text, too – and indeed, not once, but several or even a dozen times. Mostly, “the medical estate” was placed in opposition to: society, democracy, development trends, social insurance, the liberal professions, etc.

Even if we assume that the term “medical estate” is an archaism and a synonym of the term “medical profession”, the expression “estate” was used more rarely or not at all with reference to, for instance, the teaching, clerical, and legal professions. The feeling given is that the wording revealed the exclusivism of doctors, who often tended to see their own professional group as a separate social estate deserving of certain privileges and rights. What bears out this claim is the debate on compulsory insurance, the gist of which was that out of all the professions: teachers, journalists, civil servants, bankers, etc., it was the doctors who had been wronged the most and that was why they had a moral right to special treatment. A similarly strong sense of being wronged prevailed in the salary debate, despite the fact that, as Janusz Żarnowski noted, “the average incomes of doctors did not differ very much from the incomes of salaried employees with similar education levels”.¹⁰⁰ In the debate under discussion the corporationism of doctors came to light. Defending group interests within a trade union was believed to be the only alternative in the face of the unfriendly or even hostile state. Doctors from the former Congress Kingdom of Poland emphasized their

⁹⁸ T. Kaszubski, “Tendencje rozwoju a stan lekarski”, *Lekarz Polski*, 11 (1926): 10.

⁹⁹ Obviously succumbing to the suggestion of the sources, Barbara Poznańska in her sketch uses the expression “the medical estate”. This is not a neutral term, it carries certain connotations. Cf. Poznańska, *Środowisko lekarskie*, p. 236.

¹⁰⁰ Żarnowski, *Struktura społeczna*, p. 263.

attachment to the old ethos of the intelligentsia, at the same time revealing their helplessness in the face of the new realities that dictated new rules for the social game. This helplessness was manifested by frequent accusations against the state and its representatives: politicians and civil servants.

Janiszewski's lecture delivered in 1929 at an in-service training course for doctors may be regarded as a landmark marking the end of the debate on the doctor's position in interwar Poland. Janiszewski expressed his deepest regrets over the decline of the prestige of the medical profession in Poland and, against his earlier stance, defended the intelligentsia ethos of the medical profession. The same man who had been fervently struggling to place doctors at the highest positions in state administration, now announced mournfully that: "[...] rather than follow up on the tradition of Polish social activism among doctors [...] they wanted to turn them [i.e., doctors] into bureaucrats".¹⁰¹

6. RECAPITULATION

Due to the progressive and pro-modernization attitude of the Polish intelligentsia, the political decision to nationalize the health sector was made in the very first years of independence. The reform instituted led to conflicts in medical circles in the 1920s. Disputes between doctors and the Health Insurance Funds intensified, in some places even strikes broke out. Understandably, medical and social journals included demands for a restoration of the central role of private practice that clashed with demands for full nationalization. The point is that even among the advocates of a public health service a sense of disappointment, or even embitterment over the effects of the reform prevailed. The universal, and probably subjective feeling was that the reform had degraded doctors. In the nineteenth century, it had been the partitioning powers that were blamed for the shortage of funding plaguing the health sector and for the poor financial situation of doctors. In the interwar period, doctors' complaints, sometimes legitimate and fully justified, were addressed to the Polish authorities on all levels. This would not have been extraordinary in any way, were it not for the fact that, in moments of great political importance to their community, Polish doctors had adopted a passive, wait-and-see attitude.

This was also true of the eugenics lobby, which was part of the medical community. Doctors, including advocates of eugenics, turned a deaf ear to Janiszewski's appeals to support an independent Health Ministry and

¹⁰¹ T. Janiszewski, *Spoleczne obowiązki stanu lekarskiego* (Poznań, 1929), p. 9.

to campaign for granting it the broadest possible scope of competencies. They did not protest when successive sectors were taken away from it and transferred to the Ministry of Labour or the Ministry of Social Welfare. They were unable to defend the idea of an independent Health Ministry, even though it was the crucial state agency for doctor-eugenicists, one in which they had gained major influence in the early days of newly independent Poland. It was only after the dissolution of the Health Ministry that protests were voiced, and they proved futile. Both in the 1920s and later, doctors were an occupational group with little political clout. The several members of parliament in the successive parliamentary terms were not able to defend the professional interests of their own occupational group, and even less so to promote the eugenics idea. The eugenics idea was lost in the 1920s, not because of opposition from Catholics (as in Canada's Catholic provinces), nor because of opposition from the Church hierarchy or intellectuals – but because of the political weakness of the medical community.

Doctor-eugenicists overestimated the commitment of the reborn Polish state to modernization. Initially, on the wave of elation over regained freedom, conditions were created for pursuing a eugenics policy of the kind that Janiszewski and Wernic had been campaigning for. An independent Health Ministry was established as well as a Eugenics Society with its own monthly – *Zagadnienia Rasy*. A collective approach to the problem of health and a new, eugenic model of care to be provided by the state to citizens were promoted at the ministerial level. Quite soon, however, the state's pragmatism prevailed, and when the need arose for cuts in budget spending, the Ministry of Health was dissolved with the single stroke of a pen. Moreover, this occurred precisely at the time when the idea of an independent health ministry began to prevail in Western Europe. Initially, the Second Republic of Poland was ahead of the Western states in its avant-garde approach to the problem of health, but later it reversed itself and fell back to the rear-guard. Thus, the Polish state was by no means as modern as it was anticipated to be immediately after the regaining of independence. The implementation of the eugenic idea of protecting the race by means of broadly defined medical prevention, was very expensive: it required amending tax legislation, expanding the social benefit system, and subsidizing research and scientific establishments. Janiszewski was perfectly aware of all this and that was why he tried to combine the idea of a strong state with eugenics, seeking to persuade his adversaries that the costs of applying eugenics measures would be paid back in the form of a lower proportion of sick and infirm individuals requiring continuous skilled care. Despite these efforts, eugenics did not become part of state ideology, not even after the military coup of May 1926 that brought Józef Piłsudski to power. The dissolution of the Health Ministry was the greatest blow to

the eugenics lobby, which thereby suffered a spectacular defeat. As late as 1925, Wernic still complained about stalling the “health project” as a result of the dissolution of the Health Ministry. He made appeals for the Polish Eugenics Society to be admitted to the ministerial program of combating venereal diseases and prostitution.¹⁰² He proposed organizing eugenic clinics as well as treatment and educational facilities all over the country. However, his proposals and petitions went unanswered.

Nonetheless, one should not underestimate the fact that the successive health ministers in the years 1918–1924 were advocates of the eugenic selection of the population. Both Tomasz Janiszewski and Witold Chodźko were members of the Polish Eugenics Society. Certain other officials from the ministry were regular contributors to *Zagadnienia Rasy*, including Stefan Kramsztyk, a clerk at the Health Ministry in 1918–1920, Edward Loth, appointed deputy chief of the Sanitary Department at the Ministry of Military Affairs in 1919, and the often mentioned Leon Wernic, responsible for combating venereal diseases. It need be emphasized that the arguments behind the establishment of the Ministry of Health, the first one in the history of Poland and among the first in Europe, were of a eugenic nature: a policy of race protection, of protecting the healthy and the strong. Nor should one ignore the publication in the government press (*Biuletyn Informacyjny Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego*) of articles promoting the extreme forms of eugenics as an antidote for excessive burdens on the budget.

Noteworthy is the figure of Tomasz Janiszewski, who served first as minister, and later as deputy minister of health, as he played the foremost role in the popularization of eugenic slogans in the years 1918–1924. It was Janiszewski who on numerous occasions publicly justified the need for state intervention into the private life of the individual. It was Janiszewski who propagated a collectivist approach to health (health is a collective rather than an individual good) and its new definition (namely, proper genetic make-up is the basic condition for health). He did so independently of the Polish Eugenics Society, with which he maintained fairly loose links. This is evidenced by the sporadic contributions of Janiszewski, otherwise an active commentator, to *Zagadnienia Rasy*, and by the lack of any major interest on his part in the society’s work. Janiszewski’s addresses to the Sejm and the League of Nations, and even his press articles from the years 1919–1922, are different from the statements that could be heard during internal meetings of particular sections of the Eugenics Society. While eugenicists represented a learned society, Janiszewski represented the Polish government and the

¹⁰² L. Wernic, “Stan współczesny walki państwowej z zarazą weneryczną w Polsce na podstawie danych z 1925 r. i pożądane reformy”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3–4 (1925): 26–28.

Polish state. Words about the need for eugenic selection uttered from the parliament's rostrum assume a different weight, a different significance, from those spoken at a less prominent forum, one not associated with the state and its institutions.

What strikes one when reading Janiszewski's brochures on the reconstruction of the country from the ravages of war, brochures presenting a vision of well-ordered cities with marked off sections of streets lined with uniform buildings, is the characteristic way of thinking in which anything pertaining to social life is as subject to the laws of rational planning as any other domain. In order to raise education levels, it was necessary to impose a uniform educational system. Reductions in infant mortality, and later in the mortality rates of entire populations, were achieved thanks to the enforcement of sanitary regulations concerning the construction of houses and farmyards and the use of drinking water. Infectious diseases were brought under control after compulsory preventive vaccines were introduced. Thus, the problem is not so much social engineering as such, as the degree to which one wants to apply it. It was with good reason that Karl R. Popper introduced a distinction between gradual social engineering and Utopian engineering: "What I criticize under the name Utopian engineering recommends the reconstruction of society as a whole, i.e., very sweeping changes whose practical consequences are hard to calculate, owing to our limited experience. It claims to plan rationally for the whole of society, although we do not possess anything like the factual knowledge which would be necessary to make good such an ambitious claim [...] [The Utopian engineer] will argue that we shall never know more about these matters if we recoil from making social experiments which alone can furnish us with the practical experience needed".¹⁰³ Being an outstanding specialist, Janiszewski realized that Mendel's theory does not go very far to explain heredity. In his day numerous basic questions concerning the incidence of genetic disorders were still unanswered. Doctors from outside eugenics circles warned that the sterilization of the sick would not change much, as damaged genes were passed on to the offspring of phenotypically healthy people. As early as the 1920s, questions arose concerning the objective criterion of eugenic worth. Like many other eugenicists, Janiszewski turned a deaf ear to numerous reservations and doubts. Janiszewski's suppression of those "unreasonable criticisms" and his presentation of plans for a eugenic selection of the population in the form of ultimatum-style demands was one of the personality features of the Utopian engineer.

¹⁰³ K.R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London, 1947), pp. 142–143.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WORLD OF THE JOURNAL *ZAGADNIENIA RASY* (1918–1927)

1. THE STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE POLISH EUGENICS SOCIETY

The Society for Combating Venereal Diseases, renamed the Polish Eugenics Society in 1922, remained an organization of experts throughout the 1920s. In the early years of Poland's regained independence, it was mostly made up of doctors of various specialties: phthisiologists, venereologists, psychiatrists, and paediatricians. Lawyers, economists, educators, and journalists made up a small proportion of its membership in those years. Nearly all of the editors of *Zagadnienia Rasy* (Race questions) held doctoral degrees. This showed Wernic's conscious efforts to maintain the scientific character of both the journal and the society itself. In 1918, the editorial staff of the journal was mostly made up of physicians from Warsaw. Of the journal's nineteen editors, just six did not come from Warsaw: two were from Kraków, and one from Poznań, Lvov, Toruń, and Drohiczyn each.

In 1918, Dr Leon Wernic (Warsaw, skin disease specialist, venereologist, b. 1870) and Dr Waław Wesoławski (Warsaw, anatomopathologist) were editors in charge of individual *Zagadnienia Rasy* issues. Also on the editorial staff were Dr Witold Chodźko (Warsaw, psychiatrist, b. 1875), Prof. Stanisław Ciechanowski (Kraków, anatomopathologist, b. 1869), Dr Adam Ciagliński (Warsaw, psychiatrist, b. 1860), Dr Adam Karwowski (Poznań, skin disease specialist, b. 1873), Dr Adolf Kozerski (Warsaw, skin disease specialist, b. 1864), Prof. Franciszek Krzyształowicz (Kraków, Warsaw, skin disease specialist, b. 1868), Dr Leonard Lorentowicz (Lvov, gynecologist, b. 1897), Prof. Edward Loth (Warsaw, anatomopathologist, b. 1884), Dr Waław Męczkowski (Warsaw, neurologist, b. 1863), Dr Henryk Nusbaum (Warsaw, physiologist, b. 1849), Dr Albin Racinowski (Warsaw, skin disease specialist, b. 1882 r.), Dr Otto Andrzej Steinborn (Toruń, skin disease specialist, b. 1868), Dr Władysław Szenajch (Warsaw, pediatrician, b. 1879), Dr Henryk Trenkner (Warsaw, pediatrician, b. 1872), Dr Juliusz Wiśniewski (Warsaw,

skin disease specialist, b. 1886), A. (probably Adela) Wysłouch (Drohiczyn, internal medicine physician, b. 1886), and Prof. Kazimierz Stołyhwo (Warsaw, anthropologist, b. 1880).

As evident from the above enumeration, the journal's editorial staff was mostly made up of physicians born in the 1870s and 1880s, i.e., in their thirties and forties at the time when Poland regained independence. People such as Ciagliński, who was nearing sixty – or even seventy, as Nusbaum was, were exceptions.¹

Over the years following its formation, the editorial team would change. Names from Częstochowa, Kalisz, Vilnius, Białystok, and other localities appeared.² The society was developing relatively quickly, something that was aided by Wernic's contacts established during the 1915–1919 campaign to combat infectious disease epidemics. Its branch offices coincide with the localities in which he earlier founded sanitary and vice offices. In 1922, the Polish Eugenics Society numbered a hundred members in Warsaw alone. The editors also referred to branch offices in Poznań, Grudziądz, Vilnius, Kraków, Łódź, Białystok, Radom, Częstochowa, Lvov, Kielce, Płock, and Łomża.³ The society's development in the 1920s was influenced by developments such as the convening of the Second Eugenics Congress in 1921, the incorporation of the Poznań Eugenics Society as an autonomous branch in 1922,⁴ the establishment of cooperation with the National Institute of Hygiene, and the opening of the first eugenics clinic in 1925.

Among the physicians and social activists who contributed to *Zagadnienia Rasy* in the 1920s, those who distinguished themselves through their journalistic and organizational activities included Dr Teodora Męczkowska (a well-known feminist and teacher, b. 1870), Dr Maria Szczodrowska (gynecologist, b. 1885), Dr Henryk Szczodrowski (skin and venereal diseases, b. 1883), Dr Roman Zadębowski (gynecologist, b. 1883), Dr Jerzy Babecki (hygienist, b. 1890), Dr Stefan Kramsztyk (pediatrician, b. 1884), Dr Gustaw Szulc (bacteriologist, b. 1884), Dr Seweryn Sterling (internal medicine,

¹ Apart from the opening article that I am discussing here, Nusbaum did not contribute anything else to *Zagadnienia Rasy*.

² In 1921, the following persons joined the group of the journal's editors: Dr Robert Bernhardt (b. 1874, venereologist), Professor Franciszek Gröger (Cieszyn, Lvov, gynecologist, b. 1868), Dr Tomasz Janiszewski (Warsaw, phthisiologist, b. 1867), Professor Mieczysław Michałowicz (Warsaw, pediatrician, b. 1876), Professor Kazimierz Noiszewski (Warsaw, ophthalmologist, b. 1859), Dr Jan Papèe (Lvov, venereologist, b. 1865), Dr Karol Potrzebowski (Warsaw, venereologist, b. 1885), Professor Aleksander Rosner (Kraków, gynecologist, b. 1867), Professor Zdzisław Sowiński (Vilnius, dermatologist, b. 1872), Dr Franciszek Walter (Kraków, dermatologist, b. 1885).

³ Cf. *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1922): 5.

⁴ Poznań's Eugenics Society organized itself beginning from 1903, quite independently of Warsaw's eugenics community. See Chapter 2.

b. 1864), Dr Jerzy Reise (skin and venereal diseases, b. 1875), and Dr Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska (feminist, economist, social activist, b. 1866).

The successive ministers of public health (namely: the psychiatrist Professor Witold Chodźko and Professor Tomasz Janiszewski) were members of the Polish Eugenics Society. However, their commitment to propagating eugenics slogans varied. Janiszewski belonged to the resolute, ardent advocates of eugenics. He made this clear on several occasions as a writer, a minister, and later a deputy minister of health.⁵ Chodźko did not share Janiszewski's radicalism. He rarely spoke about the eugenic selection of the population. But as one of the foremost members of Poland's medical elite, he lent credence to the society's activities and attracted new members by virtue of his authority.⁶ In 1926, Chodźko was appointed head of the National Institute of Hygiene. One may guess that it was he who made it possible to attract the outstanding serologist Ludwik Hirszfeld (head of the Polish Eugenics Society Science Section from 1931, co-organizer of eugenics courses in the 1930s), as well as other scientists from the National Institute of Hygiene, to PES.

The society worked in sections. In 1925, the following sections were in existence: Prevention and Treatment Section (renamed Section for Combating Race Degeneration and Venereal Diseases in 1928), Genetics Section, Education Section, Legal and Social Section, and Science Section. This division into sections corresponded to the diverse interests of eugenicists. In the 1920s, *Zagadnienia Rasy* tackled scientific subjects from the area of several overlapping scientific disciplines: medicine, anthropology, and psychology. Medicine was best represented, psychology and anthropology much less so. It was not until 1928, when scientists from the Lvov School of Anthropology joined the ranks of the journal's contributors, that the standards of anthropological articles started improving. Scientific issues discussed in the journal included problems related to the notion of human race, heredity, natural selection, and physical as well as mental diseases. Another type of problems tackled by *Zagadnienia Rasy* were social, moral, and legal issues, including debates on the institution of marriage, the gainful employment of women, the legal situation of illegitimate children, sex education of children both at school and at home, birth control, abortion, and social pathologies (alcoholism, drug addiction, crime, infanticide).

⁵ On Janiszewski's activity and views, see Chapter 3.

⁶ Witold Chodźko was among the foremost authorities in Polish medical circles. Before the First World War, he was close to Bolesław Prus, Aleksander Świętochowski, and Stefan Żeromski. In 1922–1934, he was a delegate to the League of Nations and chairman of a number of learned societies, including the Polish Psychiatric Society (1920–1923 and 1928–1939) and the Warsaw Society for Preventive Medicine (1935–1939). Cf. *Biogramy uczonych polskich*, ed. A. Śródka (Wrocław, 1990).

2. MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO

The article setting out the journal's program, published in the very first issue of *Zagadnienia Rasy*, was written by Henryk Nusbaum, who had not earlier belonged, nor would later belong, to the core group of eugenicists. Nusbaum was the son of the Jewish industrialist Hilary Nusbaum, and his brother, Józef Nusbaum-Hilarowicz, was a well-known zoologist. Henryk studied medicine in Warsaw and Dorpat, and in 1876 he made an academic tour of Europe, listening to the lectures given by Marcell Nencki in Brno and by Jean-Martin Charcot in Paris. He was a co-founder of Jan Ludwik Popławski's *Głos* (one of the most important political magazines of the late nineteenth century), a hygienist, president of the Society for the Protection of Women (*Towarzystwo Ochrony Kobiet*), and a member of several other social and medical societies. After 1905, he was campaigning for the re-Polonization of Polish schools in the Russian and Prussian partitions. He remained in close contact with Polish intellectuals, including the novelist and patron of the emancipation of women, Eliza Orzeszkowa. In 1914, he founded a Circle of Polish Patriots of the Mosaic Religion. In 1915–1917, he edited the social and literary monthly *Rozwaga* (Prudence) with pro-assimilation tendencies, and he founded the *Ochrona Rasy* (Race protection) publishing house in 1918. Later he joined the *Zagadnienia Rasy* editorial staff, launching its publication with the above-mentioned article outlining the journal's program.

In his sketch *Troska o rasę* (Concern for the Race) he sought to elaborate on the eugenic credo: *mens sana in corpore sano*. In it he presented an opinion, typical of the representatives of the progressive intelligentsia, that the progress of civilization and science was a favourable influence on the sphere of ethics and morality. In past eras, Nusbaum argued, there was slavery, bloody persecutions of Christians, torture was used with the full sanction of the law, sages and philosophers were burnt at stake. From the perspective of time one can see, however, that a process of constant improvement of governments, institutions, and people had been taking place in civilization. In Nusbaum's opinion, while the present era was not free from suffering, this suffering was alleviated by humanitarian thought and the progress of civilization through their institutions.

Today we rightly shy away from the death penalty, performed by means of the atrocious noose or a firing squad, or even by the abominable French guillotine. But let us envisage the death penalty executed by means of pouring molten lead into the convict's throat, slow cutting off of the extremities and other members, breaking bones on the rack, nailing to a cross, or impaling the unfortunate victims! Let us envisage old-time wars, and let us note that the

humanitarian institution of the Red Cross was not founded until the nineteenth century!⁷

It is only scientific civilization, Nusbaum further argued, that was able to open itself up to the idea of humanitarianism. What had lain at its foundations was the belief in the evolutionary nature of the world and of man. Explaining the mystery of existence by means of the theory of evolution gives man an opportunity to consciously participate in “the fulfilment of the law of the gradual improvement of humankind”.

Care for the race manifests itself in concern for the nation’s physical as well as intellectual development. Nusbaum rejected the opinion that industrial civilization is a degenerating influence:

A belief haunting many rather feeble minds is that culture and civilization are allegedly factors hostile to health and physical fitness; those minds long, as it were, for primeval nature, untainted by the artificiality of the conditions of cultural life. Underlying this belief is a deep error. For it is erroneous to juxtapose nature and culture. Culture is not an antithesis of nature, but rather its most beautiful, most refined manifestation; culture is the fulfilment of all of nature’s plans and aspirations, it cannot be its opposition.⁸

Even though he sees nature and culture as a symbiotic whole, he attaches fundamental importance to civilization. For civilization has produced tools that have allowed man to control nature and to replace the instinctive struggle for survival with judicious, planned, and conscious policies. The ultimate goals of those policies include intensifying population growth, lengthening human lifespans, and strengthening the nation’s energy, vital force, and health.

For Nusbaum, the efforts to improve the health of the nation were tantamount to the fulfilment of a patriotic duty: “Whoever, inspired by love, participates consciously in this solicitude and work is a priest, as it were, in the great temple of perfection that is being constructed!”⁹

3. NATION AND RACE

The eugenicists used a definition of nation founded upon biological concepts, one that drew upon social Darwinism. The economist Zofia Daszyńska-Gołąńska, a member of the Union for Equal Rights for Polish Women (*Związek*

⁷ H. Nusbaum, “Troska o rasę”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1918): 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Równouprawnienia Kobiet Polskich, abbr. ZRKP), founded in 1907, wrote: "The nation is an organization based on biogenetic community and on the community of civilization".¹⁰ In eugenic conceptions it is not culture but biology, or, strictly speaking, the genetic factors, that determine nations and are decisive for their development or decline. The commentator Apolinary Garlicki, the author of a book *Zagadnienia biologiczno-społeczne* (Biological and Social Issues, Warszawa 1924), believed that the nation "may last as long as it preserves a healthy and relatively pure collective idioplasm."¹¹ Among the advocates of this view was Tomasz Janiszewski, who wrote: "Health and health alone, physical and moral, is what absolutely determines the existence of nations and states."¹² He was accompanied by Wernic, who presented gloomy visions of the Polish nation dying out as a result of degeneration caused by an excessive reproduction of weak, unfit individuals.¹³ He blamed the governments of the partitioning powers, which through their repressive policies had caused degeneration in Polish territories, for that state of affairs. Throughout the nineteenth century, Wernic explained, the most valiant, most worthy individuals had been separated from the rest of society (via prisons or exile) and were killed in armed uprisings, while the weak, devoid of willpower and vital energy, had kept propagating.¹⁴

The biological conception of the decline of the nation and civilization was not an original idea of Polish eugenicists. Beginning from the late nineteenth century, it had been propagated by English-speaking, German, and French scientists and commentators. Psychological test results played a major role in the American pessimism of the 1920s. During the First World War, Americans had over 2 million conscripts tested. The results were terrifying: 47.3 percent of the White and 89 percent of the Black soldiers scored at or

¹⁰ Z. Daszyńska-Golińska, *Polityka populacyjna* (Warszawa, 1927), p. 15.

¹¹ A. Garlicki, *Zagadnienia biologiczno-społeczne* (Warszawa, 1924), p. 258.

¹² Janiszewski, *Polskie Ministerstwo Zdrowia*, p. 10.

¹³ L. Wernic, "Wymieranie narodów w przeszłości i narodów współczesnych oraz rola prawodawstwa i organizacji eugenicznych w chwili bieżącej", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 10 (1927): 87.

¹⁴ "The whole tendency", Wernic wrote, "towards the annihilation of the Polish nation, towards turning it into some kind of subsoil for the partitioning nations was manifested in a traditional anti-eugenic-disgenic policy. The point was to deprive us of gifted, outstanding individuals; individuals with independent souls, making up appropriate material for the citizenry of any independent nation, were the favourite prey of our torturers. Recruiting these individuals for themselves, forcing them to emigrate from Poland to Russia and Germany by limiting employment opportunities as much as possible explains why hundreds of brilliant minds, blood of Polish blood and bone of Polish bone, are now the pride of, chiefly, German and, secondly, of Moscovian literature, arts and science" in: "Eugenika – jej zadania społeczne w Polsce oraz stosunek do medycyny i innych nauk", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 2 (1925): 37. Cf. L. Wernic, "Przemówienie inauguracyjne na II zjeździe eugenicznym", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1921): 2.

below the level of 12-year-olds.¹⁵ These test results were not published until 1921, but a press debate on them broke out as early as 1919. The scores were regarded by the general public as an objective indicator of intelligence levels. Thus, eugenicists gained a new tool for threats and blackmail. Books by Lothrop Stoddard, such as *The Revolt against Civilization: The Menace of the Under Man* (1922), and by Edward M. East: *Mankind at the Crossroad* (1923) presented visions of the complete destruction of civilization as a result of the reproduction of unfit individuals and the influx of immigrants.

The first debate on immigration law was held in 1921. The Congress curbed the influx of immigrants from each European country down to 3 percent annually relative to the number of registered immigrants (birth-place was taken into account) according to the 1910 census. Arguments of a racist, political, and economic nature were put forward against unlimited immigration. The eugenicists received support from American nationalists, who feared that an influx of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe would spoil the racial characteristics of the American people. Those opposed to immigration also included social activists, who indicating social problems, trade unions, which feared pay reductions as a result of an influx of cheap labour, as well as entrepreneurs, who pointed to the possible spread of political radicalism (socialism and communism), the propagators of which were purportedly emigrants from Europe.

The toughening of immigration laws was not enough to satisfy many from the pressure groups mentioned above, and they went on campaigning for further limitations hand in hand with the eugenicists. In 1923, hearings on the existing US immigration law began before the House of Representatives Committee on Immigration and Naturalization. In the debate preceding the drafting of the bill by both houses, opinions were voiced that biology proved that it was necessary to preclude representatives of races from Eastern and Southern Europe from immigration law. The Committee was dominated by representatives from the south and the west of the United States. One committee member, the Democratic congressman Samuel Dickstein, who was one of the two persons voting against the toughening of the law, observed that the Committee members did not want any immigrants at all, except for thoroughbred Nordics.¹⁶ When the matter became the subject of deliberations in the House of Representatives, biological and racial arguments dominated the whole debate. The congressman Robert Alien, a Democrat from West Virginia, declared: "The primary reason for the restriction of the alien stream

¹⁵ M.H. Haller, *Eugenics, Hereditarian Attitudes in America Thought* (New Brunswick–New Jersey, 1963), p. 114.

¹⁶ Cf. D.J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics. Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (Cambridge, Mass., London, 1995), p. 97.

[...] is the necessity for purifying and keeping pure the blood of America.”¹⁷ In April 1924, the Immigration Act was voted in by the House of Representatives and the Senate, and was promptly signed by President Calvin Coolidge, who had publicly declared as vice-president: “*America must be kept American. Biological laws show [...] that Nordics deteriorate when mixed with other races.*”¹⁸

Eugenics also influenced the development of the humanities. School psychology, developing in the 1920s, based on the research by the Harvard psychologist Edward Lee Thorndike, the author of the “Law of Effect” and many celebrated books on psychology, was drawing amply on the body of eugenics works. Thorndike was a participant of the Second International Eugenics Congress in 1921, where he delivered a paper: “Measurement of Family Resemblances in Intellect”.¹⁹ Lety Hollingworth’s book *Gifted Children*, a standard text which popularized the achievements of both educational psychology and eugenics, was extremely popular in the America of the 1920s and 1930s. Underlying that interest in gifted children in the United States were eugenic beliefs about degeneration, a slow erosion of adaptational capacity and the need for “breeding” talented individuals. Psychologists influenced by eugenics pointed out that the intelligence level depended on social class, and as the lowest classes reproduced most quickly, this undermined the biological foundations of the nation. In the 1920s, the psychologist William McDougall, who occupied the William James chair of psychology at Harvard University and was strongly influenced by both Galton and his own wartime experiences, wrote the book *Is America Safe for Democracy?*, in which he argued that America was unable to maintain political stability, because it was being internally degenerated by maladjusted individuals. He suggested that democracy might be replaced by a caste system in the future, in which the rights of each caste would be based on the biological worth of the individual.

The view that the physical condition of the nation determines its strength and development was therefore widespread in both Europe and America. The case of Polish eugenicists also shows that scientists found a permanent place in the debate on the nation and civilization. What a bacteriologist, economist, demographer, or phthisiologist contributed to that debate was their purely functional perspective. Generally, Polish historiography tends to emphasize political divisions in defining the idea of nation.²⁰ If we were

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁹ Cf. C.C. Little, “Second International Congress of Eugenics”, *Eugenics Review* (April 1921–January 1922): 511.

²⁰ Cf. J. Kurczewska, *Naród w socjologii i ideologii polskiej* (Warszawa, 1979); T. Kizwalter, *O nowoczesności narodu* (Warszawa, 1999); M. Janowski, *Inteligencja wobec wyzwań nowoczesności. Dylematy ideowe polskiej demokracji liberalnej* (Warszawa, 1996).

to strictly adhere to the proposed division into the nationalist camp, which had embraced the ethnic idea of the nation, and the liberal-left-wing camp stressing culture and language as the crucial elements of national identity, then a sizeable group of eugenicists found itself outside that pattern. Those who described the nation in biological and genetic terms included the socialist Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska (after 1926 a member of parliament for *Sanacja*, as Marshal Piłsudski's ruling camp was known), Henryk Nusbaum, who was close to the National Democratic party, and Stefan Kramsztyk, who sympathized with the peasant movement.

It was progressivism and the exceptionally spontaneous reception of Darwinism in Polish territories in the second half of the nineteenth century that is the key to understanding the exotic political alliances that Polish eugenicists entered into. It was precisely the popularity of Darwinism that influenced the further evolution of social-Darwinist conceptions which cut across the political and ideological divisions.

Eugenicists connected the idea of nation with the category of race. They believed that the development of humanity takes place through the development of nations, and the development of nations depends on the condition of the race. Waław Wesoławski wrote: "In the present era of universal respect for national values, with the nations seeking to outbid one another in terms of quality and size of the population, the defense of the race is to each nation the highest imperative of the intellect, the heart, and the properly defined national will."²¹

In the 1920s Polish eugenicists used the concept of race in at least three contexts. In the first case, "race" was used interchangeably with "nation", "society" and "a human community". To Nusbaum, race was a "collective, real body of the nation, a body that is the subsoil for all the qualities taken together, the virtues and vices of a human community that, ethnographically, and most importantly linguistically, constitutes that which we term a nation."²² The second context in which this concept was applied was narrower. The term "racial" was used to describe the characteristic physical and mental qualities that are subject to the law of heredity. It was in that context that Dr Waław Miklaszewski wrote in an article about "The Officers of the Russian Army from the Racial Perspective".²³ In this usage, race was inherently linked with the concepts of heredity and degeneration. Racial factors are the same as hereditary factors. In the third context, the term "race" drew upon the

²¹ W. Wesoławski, "Walka z chorobami wenerycznymi a obrona rasy" defense, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1918): 7.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²³ Cf. *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 2 (1918): 21.

racist roots of that idea, from Artur de Gobineau to the Volkist writers.²⁴ All three contexts: of race as a synonym of a community, as a designate of heredity, and as a historical race struggle coexist in the eugenicists' journal.

Polish eugenicists considerably mitigated the idea of the inevitable antagonism between nations embraced by the nationalist camp. The conflict between nations and races was replaced by the term "rivalry", a rivalry in which Poland was supposed to compete on equal terms with other nations. Some eugenicists rejected war as a "dysgenic" factor, resulting in eliminating the most genetically worthy individuals from procreation. On the other hand, the very same eugenicists stressed both the economic and military advantages of pursuing a population policy, which undermines the credibility of the thesis about the peaceful character of the expected international rivalry.

Yet another context of "race" appeared as the members of the Lvov School of Anthropology joined the eugenics community in 1928. Admittedly, one year earlier *Zagadnienia Rasy* published an article by the Rev. Dr Bolesław Rosiński entitled "Z zagadnień doboru u ludzi" (On the Problems of Selection Among People), but it should be regarded as a forerunner of the series of anthropological dissertations to be published later.²⁵

4. QUANTITY OR QUALITY? THE DISPUTE ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The war losses caused a depopulation psychosis²⁶ on the one hand and, on the other, a fear of overpopulation, diseases, unemployment, and hunger. In medical circles (not only eugenic ones) the problem of methods for detecting and combating venereal diseases as a factor causing race degeneration was feverishly debated.²⁷ A debate was also conducted on real and postulated natural increase. The eugenicists were unable to reach agreement on that issue. Between 1918 and 1927 a major proportion of eugenicists was against birth

²⁴ Hannah Arendt writes that racism appears whenever the element of the superiority of one race over the other is emphasized. Cf. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego–New York–London, 1973), pp. 158–184.

²⁵ Cf. B. Rosiński, "Z zagadnień doboru u ludzi", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 11 and 12 (1927): 33.

²⁶ The First Eugenics Congress of 1918 was entitled: "A Congress on the Depopulation of the Country".

²⁷ Cf. W. Wesołowski, "Walka z chorobami wenerycznymi a obrona rasy" defense, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1918): 7; id., "Czynniki wyludniające i stanowisko chorób wenerycznych", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3 (1919): 7; ibid., 4 (1919): 7; L. Wernic, "Sprawa ludności w Polsce, a choroby weneryczne", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1918): 13; id., "Stan współczesny walki państwowej z zarazą weneryczną w Polsce na podstawie danych z roku 1925 i pożądane reformy", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 5–6 (1926): 26.

control. Voices allowing a deliberate limitation of the number of offspring were rare. The eugenicists' ambivalent attitude towards population questions resulted partially from a kind of psychosis unleashed by physicians in the first few years after the war, when they alarmed the general public with the alleged threat that the Polish people were dying out.

As early as 1917, a memorial of the Polish Society of Social Medicine discussing the principles of the functioning of the health service in the Polish state included words of deep concern over the declining natural increase. The memorial reads:

If we Poles, deprived of statehood for more than ten decades, were looking with confidence into the future, this confidence of ours had been based to no small degree on the observation of the constant growth of our numbers through an almost continuous correct growth of the Polish population; nevertheless, we must note with utmost concern that at the present moment this growth no longer exists; for it has been found that mortality in our communities and cities has increased so remarkably that already today it considerably exceeds the number of births. Thus, a rapid population decline has begun and our nation is losing its most essential wealth, i.e., its population reserve.²⁸

At their 1918 congress, the eugenicists were in agreement that the practices of limiting the number of offspring negatively affected the nation and the state. Wernic was among the avant-garde of doctors alerting public opinion to the “arrival of a plague of sterility in Poland” and the threat of depopulation. Nodding in agreement was Kazimierz Bocheński, a gynaecologist who fought against the neo-Malthusian idea in various medical journals,²⁹ arguing that the population size was “one of the foremost factors guaranteeing the state’s might and power, and the history of mankind demonstrates that in addition to other symptoms, the decline of nations and states was accompanied by the shrinking of their populations”.³⁰ Waław Wesółowski, Stefan Kramsztyk, and St. Elwicz Lejzerowicz wrote in a similar vein in *Zagadnienia Rasy*.³¹

The eugenicists’ articles alerting readers to the low natural increase by no means tallied with the realities of the day. Despite the devastation

²⁸ “Memoriał Polskiego Towarzystwa Medycyny Społecznej w sprawie utworzenia Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego”, *Medycyna Społeczna*, 2 (1917/1918): 26.

²⁹ Cf. K. Bocheński, *Przerwanie ciąży z punktu widzenia społecznego*, *Ginekologia Polska*, 2 (1922): 71; id., “Neomaltuzjanizm i sztuczne przerywanie ciąży jako zagadnienia społeczne”, *Zdrowie*, 2 (1924): 56, *ibid.*, 3 (1924): 95.

³⁰ Bocheński, “Neomaltuzjanizm i sztuczne [...]”, p. 58.

³¹ Cf. Wesółowski, “Walka z chorobami” defense, p. 7; S. Kramsztyk, “Drogi i widoki walki z ograniczaniem potomstwa”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 9 (1921); id., “Eugenika, dziedziczność małżeństwo”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1922); S.E. Lejzerowicz, “O wyradzaniu się i zanikaniu typu żeńskiego”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1922).

and migrations caused by the hostilities, the high fertility rate continued throughout the first decade of the twentieth century in Polish territories. As evident from Jerzy Zdzisław Holzer's calculations, in 1900–1901 there were on average 6.2 children per woman during her fertile years (age 15–49).³² That is why the theses put forward by Wernic, Stefan Kramsztyk, Kazimierz Bocheński, and other doctors concerning the threats posed by the declining natural increase were rather the result of a mechanical grafting of Western European processes into Polish realities.

Paradoxically, in combating neo-Malthusian practices, the eugenicists were in accord with conservative social movements. What set them apart from conservatives was their position on artificial abortion. They regarded abortion, condemned by the Church, as advisable in several cases: when the pregnancy posed a threat to the woman's life; if there was a risk of a genetic disorder in the foetus; and if the mother did not have the necessary means to meet the baby's basic needs.³³

In the opinion of the eugenicists, marrying at a later age was another cause of declining female fertility. They believed the children of "old" fathers to be less gifted and less physically immune.³⁴ They believed that the peak of female fertility, and consequently the best age for entering into marriage, fell in the 25–38 age bracket. In their opinion premature marriage, in the bride's teens, was the cause of spontaneous miscarriages and stillbirths. Pointing to the disastrous consequences of major age differences between the spouses and of the excessively young age of the wife, the eugenicists were at the same time challenging the marriage patterns established in the nineteenth century.

A separate problem, though one closely related to the limitation of fertility, is the phenomenon of the mass employment of women and the growing popularity of women's emancipation slogans. In the interwar period, there was a steady tendency towards the higher education and employment of women. Women's employment left a fairly strong mark in the press in the period under discussion. While the physical labour of working-class women failed to provoke any major protests in the press, the office work performed by women from the intelligentsia drew criticisms in the traditionalist and conservative circles. Writers such as Tadeusz Dołęga Mostowicz (the author of many popular novels of manners), as well as Catholic writers such as Czesław Lechicki, Andrzej Drowicz, and Stanisław

³² Cf. J.Z. Holzer, "Przyczynę do analiz rodności i płodności kobiet w latach 1950–1960", *Statystyka Polski*, 65 (1962): 40.

³³ T. Kaszubski, "Przerywanie ciąży z punktu widzenia higieny rasy", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 11 (1921): 9.

³⁴ Wesołowski, "Czynniki wyludniające", 4, p. 7.

Podoleński, put forward accusations against working women, claiming that they lacked professional competence, were lowering the market value of labor, and were incapable of presenting matters in a synthetic way.³⁵ The traditionalists used the paradigm in which the psychology of the day viewed women's professional and intellectual work. The first scientific analysis of women's professional work was G. Heymans' book *Die Psychologie der Frauen* published in 1910. The set of characteristics of working women it catalogued (the lack of capacity for abstract thinking, an emotional approach to problems, changeability of opinions, lack of self-control, compensated by being systematic) actually disqualified women from occupying managerial positions. This paradigm became so strongly rooted in public awareness that it was repeated in the interwar years even by the editors of women's magazines friendly to the cause of women's emancipation. On the one hand, they called for women's initiative to enter the labour market, but on the other hand they involuntarily repeated the theses about the "true nature of women". Accordingly, there was a theme of biological determinism in the debate on women's employment. Women could not make good employees: this was determined by a sum of biological limitations.

Regarding the employment of women from the intelligentsia (because it was they who were the principal subject of the dispute), the eugenicists occupied the same position as the traditionalists. However, they were not interested in the efficiency of women as office workers, but rather in the impact of women's employment on social life:

Parallel to the elevation of the woman's social standing, her demands and responsibilities also increase; those demands and responsibilities that pose a serious competition to motherhood and all that it involves, namely pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, childcare, and bringing up children. That is why in those nations and in those population strata in which the woman's social standing is the highest, the least children are born [...].³⁶

Wernic wrote in a similar vein:

The women's movement, the independent employment of women, as well as their university education and taking i.a., clerical and teaching jobs makes them postpone marriage or abandon it altogether [...]. In America, half of

³⁵ On the criticism of the employment of women in the interwar years: D. Kałwa, "Model kobiety aktywnej zawodowo w Polsce międzywojennej", in: *Kobieta i praca. Wiek XIX i XX. Zbiór studiów*, vol. 6, eds. A. Żarnowska, A. Szwarz (Warszawa, 2000), 317; M. Gawin, "Głosy krytyczne w sprawie zawodowej pracy kobiet 1918–1939 (w świetle publicystyki)", in: *Kobieta i praca*, p. 303.

³⁶ Wesołowski, "Czynniki wyludniające", 4, p. [...].6.

female college students never marry, 1/3 of those married are childless, and the remaining 2/3 married female graduates have on the average between 1 and 2 children. In Poland, in the same year 1924 there were 29,420 male and 9,063 female students, making up 23.5 percent of all students, three times as much as in Germany. Owing to neo-Malthusian trends, Poland and the Polish intelligentsia are facing a major threat.³⁷

On another occasion, Wernic accused the women's movement of having "created a situation where [...] the ruthless method of the neo-Malthusian killing of offspring has been spreading, advocated by incautious or reckless propagators of the destruction of the Polish people, already enfeebled by years in bondage."³⁸

It was the army doctor Roman Zadębowski who undertook an effort to overcome the eugenicists' fears concerning the limitation of the number of offspring and the emancipation of women. Between 1919 and 1921 he published a series of articles entitled "Uregulowanie rozrodczości jako zagadnienie higieny rasy" (Birth control as a race hygiene issue) in the journal *Zdrowie*.³⁹ His articles addressed a number of issues belonging to various orders. The author commented on neo-Malthusianism both as an economic doctrine and as a social and moral phenomenon. Furthermore, he discussed heredity in both its scientific and social aspects; he also analysed the consequences of women's emancipation in both socio-biological and cultural terms. The wide variety of the subjects addressed was due to the author's extensive knowledge and meticulous research. Zadębowski expounded the basic problems of neo-Malthusianism, from the *Essay on Population* until the establishment of The Malthusian League in 1887 and Francis Place's and James Mill's writings. After outlining the history of the eugenics movement, Zadębowski moved on to the current reproduction-related issues. He described, in the first place, the breakthrough that the First World War had been, which, in his opinion, had paved the way for a modern approach to sexuality and procreation. "The war", the author writes, "had proven the apostles of big numbers and the propagators of uncritical procreation false [...] It is not the number but the quality of its members that determines the nation's power and future [emphasis mine – M.G.]".⁴⁰ This approach made Zadębowski view favourably the demographic changes taking place in Western Europe: in England, Denmark,

³⁷ Wernic, "Wymieranie narodów" [...], pp. 92–93.

³⁸ A lecture for doctors by L. Wernic, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 11–12 (1927): 108.

³⁹ Cf. R. Zadębowski, "Uregulowanie rozrodczości jako zagadnienie higieny rasy", *Zdrowie*, 7 (1919): 183; *ibid.*, 8 (1919): 201; *ibid.*, 9 (1919): 216, *ibid.*, 2 (1920): 3; *ibid.*, 3 (1920): 20; *ibid.*, 4 (1921): 18.

⁴⁰ Zadębowski, "Uregulowanie rozrodczości", *Zdrowie*, 6 (1919): 185.

Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, France, Austria, and Belgium. The economic well-being of a country encourages its citizens to adopt a cool, calculating approach to life. On the other hand, it creates an environment in which procreation may be subject to judicious state control in accordance with the principles of race hygiene. The author understood race hygiene as a conscious policy aimed at eliminating “unworthy” elements from society. Zadebowski supported eugenic policy, and in particular the sterilization practices pursued in the United States. Based on the American experience, he distinguished 3 groups that ought to be prevented from procreating:

- Group I** – The bodily disabled: 1. the deaf and dumb, 2. the blind, 3. those suffering from venereal diseases, 4. tuberculosis sufferers, 5. sexual perverts (sic!);
- Group II** – The mentally disabled: 1. mentally ill, 2. mentally retarded, 3. epileptics, 4. alcoholics;
- Group III** – The socially disabled: 1. drug addicts, 2. criminals, 3. prostitutes.⁴¹

The two groups that he considered the most harmful were the mentally ill, whose affliction he believed to be passed on to the offspring at a rate of 75–85 percent, as well as alcoholics. In his opinion, even after being cured, an alcoholic should be denied the right to beget offspring.⁴² He also believed that it was from these groups that social margins, procreating at the fastest rate, derived.

He saw contraceptives as the most powerful weapon in the struggle against degeneration. Firstly, contraception would make it possible to marry earlier and would bring the demand for prostitution down to zero. Secondly, he saw contraception as an instrument of selection policy. “Only taking control of individual procreation”, Zadebowski concluded his argument, “will allow us to work towards improving the race, which is the proper aim of eugenics, or race hygiene, a science about the usefulness of which to society nobody could or should doubt.”⁴³

Roman Zadebowski was one of the first physicians to introduce the neo-Malthusian idea to the Polish eugenics community. His series of articles promoted neo-Malthusianism not from the liberal standpoint (individual happiness), but precisely from the viewpoint of eugenics (collective interest). Zadebowski’s manifesto provoked protests among the *Zdrowie* editorial staff.

⁴¹ Zadebowski, “Uregulowanie rozrodczości”, *Zdrowie*, 2 (1920): 3.

⁴² “[...] even if a drunkard were successfully cured of his addiction, as a handicapped individual he must not be allowed to procreate”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 20 (1920): 21.

⁴³ Zadebowski, Uregulowanie rozrodczości, *Zdrowie*, 4 (1921): 18.

Upon the publication of the article on the need to halt the procreation of individuals “of little worth”, the journal added a reservation that the author’s views “find many opponents and the issue remains a contentious one”.⁴⁴

The eugenicists did not share the scepticism about population selection displayed by the hygienists and social activists from the *Zdrowie* circle. They invited Zadębowski to deliver a lecture at the Second Eugenics Congress held in 1921. He addressed the First Eugenics Section, represented at the Congress by outstanding Polish scientists, such as the anatomy professor Edward Loth, anthropology professor Kazimierz Stołyhwo, and the pediatrician, Dr Władysław Szenajch. In his keynote address, Leon Wernic spoke about the negative consequences of the over century-long oppression by the partitioning powers, as revealed by the First World War, such as: a declining natural increase, symptoms of the physical and spiritual exhaustion of the nation as a whole, and an advancing degeneration of human types.⁴⁵ That is why, he argued, social balance needed to be restored through a rational state policy, based on inheritance law.

During the deliberations of the eugenics section, the neo-Malthusian doctrine and the women’s emancipation movement were attacked on several occasions by Stefan Kramsztyk and Elwicz Lejzerowicz for deepening the detrimental “dysgenic” tendency to postpone marriage, limit the number of offspring, etc. Based on German scientists’ research results as published in the *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie*, Kramsztyk argued that emancipation led to a decline of sex drive in women. Lejzerowicz went even further in his criticism of the women’s movement, putting forward a thesis about the degeneration and disappearance of the female type.

A debate broke out over neo-Malthusianism and the women’s movement. Roman Zadębowski persistently argued that it was overpopulation that was the cause of misfortunes, and a decline in female fertility should not be viewed as a cause for concern, as it created better conditions for pursuing a eugenic policy. The well-known socialist and feminist Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka took a stance in defense of the women’s movement. It had been women, she pointed out, who had first raised the problems related to eugenics, among which she counted: the protection of motherhood, infant care, factory inspections, and combating phenomena such as prostitution, trafficking in women, and double morality.

“As regards sexual selection”, Budzińska-Tylicka addressed Kramsztyk, “the speaker seems to be out of touch with both life and traditional and social customs if he does not know that the woman today still continues to

⁴⁴ *Zdrowie*, 2 (1920): 25.

⁴⁵ *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1921): 2.

be the one who is chosen, and that she herself plays only an indirect role in that choice, which she either accepts or rejects.⁴⁶

She blamed Leyzerowicz for “shifting down on to the shoulders of the present-day woman” the whole blame for the degeneration of the young generation, forgetting that it was men who spread venereal diseases in legal marriages, slid into alcoholism, and begot frail, sickly offspring. She supported Ządębowski’s argument that only neo-Malthusianism might awaken a greater sense of responsibility for the fate of one’s offspring.

Another speaker in the debate was Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska, who challenged Ządębowski’s very interpretation of Malthus’ law.⁴⁷ Malthus’ population law says that the main cause of privation and poverty is overpopulation in the lowest social strata. While the population grows in geometric progression, food reserves grow only in arithmetic progression. People are only able to feed themselves because two kinds of limitations are at work all of the time: the “positive” ones: hunger, diseases, war, and infanticide, and the “negative” limitations: delayed marriages and sexual abstinence. Malthus believed that full employment and high wages would lead to population growth and to an exacerbation of the struggle for survival, resulting in a further deterioration of the living standards of the poor. Daszyńska-Golińska pointed out that history had unfolded contrary to the predictions of the Malthusian doctrine. In her opinion, Malthus had wanted to instil in the lower social strata the belief that only a conscious limitation of fertility might improve their fate. Meanwhile, the workers had learned how to organize and fight for their rights. Their situation had improved in terms of the relations between production and ownership, and not in connection with any changes concerning the natural needs for sex and food.

Zygmunt Zakrzewski took an intermediate stance between Wernic and Kramsztyk on the one hand, and Ządębowski and Daszyńska-Golińska on the other. He claimed that while increasing procreation was necessary, the demand for the “quality” of the population was superior to that for its “quantity”. “However, one should also bear in mind that in the future family of nations the importance of the voices of particular individual-nations will depend not only on the numbers of the hands they represent but, to no lesser degree, on their quality. It is therefore possible that ‘quality’ will matter more than ‘quantity’ in this case. That is why the State, that supreme breeder, should spare no effort not only to achieve for its purposes an outstanding fertility in our nation, but also to bring about an improvement of the race.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Cf. “Dyskusja nad referatami sekcji eugenicznej”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1921): 10.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴⁸ Z. Zakrzewski, “Walka ze zwyrodnieniem”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 11 (1921): 2.

Daszyńska-Golińska noted that during the First Eugenics Congress there had been universal agreement as to the need to augment the natural increase. Meanwhile, at the Second Congress, the attention of the speakers focused on the problem of “the conditions of the development of the human material”. In her opinion, this illustrates the process of a slow shift in public attention away from the size of the population to its quality, to its physical and mental health. Four years later, she would write: “Thus far, it has been population growth that was regarded as the yardstick, as a sign of well-being, as the basis for military, production, and taxpaying force. No attention was paid to the quality of that population. Lowly valued human material produces millions of feeble-minded, diseased individuals, with a hereditary predisposition to various disorders, people who are also ignorant and unqualified for any kind of work. Such elements of little worth fill hospitals, prisons, and shelters [...] A reduction in their numbers would present no loss to humanity, and to prevent bringing forth such creatures doomed to moral and physical misery into the world would represent the greatest gain.”⁴⁹

Thus, while at loggerheads over neo-Malthusianism, the eugenicists agreed on the fundamental issue: the need to extend control over the citizens’ sexuality so as to prevent producing “offspring of little worth”. They agreed there was a need to introduce a selection of the population into the “less” and “more worthy” types. Some of the members of the Polish Eugenics Society, beginning with Wernic, were against the emancipation of women in terms of employment, regarding it as a threat to the development of the race. Others recognized women’s educational and professional aspirations, as well as neo-Malthusian practices which, they claimed, provided an excellent ground for introducing the principles of population policy.

5. POPULATION POLICY AND ITS OBJECTIVES

Eugenics Society members firmly believed that introducing eugenic principles in social life would change human reality once and for all. Lunatic asylums, institutions for cripples and the feeble-minded would disappear. The plagues of alcoholism, drug addiction, and crime would be checked. An unburdened state budget would allow for welfare policies targeting eugenically worthy families. They termed these eugenic plans “population policy”.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Z. Daszyńska-Golińska, “Kwestia kobieca a małżeństwo”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1925): 1, cf. ead., “Ustawodawstwo eugeniczne wobec małżeństwa”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 6 (1923): 2.

⁵⁰ Population policy existed and continues to exist quite independently of eugenicists. However, in the period under consideration, eugenicists had adopted that concept for their own purposes.

The theoretical foundations of the population policy were created by Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska in her book *Polityka populacyjna* (Population policy, 1927). What provided inspiration for her book was Garlicki's work *Zagadnienia biologiczno-społeczne* (Biological and social issues), in which the author discussed matters related to eugenics and population policy. Daszyńska-Golińska's book was one of the first attempts to provide a comprehensive perspective on the problem of population policy in its historical aspect. The chapters of the book were arranged as follows: 1. "Demography as a science", 2. "From the history of population theory and practice", 3. "The principles of population and social policy", 4. "Race policy".

In the two opening chapters, the author sought to demonstrate that all highly developed civilizations had had policies to control the size and distribution of the population. The ancient Greeks had prevented overpopulation by pursuing colonial policy, the Spartans among them by eliminating the sick and the feeble, and the Romans through territorial expansion. The Romans were the first ones to discover the advantages resulting from a high number of residents. They held censuses so as to better supervise tax collection. The problem of the quality of the population found its reflection in Plato's, More's and Campanelli's philosophical projects. In the modern era, together with economics, social policy was born. In the nineteenth century, social policy was the same as methods for introducing balance in capital-labor relations. Under this heading come the state's legislative and welfare measures, as well as some forms of social self-help. Now, in the interwar period, population policy, which consists in the enactment of relevant laws and regulations aimed at regulating population issues in a conscious and rational way, has become its inherent part:

The state seeks to maintain this population, as a production force, military material, and taxpaying force, in reasonably good health [to] normalize the population growth, govern its distribution, and influence its migrations both at home and abroad [...]. It is impossible to distinguish between social and population policy. Population reforms keep entering the realm of social work. And social reforms, be it labour legislation or securing the welfare of old people, cripples, and invalids as well as the care of poor children etc. must consider the condition and growth of the population as their test of their success.⁵¹

Daszyńska-Golińska regarded race hygiene, the beginnings of which she traced back to the contemporaries Gobineau, Schallmayer, and Galton, as part of population policy.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 152.

As part of population policy, the eugenicists proposed financial support and housing benefits for big, eugenically worthy families, the favouring of married men at appointments to posts in government institutions, and a progressive tax for bachelors. Stefan Kramsztyk's proposals went the furthest. He wanted restrictions on the law of inheritance for the childless and those "with few offspring".⁵² A demand to tax unmarried and childless men was also frequently found in the writings of other authors, while proposals to tax women were much less frequent.⁵³ A plan for land reform submitted to the Legislative Sejm was viewed favourably. "Giving the state the biggest possible number of smallholders is the surest way to provide the nation with considerable numbers of healthy human material."⁵⁴ *Zagadnienia Rasy* contributors also pushed for a bill on mandatory prenuptial certificates that would make it illegal for the mentally retarded, mentally ill, epileptics, those suffering from venereal diseases and tuberculosis, the deaf and the blind to marry.⁵⁵ Extending legal protection to pregnant women, mothers, and children was an important part of population policy.⁵⁶

This is not to say, however, that the entire medical community in Poland shared the eugenicists' diagnoses. Some physicians viewed the problem of mentally retarded children quite differently. This may be illustrated by the words of the outstanding doctor-epidemiologist Marcin Kacprzak (1888–1968), who argued that mentally retarded children "under normal circumstances become a burden, but with appropriate guidance may be trained to become individuals useful to society."⁵⁷ In the 1920s, the first major discord appeared between physicians propagating hygiene and those who ever more resolutely began to follow the path of eugenics.

The calls for legal protection of motherhood and obligatory prenuptial certificates met with understanding and a favourable response from women's milieux as early as the turn of the nineteenth century. Prenuptial certificates were supported by the well-known Catholic pedagogue, Cecylia Plater-Zyberkówna, as she believed that they would provide "a powerful restraint for young men in their many lawless acts".⁵⁸ Sympathy for prenuptial

⁵² Kramsztyk, "Drogi i widoki walki", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 10 (1921): 11.

⁵³ Cf. St. Anteck, "W sprawie opieki nad ciężarnymi i rodzącymi", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 10 (1921): 2.

⁵⁴ Kramsztyk, "Drogi i widoki walki", 4, p. 13.

⁵⁵ Cf. Zakrzewski, "Walka ze zwyrodnieniem", p. 2.

⁵⁶ Cf. R. Stankiewicz, "Opieka nad dziećmi nieślubnymi, sierotami i dziećmi opuszczonymi ze stanowiska higieniczno-lekarskiego", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 2 (1922): 1.

⁵⁷ M. Kacprzak, "Zagadnienia Higieny Współczesnej a nasza rzeczywistość", *Lekarz Polski*, 3 (1927): 3.

⁵⁸ C. Plater-Zyberkówna, *Na progu małżeństwa* (Warszawa, 1918), p. 85.

certificates was visible among progressively-minded women. An editor of *Kobieta Współczesna*, regarded as a feminist magazine, pointed to the example of the French prenuptial certificates as a model to follow.⁵⁹ Another one liked the idea of taxing childless married couples in order to aid neglected children. She described this form of taxation as “a necessity following logically from the needs of society and of the state, from the principle of justice and properly understood civic duties.”⁶⁰

A similar argument, proper to the strain of feminism called “maternal feminism” by Angus McLaren, appeared in parliamentary debates on social laws in 1924. Female MPs from the National Democratic caucus, along with socialists, protested against cutting welfare spending.⁶¹ Irena Puzynianka argued: “these are short-term savings and must take their toll in the near future [...]. For a dwarfed population, grown out of a generation that had been denied adequate help at the right time and for which conditions for normal development have not been ensured, must lower its productivity and, consequently, reduce the national product of these two great treasures – the nation and the state, and at the same time [such a generation] must provide individuals of no use to society in the form of excessively increased numbers of the sick, cripples, beggars, vagrants, and criminals sometimes, who will sooner or later burden the state budget, overcrowding the hospitals, shelters, and prisons.”⁶² Female MPs from the national caucus (Wanda Ładzina, Maria Holder Eggerowa) moved for the enactment of laws to regulate the legal situation of illegitimate children as well as mother and infant care.

In the debate on the social law on “the labour of juveniles and women”, female members of both caucuses: the national and the socialist, were tabling what were essentially very similar arguments.⁶³ One female MP pointed out that female workers needed state protection in order to be able to produce healthy children and bring them up to be healthy citizens and strong defenders of the motherland.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ M.Cz., “Troska o przyszłość pokolenia”, *Kobieta Współczesna*, 41 (1928): 4.

⁶⁰ J. Rostkowska, “Kto ma ponosić kosztą wychowania młodego pokolenia”, *Kobieta Współczesna*, 26 (1928): 4.

⁶¹ Characteristically, the differences in the worldviews of female MPs, the socialists and the national democrats, visible in the debate on marital law, did not play any major role in the debates on social legislation. Michał Śliwa described the close cooperation between female MPs in debates on welfare and the protection of motherhood in his article: “Kobiety w parlamencie Drugie Rzeczpospolitej”, in: *Kobieta i świat polityki* (Warszawa, 1996), pp. 53–69.

⁶² *Kobieta w sejmie, Działalność posłanek Narodowej Organizacji Kobiet, Zarys sprawozdania za lata 1919–1927*, (Warszawa, 1928), pp. 29–30.

⁶³ Sprawozdanie Stenograficzne Sejmu (hereinafter: SMS), Session 112, 12 March 1924, vol. 31. Quoted after: Śliwa, *Kobiety w parlamencie [...]*, p. 62.

⁶⁴ SMS, Session 112, 19 March 1924, vol. 26.

One should not look for any direct inspirations from the Polish Eugenics Society in the statements and arguments quoted above that smack of eugenics (e.g., that a citizen's value is seen through the prism of his health and usefulness in times of war and peace, in the fears of degeneration of the population, and the concerns about the excessive burdens on the budget to be caused by caring for the sick). It was rather that eugenic ideas were part and parcel of the spirit of the age, than them being the product of any single association or organization. Cases when female MPs explicitly referred to the activities of the Polish Eugenics Society were rare. Thus far, it has been possible to identify just one female MP, Eugenia Waśniewska (a member of the Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government [BBWR]), who criticized the Ministry of the Treasury and the Health Service Department for the lack of funding for the Society's activities.⁶⁵

Some eugenic demands met with approval among educators. The outstanding pedagogue Janusz Korczak (1878–1942) viewed selected eugenic recommendations favourably. He admitted that the restoration of the Polish state had been a landmark event for eugenic ideas: “For a long time, I could not understand that there must be sober foresight and care for the children that are born. In the bondage of one of the Poland's partitions, and hence as a subject, not a citizen, I indifferently ignored the fact that along with children, so too must come into the world schools, workshops, hospitals, and cultured living standards. Today I feel that imprudent pregnancy is an injurious and reckless misdeed. We may be on the eve of new laws dictated by eugenics and population policy.”⁶⁶

However, Korczak was not among the uncritical proponents of eugenics. He used the term itself at a time when it was not yet burdened with discrimination practices. What Korczak foremost wanted to achieve was an awakening of adults' sense of responsibility for their own children. He worked with abandoned children, ones wronged by the recklessness and the ill-will of their parents. In his “Senat szaleńców” (A senate of madmen) he wrote accusingly and angrily:

Without preparation, without qualifications, without awareness, without a proper document, one is not even allowed to work as a shoeshine boy. Even polish for a door handle must be tested to make sure that it is not poisonous, that it does not contain caustic, harmful ingredients. But anyone who wishes may be a father or a mother. To open a kiosk with soda water one needs a permit,

⁶⁵ E. Waśniewska, “Ministerstwo Skarbu, a zagadnienie przyszłości narodu”, *Kobieta Współczesna*, 39 (1928): 2.

⁶⁶ J. Korczak, *Pisma Wybrane*, eds. L. Barszczewska, A. Lewin, vols. 1–2 (Warszawa, 1983), vol. 1, p. 97.

consent from an organization, and here where a human being is created, nothing except for 'I felt like it' [...]. Things cannot stay this way: first knowledge and then the law must put an end to it.⁶⁷

Korczak's views on heredity were distant from the simplifications and platitudes used by eugenicists. He could observe the working of heredity in the course of his work with children. He realized that sometimes even the most intense educational efforts are doomed in the face of barriers set up by biology. He was decidedly in favour of birth control as a means of limiting and regulating fertility. He did not address the issue of artificial sterilization at all. He subscribed to the view on the innate, hereditary nature of criminal traits that may only be eradicated by eugenics.⁶⁸ In order for criminogenic elements to disappear, something Korczak believed could be achieved, it was necessary to legally deprive criminals of their ability to procreate. Yet this simple conclusion that suggests itself did not find reflection in Korczak's writings. It seems that this educator and pedagogue favoured only selected aspects of positive eugenics. He did not quote eugenic booklets, he did not support his own views with authorities in the field of race hygiene. For Korczak eugenics meant above all strengthening parental responsibility vis-à-vis the production of offspring.

In the 1920s, eugenics was synonymous with welfare and so numerous writers and social activists did not yet associate it with negative eugenics: sterilization and discrimination practices. The results of disastrous health policy were felt in particular in the former Russian partition; in the rural areas there were not enough midwives and doctors, infant mortality was high, and the Russian authorities had ignored the requests of Polish medical circles for an introduction of obligatory vaccinations. After decades of neglect, social activists were falling into a terminology trap: wishing to intensify the efforts of the Polish state to keep its citizens in good health, they invoked eugenics, which was a synonym for a modern, effective health policy in foreign periodicals after the First World War.

In the first half of the 1920s the proposed eugenics measures, including mandatory prenuptial certificates, did not yet draw criticism even from the disoriented Catholic Church. One of the first resolute opposition voices was that of an individual rather than a milieu – namely, the physician Julia Blay. Who was Blay? And why was it she who penned the fervent protest not only against prenuptial certificates, but against perceiving humanity through the prism of eugenics, and in the teeth, frankly speaking, against the expectations and views of representatives of medical circles?

⁶⁷ J. Korczak, *Wybór Pism*, ed. I. Newerly (Warszawa, 1958), vol. 4, pp. 483–484.

⁶⁸ Korczak, *Pisma Wybrane*, vol. 2, pp. 141–142.

In order to answer this question, we need to back up over a decade. Julia Blay (1886–1943), a doctor of medicine with a specialization in dermatology and venereology actively joined in public life as early as the first decade of the twentieth century. She straddled the border of two cultures: Polish and Jewish. Her medical career and her close ties to Polish culture might have resulted from the process of emancipation of young Jewish girls craving for an education and who, unable to find an educational offer in their own community, attended Polish schools and assimilated (to varying degrees) to Polish culture. In the case of Blay it was rather a borderland between the two cultures, straddling them, for her ties to the Jewish world were not severed.

In Polish emancipationist circles, there were many women of Jewish origin, mostly associated with the socialist movement. As an emancipationist, Blay joined the feminist Union for Equal Rights for Polish Women (ZRKP) and was appointed head of its human trafficking section.⁶⁹ In 1907, Polish feminists and suffragettes organized a Congress of Polish Women in Warsaw, which, apart from demands for full equality of civil and political rights between men and women, also debated on the “new ethics”. Doctors, like above-mentioned Walenty Miklaszewski, believed that hygiene should be the foundation upon which to base the new ethics in order to regulate the relations between the sexes. He also argued that female sexuality was procreation-oriented, as his research had shown that barely 10 percent of women drew pleasure from the sexual act. Accordingly, he believed that the health of the future generations should be the most important consideration for women in selecting a spouse. The person to protest against such a definition of new ethics was the very young speaker Zofia Rygier, who went down in the annals of Polish literature as Zofia Nałkowska, the author of the celebrated psychological novel *Granica* (1935) and the postwar short-story collection *Medallions* (1945), which revealed German atrocities in Nazi-occupied Poland. In the new ethics, Nałkowska argued, there is a tinge of the old falsehood.⁷⁰ The new ethics, based on absolute chastity and scientific recommendations, will be an old tyranny clad in the new costume of the era. For chastity was not the result of women’s moral superiority, but a product of adjustment

⁶⁹ Cf. “Związek Równouprawnienia Kobiet Polskich”, *Ster*, 8 (1912): 3–4.

⁷⁰ Z. Nałkowska, “Uwagi o etycznych zadaniach ruchu kobiecego. Przemówienie wygłoszone na Zjeździe Kobiet”, in: *Widzenie bliskie i dalekie* (Warszawa, 1957), pp. 235–240; a further discussion in: W. Miklaszewski, “Kobieta wyzwolona a miłość. Odpowiedź p. Z. Rygier Nałkowskiej na ‘Uwagi o etycznych zadaniach ruchu kobiecego’”, *ibid.*, pp. 241–245; M. Turzyna, “O miłości; jeszcze w sprawie referatu p. Rygier-Nałkowskiej”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 246–251; I. Moszczeńska, “W kwestii miłości”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 254–255; W. Miklaszewski, “Jeszcze w sprawie miłości. Odpowiedź p. Turzynie i I. Moszczeńskiej”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 256–161; Z. Nałkowska, “Konkluzja. Dawne sprawy”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 262–264.

to the “conditions of bondage”. Rejecting sentiment and superseding it with hygiene and the health of the future generations, the new ethics becomes: “a great stable for the rational breeding of human animals”. She concluded: “The new woman should play no part in such an ethical metamorphosis of life. Physical health must not be the aim of our universal human aspirations, but merely a means of achieving those aims.”⁷¹

Nałkowska’s stance was supported by a Galician feminist, the editor of the feminist *Nowe Słowo* (Latest Word) magazine, Maria Wiśniewska, pseudonym Turzyna. She argued that the ethical movement seeking to reduce life as a whole to motherhood is just as unnatural as the preceding moral law imposing the marital duty upon women. Both people who have children and those who do not do love each other, quite irrespective of that fact. Should, therefore, childless couples separate because their unions fail to bear fruit?⁷² Iza Moszczeńska, the most outstanding representative of the liberal political current, answered Miklaszewski directly, saying that everything he proposed: “boils down to the rational breeding of humans. It is the ethics of a stable or a barn.”⁷³

The dispute that flared up between feminists and progressive doctors (Miklaszewski, Wernic) demonstrates that the female participants of the debate showed remarkable perceptiveness. For what they saw in the germinating social-Darwinist medical argumentation was an objectification of women’s lives. Not all female activists were convinced by that dispute, but it made at least some of them sensitive to the physicians’ inclinations towards the “breeding” of humans. Thus, the dispute on eugenics’ new ethics divided the feminist community as early as the first decade of the twentieth century.

Some 18 years later, Julia Blay used precisely the same “anti-breeding” argument. In 1925, Blay was an experienced doctor of the Jewish community. She devotedly provided medical assistance to the poorest urban residents and she saw human tragedies closely and clearly enough to reject the eugenic antidote. She bravely entered into debate with eugenicists in her capacity as a practicing doctor. She questioned the rationale behind mandatory prenuptial certificates because of the inability to diagnose venereal diseases at some of their development stages. She pointed out that a negative Wassermann test result is no criterion or proof of physical health. She ridiculed the aspirations of the eugenicists seeking to control the population by means of a selection of prospective spouses and parents. She wrote:

⁷¹ Nałkowska, “Uwagi o etycznych zadaniach”, p. 240.

⁷² Turzyna, “O miłości [...]”, p. 251.

⁷³ I. Moszczeńska, “W kwestii miłości [...]”, p. 253.

A modern-day Molière could write several comedies on the subject: (1) On how unconscientious individuals observe the legal requirement of celibacy, all the way until they obtain a blessing for their married union in the name of gonococci and the Wassermann test; (2) On the unsuccessful attempts to replace sexual morality with chemical substances; (3) On cattle breeding and the breeding of humans according to Mendel's theory; (4) On a school for prospective husbands and wives, in which candidates for matrimony are weighed, measured, and x-rayed, where the health of their grandparents, parents, siblings, paternal and maternal uncles, aunts and cousins is considered and, following their examination by representatives of all medical specialties, they are immunized against all possible and impossible ailments in their married life; (5) On the forgeries of certificates ensuring health for an individual and longevity for a married couple and their offspring.⁷⁴

Blay believed that obligatory health certificates were and would remain harmful and pointless, even when science and medicine became capable of providing exhaustive answers to questions concerning heredity. For one must not deny the right to existence to the weak and the diseased. One must not make the value of a human individual conditional upon physical health. One must not condemn those weaker ones to humiliation and isolation. She predicted that an introduction of certificates would be merely a beginning and not the end of social experiments, because a one-off examination would not solve the problem of the infectious and hereditary nature of diseases. The spouses would have to subject themselves to systematic check-ups, which would make necessary a selection of the entire population in terms of venereal diseases, and subsequently in terms of a variety of ailments diagnosed by ophthalmologists, ear, nose, and throat specialists, psychiatrists, and other physicians:

The regulations governing sexual selection may be applicable to cattle husbandry or planting, from the point of view of the breeder's or planter's profits, when the point is to ensure a certain quantity of milk produced by a cow, a certain kind of fleece in a sheep, a fruit variety, the colour or shape of the eyes. But what kind of test might be fit for the breeding of humans? [...] One cannot ensure immortality or even health for the human body. And it is not only a healthy body that creates a healthy spirit, but also a strong spirit that upholds a weak body. One must not turn our imperfect medical knowledge into a new, universally binding religion, the forced followers of which are to make a sacrifice of the freedom of their conscience to their priests in the name of the expected health and the securing of one's own and one's progeny's future. You must not force anyone to be happy. A revival of humanity may take place not in the name of the liver, the spleen, or the

⁷⁴ J. Blay, "O bezcelowości przedślubnych świadectw zdrowia" (On the pointlessness of prenuptial health certificates), *Kurier Polski* (9 May 1925): 5.

kidneys – but in the name of ideals such as truth, charity, and respect for other people’s freedom [emphasis mine – M.G.].⁷⁵

As eugenics evolved institutionally, the names of well-known female activists dropped out one by one. Nałkowska and Moszczeńska never joined the eugenics movement, and Budzińska-Tylicka, who as a socialist propagated birth control while keeping away from *Zagadnienia Rasy*, moved into the background. Others stood by eugenics, attempting to influence its principles. The socialist and feminist economist Daszyńska-Golińska even criticized Galton, the architect of eugenics, for his individualism and his fascination with the phenomenon of genius, something that may be attributed to an individual only.⁷⁶ Modern eugenics should deal with the population as a whole. Population policy was supposed to make eugenic principles serve the state’s economic and military development. The eugenically “bred” man was meant to be a productive worker and a good soldier.

6. RATIONALIZATION AND HYGIENE: AT HOME AND AT WORK

The second half of the nineteenth century brought a rationalization and standardization of production, and on an unprecedented scale. Mass manufacture was connected with new labour methods, and in particular with the assembly line system, first used on a greater scale at Ford Motor Company. Scientific labour organization was one of the subjects that never disappeared from press columns.⁷⁷ It sparked animated debates among politicians, entrepreneurs, and academics. It generated no lesser interest in medical circles.

Articles on the participation of doctor-hygienists in scientific labour organizations were regularly published in the medical press – in *Zdrowie* and *Lekarz Polski*, as well as in *Zagadnienia Rasy*. The articles also dealt with the new form of mission in the medical profession. The new kind of activity pursued by the factory doctor raised high hopes among some physicians. Hygienists believed that a breakthrough in manufacturing offered an opportunity to “win for public health an importance and respect no philosopher in days of yore could have dreamed of.”⁷⁸ Thanks to support from the Rockefeller Foundation, a National School of Hygiene was opened in Warsaw on April 20, 1926 for the purpose of training the appropriate sanitary and hygienic

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Z. Daszyńska-Golińska, *Zagadnienia polityki populacyjnej* (Warszawa, 1927), p. 335.

⁷⁷ J. Żarnowski, *Polska 1918–1939, Praca – technika – społeczeństwo* (Warszawa, 1999), p. 98.

⁷⁸ B. Nowakowski, “Higiena pracy a zdrowie publiczne”, *Lekarz Polski*, 6 (1927): 8.

personnel.⁷⁹ It cooperated with the National Institute of Hygiene that was established soon after Poland had regained independence. It had 6 departments: sanitary engineering, biochemistry, labour hygiene, epidemiological and statistical, social hygiene, and sanitary administration departments – along with a propaganda department with a hygiene museum.

Prioritizing health with a view to promoting the country's economic growth was connected with broadening the scope of competencies of the doctor himself: "for man is the most important tool, after all; and who should have scientific data on the human machine, if not a physiologist?"⁸⁰ asked one of the contributors to a medical journal. Thus hygienists became champions of scientific labour organization in industrial plants:

Each hygienist-social activist is basically an apostle of a rational, scientific organization of labour. He is an advocate of replacing human work with machine work, of introducing improved machines and excellent tools, of eliminating the thousands of superfluous movements, of abandoning ancient and irrational manufacturing methods, of employing the best possible labour methods everywhere and of a thorough reorganization of factory administration.⁸¹

While labour method rationalization and improving the workers' productivity were among the hygienists' indisputable goals, Taylorism and the assembly line work system in the Ford factories that came to be identified with it provoked rather negative reactions among hygienists. Taylorism was accused of completely objectifying workers, whose labour, devoid of thinking and in fact of contact with the manufactured product, leads to fatigue and discouragement. Janiszewski's position was extreme, as usual. He rejected Taylorism as a manufacturing and production method, but from the point of view of an enraged eugenicist: "Ford employs even the blind and cripples in his industrial plants; and such less worthy individuals earn the same wages there as perfectly competent workers."⁸²

Other physician-hygienists were of the opinion that labour becomes effective when the worker draws pleasure from it, when he likes his jobs and the activities it involves. That is why they appreciated the developing branches of work psychology and industrial hygiene. Initially, as Marcin Kacprzak observed, the demands of hygiene had been limited to three matters: the access of light, access of air, and cleanliness. Later, at the second stage, there came interest in man himself: "Thus far, the human machine

⁷⁹ Cf. M. Kacprzak, "Państwowa Szkoła Higieny", *Lekarz Polski*, 6 (1927): 14.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ J. Zieliński, "Higiena a wydajność pracy", *Lekarz Polski*, 1 (1927): 9.

⁸² T. Janiszewski, "Wojna obronna ze stanowiska eugeniki", *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 4 (1932): 204.

has been the least known, and, frankly speaking, has been treated in the most brutal way. Now major changes are taking place and what is taken into consideration are not only working conditions, but also the labourer's accommodation, diet, and leisure. Special research is being done on his tiredness and the dependence of that tiredness on all possible external and internal factors. It is claimed that the work rhythm should be adjusted to the worker's physiological rhythm, that tiredness is detrimental not only to the human body, but also to productivity.”⁸³

Characteristically, the positive examples of introducing the principles of hygiene to industrial plants were taken from the United States and the Scandinavian countries. At factories and enterprises, the doctor-hygienist was to be made responsible for assigning specific tasks to individuals in the production process, watching over the safety features on machines at industrial plants, and carrying out regular hygienic check-ups of the entire personnel and the production facilities. A technicised and modernized society was to create a new social role for physicians: that of the guardian of an efficiently working production mechanism.

One should point out here that the consequences of the “hygienisation” of labour were different from what had been theoretically presumed. As mentioned above, what doctors viewed as their main achievement was a shift of interest from manufacturing machines to man and his needs. They even believed modern hygiene to be a major civilization achievement on the road to mitigating ruthless economic principles. However, the language that work hygienists used revealed something quite the contrary: a deeply objectified image of the working man. Bruno A. Nowakowski, head of the Work Hygiene Institute at the National School of Hygiene, referred to workers as: “human material”, “human factor”, “the most precious production material”, “workforce”, “production force”.⁸⁴ To Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska and Tomasz Janiszewski, they represented a “taxpaying force” and “military material”. The hygienist Kazimierz Karaffa-Korbitt, the author of numerous works on work hygiene, used similar terms.⁸⁵ Even Marcin Kacprzak, otherwise

⁸³ M. Kacprzak, “Zagadnienia higieny współczesnej a nasza rzeczywistość”, *Lekarz Polski*, 3 (1927): 4.

⁸⁴ “Public hygiene provides a better human material, work hygiene teaches us how to make the best use of this material; consequently, it is concerned with the improvement of the production process itself [...] The tasks of such a doctor-factory hygienist [...] include: the selection of human material for the purposes of the given facility and maintaining the employees' capacity for work at the highest possible level [...]”, Nowakowski, “Higiena pracy”, p. 7.

⁸⁵ K. Karaffa-Korbitt, *Praca i odpoczynek* (Kraków, 1929), p. 19. See his other works: *Przemysł a zdrowie* (Kraków, 1929); *Ogólna higiena pracy* (Kraków, 1933).

an opponent of extreme functionalism and someone who stressed the need for work psychology, used the expression “the human machine”.

In addition to using state-of-the-art apparatuses: dynamometers, *aesthesiometers*, ergometers, and *ergographs*⁸⁶ to test the workers’ muscle strength and carry out stress tests, hygienists recommended psychological consultations concerning vocational choices. These methods of testing the mental and intellectual abilities were known as “psychotechnique” at that time. The need for testing was precisely what the eugenic community was adamant about. One of the contributors to *Zagadnienia Rasy* even argued that in the light of statistics, most fatal factory accidents were caused not by faulty machines but “by the mental and physical faults of the workers themselves. The ideal to which we will aspire in organizing labour will consist in the effort to make the worker produce the best possible product most efficiently while at the same time conserving his strength [...] However, we can only achieve this ideal if we have select, qualified workers. And a qualified worker must like his job and must perform it without fatigue. One needs to organize a rational selection of workers.”⁸⁷

Actually, eugenic measures went beyond the “conscious selection of workers”. Vocational counselling provided at eugenic clinics and numerous brochures from the series *O wyborze zawodu i wychowaniu* (On the choice of vocation and upbringing) published by the Eugenic Library concerned all social strata. The writers revealed before the young readers the secrets of the teaching profession, the vocation of an officer, journalist, clerical worker, pharmacist, engineer, doctor, and farmer. They recommended “psychotechnique” and IQ tests in the belief that they were contributing to a rationalization of human behaviour.

Hygienists frequently put forward demands for interfering in workers’ private lives, which was supposed to ensure their one-hundred-per-cent productivity at work. What the doctors meant was the furnishing of the workers’ flats, their diet, and leisure occupations. This paternalistic attitude towards the lower social strata, and towards workers in particular, was a distinguishing feature of the intelligentsia’s mission.

The construction of the Warsaw Housing Cooperative (Warszawska Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa, abbr. WSM) estate in the Zoliborz district and of the TOR housing estate was a manifestation of that kind of thinking. It was then that a plan for the development of worker housing, unprecedented in

⁸⁶ Dynamometer: a device for testing physical strength, *aesthesiometer*: for measuring the tactile sensitivity of the skin, ergometer: for measuring muscle springiness, *ergograph*: for measuring finger movements.

⁸⁷ J. Kempner, “Rola badań fizjologicznych w wyborze zawodu”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 2 (1925): 43.

Polish history, was created. Elżbieta Mazur notes, “the creators of the Warsaw Housing Cooperative had had their roots both in the tradition of the Warsaw Charitable Society and in that of the Warsaw Hygienic Society.”⁸⁸ A debate on the activities of the Warsaw Housing Cooperative began as early as the interwar years. The investments were assessed favourably, even though some critical opinions were also voiced. Among the criticisms against the WSM’s creators was that the newly built flats were too expensive and too small.⁸⁹ In bedsitters (but ones complete with a bathroom and running water, these being features absent from the workers’ accommodation in old tenement houses) 4 persons resided, which prewar commentators found outrageous. One should emphasize here that the “necessarily more primitive” flats for workers had an area of up to 42 square meters (i.e., just over 450 square feet). They were criticized at a time when 80- and 100-square-meter flats were described as “small”. Indisputably, the Warsaw Housing Cooperative was one of the best achievements of Polish architecture in the 1920s and 30s. The work of the Warsaw cooperative may be compared to a larger-scale Austrian council housing project from the Red Vienna period, epitomized by the large Karl Marx-Hof municipal tenement complex.⁹⁰ The creators of the housing colonies in Warsaw’s Żoliborz district indeed admitted to being inspired by Austrian, French, and Belgian residential developments. In addition to the architectural conception, the authors of the Żoliborz-Rakowiec experiment had a vision of an educational system, which was meant to inspire among the workers’ (WSM tenants) new attitudes toward life and new cultural needs. The housing estates boasted thriving organizations, such as The Tenants’ Mutual Assistance Society, Glass Houses, and The Workers’ Society of Friends of Children.

The members of the intelligentsia were just as interested in the way in which the workers spent their leisure time as in their working conditions. The press published under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Welfare followed the models of culture animation among workers functioning in other European countries. The expansion of educational societies, workers’ universities, reading rooms, libraries, training courses, sports societies, and other similar bodies was closely followed.⁹¹ At international conferences in the 1920s and 30s, the matter of the workers’ leisure activities appeared on the agenda next to the scientific organization of labour.⁹²

⁸⁸ E. Mazur, *Warszawska Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa 1921–1939. Materialne warunki bytu robotników i inteligencji* (Warszawa, 1993), p. 5.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 88–90.

⁹⁰ For more details on borrowings from the Viennese residential development conceptions see Mazur, *Warszawska Spółdzielnia*, p. 37.

⁹¹ Cf. *Praca i Opieka Społeczna*, 2 (1925): 396–403.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.395.

But occasionally this paternalism assumed a less pleasant form, as when members of the intelligentsia would yield to the strong temptation to change the workers' lifestyle. Incidentally, the evident desire to interfere with the workers' private lives: their habits and tastes, failed to bring the expected results. Some of the Warsaw Housing Cooperative flats were given to tenants along with basic kitchen and living-room equipment. When workers nonetheless brought their own furniture to the flats (mostly massive, highly-polished wardrobes and *étagères* and chairs upholstered with plush, a material much-hated by the intelligentsia⁹³), thereby ruining the sophisticated conception of rational minimalism, members of the intelligentsia responded with barely concealed irritation.⁹⁴ Feliks Gross' remarks are an example of the impatience typical of the intelligentsia: "Those better-off, in the case of whom this problem (i.e., of cultural furnishing of the flat – M.G.) could be taken into consideration, tend, rather, to have a liking for hideous factory-made plush bedspreads, for furniture and fittings that come close to the poor petty-bourgeois tastes [...] A railway-worker's flat [...] It is clean and tidy everywhere. The bedroom with the stereotypical petty-bourgeois "psycha": a tripartite mirror with cabinets, takes the pride of the place. The furniture designed for night rest occupies most of the flat. Mediocre and petty-bourgeois, in bad style and in bad taste [...] Red bedspreads on the beds: made of a high-quality fabric perhaps, [but] ugly, stereotypical. Poor chromolithographs on the wall. This is a typical flat; with more affluent workers, with higher earnings, we will find thousands of the likes of it."⁹⁵ We may note many more such statements concerning workers' flats in the interwar years.

The desire to rationalize the working men's flats was due to the fascination with the subject among the intelligentsia itself. Women's magazines, such as *Bluszcz* (Ivy), *Praktyczna Pani* (Practical Lady), *Kobieta w Świecie i w Domu* (The Woman in the World and at Home) were overwhelmed with the idea of rationalizing all elements of the household: furniture, housework, and

⁹³ Ibid., p. 124.

⁹⁴ "Workers, even those who have a flat rationally designed and built by architects (e.g., in the Warsaw Housing Cooperative), are able to classically spoil it by overcrowding it with a multitude of pretentious, unaesthetic objects, adorned with a variety of pillars and ornaments that do not in the least harmonize with smooth walls, doors, wide windows and in general with the character of a modern flat", A. Kowalska, "Urządzenie wnętrza mieszkań a powstawanie ruder", *Dom, Osiedle, Mieszkanie*, 9–12 (1934): 26–27, after: A. Janiak-Jasińska, "Unowocześnianie gospodarstwa domowego i wyposażania mieszkań", in: *Równe prawa i nierówne szanse. Kobiety w Polsce międzywojennej*, eds. A. Żarnowska, A. Szwarc (Warszawa, 2000), p. 196.

⁹⁵ F. Gross, *Proletariat i Kultura* (Warszawa, 1938), after Żarnowski, *Polska 1918–1939*, p. 268. Cf. also his statements for *Życie WSM* from the 1930s.

leisure. The interiors were supposed to be bright and spacious, the furniture simple and functional. Advice was given to remove all unnecessary ornaments from flats, to get rid of plush-covered sofas, upholstered chairs, and bulky sideboards and to replace them, for example, with the products of the Artists' Cooperative Ład or with Bauhaus-style furniture. Built-in wardrobes, simple shelving, tables and chairs made of light-coloured wood and divan beds covered with light bedspreads were promoted. According to these designs, the kitchen was supposed to give an impression of a sterile laboratory and a real workshop. That is why it was recommended to paint the walls white or, in the case of more affluent housewives, to cover them with white tiling. The floor was to be lined with white linoleum, and kitchen furniture was to be covered with light-coloured, easy-to-clean oilcloth. A system of built-in cupboards, worktops, fitted cookers, and sinks was intended to simplify the housewife's work as much as possible. "The whole point of modern-day furnishings is hygiene and comfort", wrote one of the propagators of modern interiors.⁹⁶

It was the urban intelligentsia that was the quickest to pick up the rationalization trend: "the whole contents of those [women's] magazines", Żarnowski writes, "was a propaganda of modernity and rationalization in the household. Efforts were made to describe and define both overall household management and particular housework chores in terms of the scientific organization of labour. This aim was served for example by model household budget files and schedules, etc. Furthermore, the 'scientific' methods of washing, cleaning, and meal preparation were described. Ample use was made of foreign press materials, e.g., in the case of *Pani Domu* of materials taken from *Good Housekeeping*, *Ideal Home*, *Land und Frau*, *Mon Chez Moi*, *Mitteilungen der österreichischen Gesellschaft für Technik im Haushalt*."⁹⁷

Accordingly, it turned out that scientific labour-organization principles could be successfully applied outside industry as well. It was recognized that the household is a kind of a small enterprise, in which the principles of saving time, raw materials, and money are applicable, as is the case in industrial plants. Housewives were encouraged to economize wherever possible, to keep an accounts book, and to save systematically at the Universal Savings Fund (*Powszechna Kasa Oszczędności*) or at insurance institutions, and to eliminate all forms of waste. The numerous articles and guidebooks devoted to the scientific organization of housework advised the reader, in the first place,

⁹⁶ M. Morozowicz-Szczepkowska, "Wnętrze polskiego domu dawniej, a dziś", (Warszawa, 1931), p. 95, after Żarnowski, *Polska 1918–1939*, p. 264; cf. J. Ginett-Wojnarowiczowa, "Umiejętne użytkowanie przestrzeni w mieszkaniu", *Organizacja Gospodarstwa Domowego*, 8–9 (1931): 115–117.

⁹⁷ Żarnowski, *Polska 1918–1939* [...], p. 269.

to prudently divide household chores among the persons who had hitherto discharged them haphazardly.⁹⁸ Housewives were encouraged to implement Taylor's assembly line system at home and to assign executive and auxiliary functions to their helpers. Each "actor" should perform some fragment of household work that will allow him or her to soon become proficient at it. In the late 1920s and the early 30s, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, irons, electric cookers, immersion heaters for making tea and coffee, and, less frequently, refrigerators first appeared in the more affluent bourgeois and intelligentsia homes. When the less-well-off readers complained about the prohibitive prices of modern-technology household appliances, magazine editors advised, quite controversially, "collective purchases". The tenants of one tenement house were supposed to make collective purchases, and later share the purchased appliances.⁹⁹

Viewing the household as a "service and production enterprise" was reflected in the resolutions passed by international and national congresses devoted to the scientific organization of labour. In 1927, at the International Congress on the Scientific Organization of Labour in Rome, the proposal to recognize the housewife's work as a profession, and housewives' organizations as occupational organizations, as put forward by the German speaker, enjoyed considerable support.¹⁰⁰ Similar demands were tabled in Poland in 1930 at the Founding Congress of the Housewives' Union. Demands were made at that venue to recognize housework as a career.

The technologization and rationalization of daily life brought positive effects not only in terms of improving the aesthetics of the interior, but most importantly in terms of improving the health of the household members. Dark and dank basement flats, of which Warsaw had a record number before the First World War, were the most frequent causes of the spread of tuberculosis.¹⁰¹ Modern architecture promoted a complete abandonment of dark, narrow inner courtyards, basement flats, attics, etc. Polish intellectuals welcomed the designs of Walter Gropius, Jacobus Johannes, and Le Corbusier with great enthusiasm. The well-known journalist and voluntary motherhood prolator, Irena Krzywicka, recalled:

⁹⁸ Books by Lillian Gilbreth and Christine Frederick, in which the authors drew on the experiences of industrial organization, were popular in Poland. Cf. W. Rybczyński, *Dom, Krótka historia idei* (Gdańsk–Warszawa, 1996), pp. 147–174.

⁹⁹ Cf. Janiak-Jasińska, "Unowocześnianie gospodarstwa", p. 203.

¹⁰⁰ Z. Chyra-Rolicz, "Kobiety a unowocześnianie i uspołecznianie gospodarstw domowych w Polsce międzywojennej", in: *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego. Wiek XIX i XX. Zbiór studiów*, vol. 5, eds. A. Żarnowska, A. Szwarc (Warszawa, 1997), p. 253, after: Janiak-Jasińska, "Unowocześnianie gospodarstwa" [...], p. 196.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *Pamiętniki lekarzy*, selection and introduction by J. Borkowski, with a foreword by M. Wańkowicz (Kraków, 1987).

To all of us, Le Corbusier was a true prophet and a revelation. The disenchantment with what the otherwise brilliant ideas of the great architect and city planner turned out to be in practice, resembles, to a certain degree, the disenchantment with communism, which used to look so attractive on paper. Le Corbusier's greatness seemed dizzying to us (and rightly so). The brilliantly designed houses, without dark inner courtyards (like the one in the tenement house I used to live in, for example), without basement flats, where Johnny [from Maria Konopnicka's well-known poem] did not live to see better days, without attics, murderous both in winter and in summer. Wall-wide windows, flat roofs that might serve as terraces. Everything was a novelty, everything was like an illumination – and even more: it was a glimpse at the brave new world where a proletarian and a worker and a member of the intelligentsia would enjoy the same right to sunshine, air, and greenery. In these new flats, so very different from the old ones, new, more mature, more conscious and happier people were meant to grow up.¹⁰²

Physicians were involved in the modernization of the architecture of cities, towns, and villages. It is enough to mention the booklets written by Tomasz Janiszewski and Józef Polak¹⁰³ at the end of the war containing precise guidelines according to which modern city districts were to be constructed. Several years later, Janiszewski observed that as social security developed, the share of the state in the development of housing would gradually increase.¹⁰⁴ Janiszewski saw a historical pattern in that. A state that takes upon itself the burdens connected with health care for the citizens must create an environment in which the incidence of diseases and temporary or permanent physical infirmities will decline markedly. And a state like that, he added, has the right to interfere with individual reproductive decisions.

7. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL TESTING IN THE ARMY

Interest in military affairs was growing in eugenic circles in the 1920s. At the beginning of the decade, the names of individuals connected with the army began to appear in the journal *Zagadnienia Rasy*, both those of military men and of contributors to the military press. This interest was prompted by historical circumstances – namely, the outbreak of the First World War, followed by the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1920. Doctors conscripted in the

¹⁰² I. Krzywicka, *Wyznania gorszytelki* (Warszawa, 1992), p. 101.

¹⁰³ On that subject cf. Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. T. Janiszewski, "Uwagi z powodu zjazdu delegatów Związku Lekarzy P.P. w Krakowie", *Lekarz Polski*, 2 (1928): 26.

army had an opportunity to follow the hostilities from close up, both in technological and psychological terms.

As stated earlier,¹⁰⁵ in the West the raising of million-strong armies made it possible for physicians and psychologists to carry out comprehensive tests, including IQ tests. In Poland, it was not possible to carry out testing on such a broad scale because of the lack of funding and the necessary scientific support, etc. However, similar projects, though on a smaller scale, were initiated on an individual basis by physician-social activists.

One of the pioneers of the medical testing of larger groups of people was W. Miklaszewski. Even before the First World War he published pamphlets which won recognition in the circle of reformers connected with Leon Wernic – among them: *Życie płciowe naszego ludu miejskiego* (The sex life of the common people of our cities; Warszawa 1908), *Małżeństwo kobiet uprzywilejowanych a ich choroby nerwowe* (The marriages of privileged women and their nervous disorders; Warszawa 1909), and *Rozwój cielesny proletariatu Warszawy w świetle pomiarów antropometrycznych* (The physical development of Warsaw's proletariat in the light of anthropometric measurements; Warszawa 1912). Paradoxically, Miklaszewski's research revealed the thesis concerning the degeneration of the Polish population during the partition era to be unfounded: "while the physical condition of the population of the Russian partition leaves much to be desired, it is not desperate".¹⁰⁶ He pointed out that while the incidence of tuberculosis was higher among the Polish population, the general health of the Jewish population was definitely poorer. He believed this was connected not with racial issues, but with the environment: poor diet and living conditions. Miklaszewski took part in lecture campaigns organized by Wernic's circle, but his skepticism regarding the degeneration phenomenon failed to convince the eugenicists or even provoke any major reaction. He published barely one article in *Zagadnienia Rasy*.

During the First World War, Miklaszewski held the post of head doctor of the officers' ward at the Ujazdowski Hospital in Warsaw. This provided him with an opportunity to carry out a number of tests on the hospital's patients, Russian army servicemen. "The point in these tests was not to officially diagnose a disease", he confessed, "but to get to know the patients' personalities from the point of view of their development to date and the problem of race".¹⁰⁷ Miklaszewski's survey included questions concerning

¹⁰⁵ Cf. the sub-chapter *Nation and race* in the present chapter.

¹⁰⁶ W. Miklaszewski, *Zdrowotność Warszawy w świetle danych Kasy Chorych* (Warszawa, 1932), p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ W. Miklaszewski, "Oficer armii rosyjskiej ze stanowiska rasy", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 2 (1918): 21.

mental health, sex life, and the use of addictive substances: nicotine and alcohol. His research results were published by *Zagadnienia Rasy* under the title “Oficer armii rosyjskiej ze stanowiska rasy” (The Russian army officer from a race perspective). In all of his subjects he noted a strong neurosis, exhaustion, and anxiety and in 11.2 percent of the subjects post-venereal disease symptoms. Miklaszewski concluded that neurotic symptoms in servicemen were a natural phenomenon in wartime, and that the general health of his subjects was satisfactory.

The professionalization of research conducted in the army began in the newly independent Polish state. Psychological as well as anthropological research was carried out. It should be viewed in two basic dimensions. Firstly, soldiers would be used as a group of subjects, with the results applied subsequently to assess the condition of the population in general. In this case, servicemen were merely a convenient source of information about the general health of the population as a whole. Secondly, there were studies serving solely military objectives and the art of war. A recognition of psychological mechanisms underlying soldiers’ behaviour as well as racial determinants was meant to facilitate selection for the military and streamline army operations. In 1920, the psychologist Waclaw Radecki was delegated by the Supreme Command to carry out psychological observations of soldiers.¹⁰⁸ In 1922, *Lekarz Wojskowy* published a report on intelligence testing in the military.¹⁰⁹

The origin of intelligence tests is connected with the public’s fear of degeneration. In 1904, Alfred Binet, director of the Laboratory of Physiological Psychology at the Sorbonne, was asked by the French Committee for Public Education to join a committee set up to address the problem of mentally retarded children.¹¹⁰ The point was to distinguish between mental retardation and laziness and to examine the incidence of mental retardation in children. Binet constructed a set of questions to be applied to examine a child’s ability, i.e., to measure “mental age”. That set, known as the Binet-Simon scale (Simon cooperated in developing it) was improved in 1908 and 1911. Despite the criticisms it attracted, it spawned major interest in testing among psychologists. From that time on, tests for examining special and occupational abilities, temperament, and character were developed. Spearman, as well as Galton’s closest associate, Karl Pearson, developed statistical methods for correlating various test results. They wondered, for example, whether there was a connection between developmental retardation

¹⁰⁸ Cf. W. Radecki, “Psychologia a wojsko”, *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 13 (1920): 6.

¹⁰⁹ J. Urbanowicz, “Badania inteligencji w wojsku”, *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 6 (1922): 441.

¹¹⁰ Cf. G.S. Brett, *Historia psychologii*, transl. into Polish by J. Makota (Warszawa 1969), pp. 445 and 661.

and emotional instability.¹¹¹ The Binet-Simon test became known across the Atlantic in 1908, where it was subsequently modified by Lewis Terman of Stanford University. The IQ (intelligence quotient) tests were applied to thousands of US servicemen during the First World War.¹¹²

Polish tests were modelled on those used by American psychologists. Several-page booklets with tests divided into two parts were distributed to groups of between 50 and 100 soldiers. In the first part, the subject was expected to order words, geometric figures, and numbers according to a given criterion and to complete sentences. In the second part, one had to answer questions.

Anthropological research was carried out at the same time. In 1921, as a result of major Stanisław Jaster's plan, a Soldier Individualization Section was organized, later to be transformed into a Soldier Individualization Office attached to a Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Soldier Individualization Section included an anthropological office, whose principal task was to examine racial diversity in Polish territories and to "draw practical and military consequences from that fact".¹¹³ To that end, wide-scale research expeditions were planned, comprising outstanding scientists: physicians, anthropologists, and naturalists, to carry out detailed physical examinations of soldiers throughout Poland. This research project was a major organizational and financial effort. At the Congress of Physiographers in 1924, the following statement was made: "This project is one of the greatest of this kind ever undertaken by military and academic authorities".¹¹⁴ Polish research provided an inspiration for the other anthropological centres in Central and Eastern Europe. At a Congress of Slavic Geographers and Ethnographers in Prague in 1924 a resolution was adopted for representatives of individual nations to request their governments to carry out anthropology photography projects in their respective countries modelled on the Polish project. This reflects a fascination with thinking in racial terms. High hopes were pinned on the examination of race structure. Mydlarski did not conceal the fact that conscription demands were a secondary research objective.

Mydlarski divided the project into four basic stages. During the first stage, at the beginning of September 1921, the first anthropological column set out. It consisted of a commander, and at the same time scientific director, Jan Mydlarski (in the rank of a captain), Henryk Nusbaum (liaison officer),

¹¹¹ Cf. C. Spearman, "The Measurement of Intelligence", *Eugenics Review* (April 1914–January 1915): 291.

¹¹² For more on the subject, cf. Chapter 1: "The obsession of degeneration: the city and statistics".

¹¹³ J. Mydlarski, "Sprawozdanie z wojskowego zdjęcia antropologicznego", *Kosmos*, 2–3 (1925): 530.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

and research personnel, made up for the most part of medical students and naturalists. With the approval of Ludwik Hirszfeld, director of the Serum Research Institute in Warsaw, one person was delegated to examine blood agglutination types. The research column was equipped with the following instruments: anthropometers, spreading calipers (big and small), a slide caliper, steel measuring tapes, pigmentation tables, a spirometer, scales, and a set of instruments for serologic testing. The column was accommodated in an ambulance train. All examinations were carried out in several ambulance carriages. During the second stage, in December 1922, a second measurement column set out; at the third stage (July-September 1922) four measurement columns were on the way, and three at the fourth stage (July-September 1923).

Soldiers from garrisons across the country were subject to examination under the project. Overall, 80,310 servicemen were subject to testing.¹¹⁵ In each case, 45 measurements and 17 descriptive observations were made, a blood sample taken, and identification data noted. The form for recording the observations comprised 45 measurement points, including eye colour, hair colour, skin colour, descriptive features such as body hair, eye slit, semilunar fold, epicanthal fold, teeth, forehead, cheekbones, mouth, lips, and ear and nose shapes. Body proportions and the circumferences of the head, the neck, the chest, the waist, the abdomen, the forearm, the thigh, and the foot (both across the heel and across the instep), as well as many other features were examined in detail.¹¹⁶ The main index, i.e., the facial and nasal index, was used to determine the subject's racial background.

Based on the study results, Mydlarski concluded that there were dominant anthropological types in specific territories. While the Northern European type prevailed in the Poznań and Pomeranian provinces, in the south-eastern provinces the Dinaric type dominated, with the Alpine and sub-Nordic types prevailing here and there. He thought that the diversity of individuals in physical, serologic, and developmental terms proved the existence of elements demonstrating a certain consistency, both morphological and physiological. He wrote: "It is undoubtedly an extremely complex issue, for we are dealing here with a coincidence of biological and social phenomena. However, it

¹¹⁵ Soldiers from the following garrisons were examined under the project: Białystok, Łomża, Osowiec, Ostrołęka, Ostrów, Skierniewice, Warsaw, Łódź, Piotrków, Częstochowa, Kraków, Nowy Sącz, Sanok, Sambor (Sambir), Stanisławów (Stanislaviv), Lvov, Przemyśl, Jarosław, Lublin, Grudziądz, Bydgoszcz, Toruń, Vilnius, Brześć Litewski (Brest-Litovsk), Puck, Gdynia, Będzin, Tarnów, Rzeszów, Leszno, Poznań, Gniezno, Grodno, Dęblin, Zamość, Włodzimierz Wołyński (Volodymyr-Volynsky), Chełm, Kowel (Kovel), Łuck (Lutsk), Równe (Rivne), Pińsk (Pinsk), Kobryń (Kobryn), Siedlce, Mińsk Mazowiecki, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 531–537.

¹¹⁶ Cf. a full list from the examination form, *ibid.*, p. 532.

seems important from a practical perspective, too, to raise and analyse this issue. For a diversity of racial elements in the population, if it does occur, is undoubtedly one of the driving forces behind social phenomena".¹¹⁷

Mydlarski's conclusions were very cautious. He returned to the anthropological photographs on several occasions in his later articles.¹¹⁸ Research into differences occurring within individual races aroused the interest of eugenicists. First they invited Mydlarski to contribute to their journal, and later offered him a membership of the Eugenics Society, the board of which he joined in 1928.

Eugenic ideas also found their way into the military press. In 1926, *Lekarz Wojskowy* published an article by Kazimierz Karaffa-Korbutt.¹¹⁹ on eugenics from the perspective of military service and the army.¹²⁰ Based on German-language literature, the author of the article defined eugenics as measures designed to promote "the most beneficial development of races; with measures being aimed both at individuals and communities, up to and including the state".¹²¹ Elsewhere, he associated eugenics with genetic manipulation: "[eugenics] is the study of all direct and indirect genetic factors modifying an individual's hereditary traits both for the better and for the worse; the object of eugenics is both to reduce and eliminate the negative and to intensify and select the positive genetic factors".¹²² He used a number of other terms, such as race hygiene, reproductive hygiene and eugenetics as synonyms of eugenics. He also suggested the following systematization of racial hygiene:

Quantitative Race Hygiene:

1. Reproduction,
2. Mortality,
3. Population growth.

Qualitative Race Hygiene:

1. Parental selection:
 - non-selective elimination (elimination of elements of high and of little value from a race)
 - selective elimination (elimination of worthless elements)
 - counter-selective elimination (elimination of high-value elements)
 - counter-selective breeding (selection of elements of little value).

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 575.

¹¹⁸ Cf. J. Mydlarski, "Przyczynek do poznania struktury antropologicznej Polski i zagadnień doboru wojskowego", *Kosmos*, 53 (1928): 195.

¹¹⁹ K. Karaffa-Korbutt, b. 1878, a hygienist, specialist in labour hygiene.

¹²⁰ K. Karaffa-Korbutt, "Eugenika, służba wojskowa a wojna", *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 2 (1926): 105.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 106.

¹²² Ibid., p. 107.

2. Reproductive hygiene:

- birth (heredity – i.e., the preservation of valuable parental traits, variability – the problems of degeneration),
- pregnancy (the influence of the mother and of external circumstances on the foetus).

In the second part of his article, the author considers the impact of wars on past and contemporary societies. He believed that “historical” wars had played a positive role from the point of view of natural selection in the evolution of European societies. The character of the most recent war, however, was completely different from the preceding ones. European states had made a huge effort to raise million-strong armies. In the mass-scale war, a counter-selective elimination of the most valuable part of society had taken place. As a result, counter-selective breeding had intensified in postwar societies, because most of the survivors had been individuals of no eugenic value. Moreover, genetic changes caused by the war had occurred. Wartime malnutrition and hunger must have adversely affected the human body. After the war, a reduced body height and mass had been noted in all children born during and immediately after the war. Infectious diseases like tuberculosis and venereal diseases had had a similar impact. The war resulted in generally weakened immunity to diseases, increased mortality, a reduced natural growth, and in the phenomenon of mestization, or race mixing.

Thus, Karaffa-Korbutt repeated things that eugenicists were perfectly familiar with. Basically, his article failed to contribute any new theses or trains of thought. However, it surprised the reader with its solid knowledge of the German eugenic literature and numerous examples quoting German realities in support of the assumptions he made. Karaffa-Korbutt cited eugenicists such as A. Plöetz, W. Schallmayer, E. Rüdin, E. Fischer, and F. Lenz.

Military matters were present in *Zagadnienia Rasy* thanks to the journal’s contributors who were concerned with them. Karaffa-Korbutt was a lieutenant-colonel, as was Gustaw Szulc, Jerzy Babecki was a major, and later a colonel, Henryk Szczodrowski was among the editors of *Lekarz Wojskowy* (Army Doctor), and Henryk Nusbaum and Kazimierz Stołyhwo carried out anthropological research in the army. It was this group of physicians, anthropologists, and naturalists that created an interest in military matters among eugenicists and, vice versa, introduced the subject of eugenics to *Lekarz Wojskowy* in the 1930s. Participation by eugenicists in an International Military Hygiene and Pharmacy Exhibition in Warsaw in 1927, where they were awarded a gold medal for their overall achievement, was symbolic of the fact that eugenics had found its way into military circles.

8. THE EUGENICISTS' ACTIVITIES IN POLAND BETWEEN 1918 AND 1927

The Polish Eugenics Society worked together with several other social and humanitarian associations.¹²³ Relations between Wernic's circle and women's organizations dated back to the early twentieth century, when together they put forward demands for the abolition of the prostitutes' licensing system and for closing down bawdy houses. Their cooperation grew even closer during the First World War, when Wernic (then the head of the Section for Combating Prostitution and Venereal Diseases at the Bolesław Prus Society for Practical Hygiene) set up a Vice Department of the Civil Guard in Warsaw in 1915.¹²⁴

Representatives of women's organizations (namely, The Christian Society for the Protection of Catholic and Protestant Women and The Jewish Society for the Protection of Women) participated as guests in the Polish Eugenics Society meeting in September 1922. A plan to establish a separate organization to combat trafficking in people was jointly considered. Leon Wernic and Henryk Szczodrowski drafted the organization's charter, which was approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in March 1923. Thus the Polish Committee for Combating Trafficking in Women and Children, with Witold Chodźko as its president, was established.

The origins of the committee were presented somewhat differently in the government press. The Polish Eugenics Society seems to have groundlessly claimed credit for the founding of the committee. In *Praca i Opieka Społeczna*, we can read that the main initiator was the Ministry of Labour and Welfare.¹²⁵ Yet it is beyond doubt that eugenicists took an active part in the committee's work. They were co-organizers of railway missions set up to protect women and children traveling on their own from traffickers. In 1924, at a meeting of the PES' legal and social section, Wiktor Borkowski presented a plan for organizing such missions.¹²⁶ He deemed it necessary to appoint female mission inspectors to work at Warsaw's Main, Eastern, and Gdański Railway Stations. Later, railway stations in cities located along main transport routes were to be covered by the missions' activities.¹²⁷ Overnight

¹²³ Cf. T. Męczkowska, "Stosunek Towarzystwa Eugenicznego do towarzystw pokrewnych", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1924): 17.

¹²⁴ Cf. Chapter 2.

¹²⁵ Cf. *Praca i Opieka Społeczna*, 2 (1923): 130.

¹²⁶ Cf. W. Borkowski, "Projekt organizacji misji kolejowych", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 11 (1924): 11.

¹²⁷ Borkowski enumerated Gdańsk, Poznań, Kraków, Cieszyn, Toruń, Lwów, Białystok, Vilnius, and Suwałki, cf. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

shelters for women, for which funds were lacking, represented the biggest problem. Borkowski suggested organizing such shelters in the branch offices of the Polish Eugenics Society, the Society for the Protection of Women, and similar social organizations. Such an arrangement solved the accommodation problem, at least temporarily.¹²⁸

The Polish Eugenics Society founded a Union of Societies to Combat Venereal Diseases in 1927. Eugenecists showed films in the Urania cinema, delivered lectures at the St. Lazarus hospital in the district of Powiśle, and at the Museum of Industry and Agriculture. The founding of the first eugenics clinic at 28 Żurawia Street in Warsaw was a major achievement for eugenecists. It was opened in August 1925. Its managers were Leon Wernic, Jan Jakimowicz, and Jerzy Reise. The clinic provided premarital and marital counselling, as well as counselling for pregnant women, young mothers, as well as vocational counselling. Patients suffering from venereal diseases and tuberculosis, alcoholics and drug addicts were referred to specialist clinics. The eugenics clinic worked together with analytical laboratories, an x-ray practice, and other similar establishments. Initially, there were 25 doctors working there (later their number dropped to 10) as well as a lawyer and an educator. The following statistics bear evidence to the clinic's work:

KULTURALNO - OŚWIATOWE KINO
POLSKIEGO TOWARZYSTWA EUENICZNEGO

„URANJA“

w sali Muzeum Przemysłu i Rolnictwa
Krakowskie-Przedmieście Nr. 66.

Codziennie seanse od godziny 4.
W niedziele i święta od godzin: 12, 2, 4, 6, 8 wiecz.

Wyświetla najciekawsze filmy
naukowe i rozrywkowe dla młodzieży

W niedziele i święta pogadanki i losowanie książek.

An advertisement of the eugenics Urania Cinema.
Source: *Zagadnienia Rasy* 8 (1926).

¹²⁸ As far as remuneration is concerned, a female inspector working 8 hours daily was to earn a monthly salary of 100 zlotys.

Table 3. A list of counselling sessions provided at the Warsaw eugenics clinic between August 1925 and May 1926

Type of counselling	Number of counselling sessions provided
Referring for analyses	515
Premarital counselling	245
Diagnosing and preventing venereal diseases, tuberculosis, alcoholism, and other diseases	224
Vocational	214
Other	342
Total	1,540

Source: *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 8 (1926): 105.

Statistics concerning the clinic's work are very scarce. The number of counselling sessions does not provide information on the number of patients. The classification itself may arouse some reservations. The statistics provided above only prove that Warsaw residents treated the eugenics clinic rather like a normal health clinic, as shown by the number of referrals for lab tests.

PORADNIE

Polskiego Towarzystwa Eugenicznego

Nowy-świat 1, tel. 689-99 — czynna od 9 rano do 9 w.

Udzielają wskazówek i pomocy w zakresie lekarskim i pedagogicznym w sprawach: 1) dotyczących związków małżeńskich, porad przedślubnych, ciąży i macierzyństwa, opieki nad dzieckiem w wieku szkolnym i przedszkolnym; 2) porad sportowych; 3) porad dotyczących wyboru zawodu; 4) porad dla matek ciężarnych i dzieci kilowych; 5) dotyczących zapobiegania chorobom zwyrodniającym, piciowym, wenerycznym i skórnyom ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem skroful i gruźlicy skóry (wilk), alkoholizmu, kokainizmu, morfinizmu i zatruc zawodowych.

Porady bezpłatne dla matek ciężarnych, oraz noworodków w godzinach od 2—3, 4—5, 7—8, dla sportowców 5½—6½ w.

An advertisement of counselling clinics of the Polish Eugenics Society.

Source: *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 8 (1926).

A third of counselling sessions was provided free of charge and another 207 at a reduced rate, showing that the clinic's patients were not well off.

Up to 1928, the clinic's work was classified into 5 categories: premarital counselling, mother and infant care, medical advice for sportsmen, intelligence and talent testing, and combating the degenerative factors (occupational,

sexual and venereal diseases, drug addiction).¹²⁹ Eugenicians did not conceal the fact that the clinic was merely a first step towards opening a Eugenics Institute with a genealogical section and numerous laboratories.¹³⁰

9. THE EUGENICISTS' ACTIVITIES ABROAD AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN 1918–1927

The Polish Eugenics Society pursued intense international cooperation in a variety of fields: combating venereal diseases, prostitution, and trafficking in women – as well as in the promotion of eugenics principles. In 1925, the PES became a member of the Union Internationale Antivenerienne in Paris (Leon Wernic was appointed the organization's permanent board member) and the London-based Eugenics Federation.¹³¹ In 1924, the society delegated two individuals, Maria and Henryk Szczodrowski, to attend an Anti-Venereal Congress at Nancy.

1927 saw the peak of the eugenicists' international activity. Jerzy Babecki was delegated to the First International Population Congress in Geneva.¹³² That same year the eugenicists participated in the International Congress of Eugenics Societies in Amsterdam. The eugenics congress was combined with an International Congress of Anthropological Societies. Eugenicians and anthropologists met at the same forum. Participants from 19 countries attended: Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Yugoslavia. Jan Mydlarski came to the eugenicists' congress as a representative of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education.¹³³ Prof. Kazimierz Stołyhwo, representing the Polish Free University, the Jagiellonian University, and the International Anthropological Institute, enjoyed a special place at the congress. In acknowledgement of the contribution made by Polish scientists,

¹²⁹ Cf. "Dział sprawozdawczy", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 9 (1930): 69.

¹³⁰ Cf. "Wiadomości bieżące", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3–4 (1925): 133–135.

¹³¹ Cf. "Z Towarzystwa Eugenicznego", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 7–8 (1926): 96.

¹³² Cf. J. Babecki, "Z I Międzynarodowego Zjazdu Ludnościowego w Genewie", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 11–12 (1927): 57.

¹³³ A full list of delegates included the following persons: from Warsaw: Professor Ludwik Hirszfeld (National Epidemiological Institute) and Dr Aniela Lipcówna; from Poznań: Dr M. Ćwirko-Godycki, Dr A. Karpińska and Professor J. Kostrzewski (University of Poznań); from Vilnius: Professor Michał Reicher (Stefan Batory University of Vilnius) and Dr K. kosiński; from Lviv: the Rev. Dr Bolesław Rosiński. See K. Stołyhwo, "Ze zjazdu w Amsterdamie Związku Organizacji Eugenicznych", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 11–12 (1927): 81–82.

Ludwik Hirszfeld and Kazimierz Stołyhwo were appointed members of the praesidium of the eugenics congress, the former as head of the Heredity and Eugenics Section, and the latter as head of the Morphological and Functional Anthropology Section.

Lectures delivered in both sections attracted major interest. In the eugenics section, the problem of interracial cross-breeding was discussed. Well-known Scandinavian eugenicists: J.A. Mjöen from Norway (Krzyżowanie ras ludzkich [Cross-breeding of human races]) and H. Nilsson Ehle from Sweden (Ogólny pogląd biologiczny na krzyżowanie się ras [A general biological view on cross-race breeding]), as well as C.B. Davenport from the United States (Krzyżowanie ras ludzkich [Cross-breeding of human races]) delivered papers on the subject.¹³⁴ The participants of the debate pointed out “an excessive number of synonyms” denoting a race and anthropological type. It was decided that the following congress would be devoted to the diversity of definitions of race. Kazimierz Stołyhwo was honored by being appointed as head of a commission to prepare materials for debate on the subject.

Ludwik Hirszfeld’s papers on serological blood groups also attracted major interest at the congress. Numerous reports concerning research on blood groups in various countries (i.a., France, Germany, and the Soviet Union) were also submitted. Stołyhwo reported: “issues concerning serological blood types [...] definitely attracted the greatest interest at the Amsterdam congress, both from the point of view of methodology and from the perspective of various approaches to the heredity of particular types. The above papers also attracted the greatest numbers of people in the heredity and eugenics section”.¹³⁵

Fragments or summaries of works published in *The Eugenics Review* appeared regularly in the foreign literature reviews section of *Zagadnienia Rasy*. What particularly attracted the attention of Polish eugenicists were controversial issues concerning eugenic population policy. They sought answers to questions concerning the impact of biological factors on human life. For example, the journal published a summary of K. Austin Freeman’s article “Subman”, in which the author argues that a low social status corresponds to low racial criteria.¹³⁶ Briefly, people are limited in choosing their paths in life, since they are determined by biological factors. Freeman argued that via the state’s welfare policies (charity, social insurance, benefits) the numbers of unemployed, whom he described as “subhuman”, kept steadily growing. It is worth adding that criticizing the welfare state was only allowed in *Zagadnienia Rasy* with regard to foreign models. As far as Polish affairs were concerned,

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 79.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 80.

¹³⁶ Cf. “Z zagranicy”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 5–6 (1926): 53.

the positive aspects of state interventionism were highlighted. An article by a German eugenicist said that addictions were associated with pathological personalities: "Tobacco abuse and passionate smoking is a trait of prostitutes, madmen, and prisoners".¹³⁷ Eugenicists were also interested in genealogical research. Articles by Norwegian, British, and American eugenicists confirmed the belief that it was necessary to "breed" geniuses by supporting eugenically worthy families.¹³⁸ *The Eugenics Review's* writings put forward more drastic theses than did Polish authors. This confirmed Polish eugenicists in the demands that they were putting forward to Polish authorities.

From the Polish perspective it might seem that cooperation with the British was satisfactory. It is only after carefully reading *The Eugenics Review* that we are shown it was not so. Throughout the 20 interwar years, the British published only a few, laconic mentions of the Polish eugenics movement. The first such mention dates back to 1921. It reports that Leon Wernic, the head of the Polish Society for Combating Venereal Diseases and Race Degeneration, submitted a report on the state of combating venereal diseases in Poland to the minister of health.¹³⁹ At the same time, *The Eugenics Review* published extensive reports and articles on North American, German, Scandinavian, and Dutch eugenics. Of the Central European countries only Czechoslovakia attracted considerable interest in Britain. In the permanent section "Noted and Received Journals" articles from the US, Belgian, Canadian, German, Italian, French, Swedish, and Danish eugenic press were discussed, but never from Polish journals.

The year 1927 marked a breakthrough in the development of eugenics in the United States and the world over. It was then that the *Buck v. Bell* case came before the US Supreme Court, which ruled that the sterilization law of the state of Virginia was not incompatible with the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

J. H. Bell was the superintendent at a care and rehabilitation institution for epileptics, the feeble-minded, prostitutes, the homeless, as well as neglected and abandoned children. In 1924, Doctor Bell requested to have an inmate of his institution, Carrie Buck, sterilized. Bell's report stated that mentally retarded Carrie Buck was the daughter of a feeble-minded woman, a patient of the same institution, and the mother of an illegitimate child, a girl, also observed to be feeble-minded. The formal basis for diagnosing Carrie and her mother Emma with mental retardation were the Binet-Simon intelligence test results. This was not the first case of sterilization at that institution. What

¹³⁷ Cf. Dr Spielmann, "Prostytucja a gruźlica", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 2 (1925): 62.

¹³⁸ Cf. J. Mjöen, "Geniusz jako zagadnienie biologiczne", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 2 (1925): 53.

¹³⁹ *Eugenics Review* (April 1920–January 1921).

Bell wanted to achieve this time was for the Supreme Court to rule that the operations were not in violation of the letter of the law or the Constitution. On 2 May 1927, the Supreme Court ruled that the legislation of the state of Virginia allowing sterilization of the mentally retarded was not in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. In a justification of the verdict, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. argued: "We have seen more than once that the public welfare may call upon the best citizens for their lives. It would be strange if it could not call upon those who already sap the strength of the State for these lesser sacrifices, often not felt to be such by those concerned, to prevent our being swamped with incompetence. It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind. Three generations of imbeciles are enough".¹⁴⁰ A subsequent investigation into the case revealed that Carrie Buck's daughter, Vivien, who died prematurely as a several-year-old child, was a good pupil and showed no symptoms of mental retardation.¹⁴¹

The Carrie Buck case became a milestone for the development of sterilization practices worldwide. In 1929, Denmark was the first state on the continent of Europe to introduce voluntary sterilization.

10. RECAPITULATION

The recognition of and popular support for eugenics were a result of growing trust in science and planning. Enthusiasts of eugenics expected rational control of reproduction and natural growth to bring society benefits analogous to those that had been achieved in industry thanks to the application of modern manufacturing technologies. In 1913, Harry Laughlin said: "Eugenics is simply the application of *big business* methods in human reproduction".¹⁴²

Eugenics in Poland was connected with the welfare state, which made it similar to Scandinavian eugenics. This is evidenced in the welcoming eugenicists gave the social insurance system, which drew strong criticism in medical circles. What set the eugenicists apart from the medical circles, whose fairly wide representation I found in the periodicals *Lekarz Polski*, *Zdrowie*, *Warszawskie Czasopismo Lekarskie*, was their approval of the institution of

¹⁴⁰ Quoted after J.H. Landman, *Human Sterilization* (New York, 1932), p. 98.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Kevles, *In the Name*, p. 112.

¹⁴² Quoted after: G. Allen, "Eugenics and American Social History 1880–1950", *Genome*, 31 (1989): 885.

the state. Daszyńska-Golińska wrote: “For population policy, the state is the central institution”.¹⁴³ Tomasz Janiszewski, Stefan Kramsztyk, Leon Wernic, and Waclaw Wesolowski presented eugenics as a “state idea”. It would be naïve to explain this stance only in terms of the financial dependence of the eugenics society on the state. Eugenecists appreciated the state monopoly on the application of compulsion to its own citizens, compulsion that, as I have pointed out on numerous occasions, was a necessary element of the eugenic correction of the population.

Polish eugenics was associated with collective intellectual currents, characteristic especially of the 1930s. Giving priority to the nation, race, state, social class, was a distinctive feature of the interwar period. This collective perspective on social affairs was reflected in a peculiarly defined patriotism. Waclaw Wesolowski believed that the cement holding the international eugenics community together was the sense that their actions resulted from “the reverence for their inherited traits and for both physical and mental qualities that justify the cult of one’s own race”.¹⁴⁴ Serving some clearly defined objectives, such as the well-being and security of the racial community, was part of patriotism defined in such a way.

The objective of eugenics in Poland, as defined by PES members in the 1920s, was to support the state’s economic and military development. A man “bred” according to eugenic principles was to be an efficient employee and a good soldier. This lined up with a wider trend spreading in the interwar years – namely, that of integrating the economy with the state’s military efforts, which further intensified in the 1930s. It should be emphasized that the principles of industrial labour hygiene were laid down in the interwar years by physicians connected with the army, such as Bruno A. Nowakowski, an assistant at the Military Hygiene Institute, and later head of the Labour Hygiene Section at the State School of Hygiene, and Col. Kazimierz Karaffa-Korbitt, the author of numerous pamphlets and textbooks on labour hygiene.

As I have described in the preceding chapters, eugenicists situated themselves between the old ethos of a physician-hygienist (Warsaw Hygiene Society members were initially a natural support base for Wernic) and the new role of physician-eugenicist connected with industry and the state’s defence efforts. The first discord between the “old” hygienists and the “new” race hygienists appeared shortly after Poland’s recovery of independence in connection with the dispute on the shape of the health service. This discord deepened gradually in the 1920s. Wernic criticized then the contributors

¹⁴³ Daszyńska-Golińska, *Polityka populacyjna*, p. 248.

¹⁴⁴ Wesolowski, “Walka z chorobami”, p. 7.

to *Zdrowie* for ignoring the problem of heredity, while the “old” hygienists maintained an attitude full of reserve towards *Zagadnienia Rasy*.¹⁴⁵

It should be added that the shake-up caused by almost the entire medical sector becoming public in the new state facilitated the acceptance of eugenics in medical circles. The advocates of a private medical sector felt the reform to be an attack on their social and professional status, but such frustration and discontent were perceptible in the 1920s also among other groups of doctors. Meanwhile, eugenics allured with the promise of a new role for the physician. It was propagated as an avant-garde branch of medicine and hygiene.

The dividing line in the polemic between Józef Polak, a member of the intelligentsia from the former Congress Kingdom of Poland, and Tomasz Janiszewski, a civil servant from Galicia, was reflected by the publications in *Zagadnienia Rasy* and *Zdrowie*. *Zdrowie* tackled problems going beyond the scope of hygiene and medicine. Articles published in the journal covered a broad spectrum of medical as well as social issues, whereas in *Zagadnienia Rasy* social realities appeared only when they concerned eugenics or the fate of the Eugenics Society. Issues concerning social mores, such as reform of the institution of marriage, birth control, and sex education were discussed because of their close affinity with eugenics. The departure in *Zagadnienia Rasy* from the social debates typical of the medical intelligentsia is a pronounced feature of the eugenic community.

Finally, I would like to raise the issue of the ideological road traveled by the eugenicists from the Warsaw Hygienic Society and the Bolesław Prus Society for Practical Hygiene to the Polish Eugenics Society. The activities of hygienists from Wernic’s circle had their source in the intelligentsia’s traditions, in what is termed the mission of the intelligentsia. Later on, as the community was taking shape, as its institutions were becoming established and taking on a eugenic character, there was a departure from that model in favour of an attitude that could be described as eugenic Prometheism. Both the former and the latter appear to belong to the same intelligentsia order, but this appearance is misleading. The mission of the intelligentsia guiding the activists from the Warsaw Hygienic Society and the Society for Practical Hygiene was thoroughly optimistic. Its underlying assumption was that people are able to give up their bad habits and customs provided that they understand that they have been doing something wrong. The “old”

¹⁴⁵ Wernic wrote: “Instructing about the objectives of eugenics must begin with physicians. Hypnotized by the one-sided hygiene campaign, which is very useful, incidentally, they forget that in addition to external conditions influencing an individual, there is heredity”, L. Wernic, “Uwagi praktyczne w sprawie rozwoju ruchu eugenicznego w Polsce”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 10–11 (1930): 198.

hygienists combated prejudice, established public baths and bathing beaches, and taught the basic principles of personal hygiene, because they believed that the sum of their activities entailed a major force shaping human characters in the desired direction.

The Promethean zeal of the eugenicists was, by contrast, underpinned by a profound disbelief in the possibility of bringing about an internal change in people. It emphasized biological determinism as the reason why an individual's goodwill or ill-will did not have any major impact on his or her life, or on the life of the community it was part of. The hygienists' mission invoked social solidarism and egalitarianism, whereas the eugenicists' Prometheism preached an inevitable hierarchization in society. While the former wanted to erase social differences, the latter created them, adopting biological factors, those most independent of human will, as the basis for those divisions. While the aim of the "old" hygienists was to expand the civilizational, political, and cultural community by including informed individuals in it, eugenic Prometheism ordered the exclusion from that community of those whose genes or physical or mental characteristics were deemed to be disqualifying or "of little value". In Poland, as perhaps in other Central European countries, eugenicism fed on the tradition of the intelligentsia and sometimes ineptly copied it in the language and the arguing style it used. Nonetheless, these two traditions of social mission and commitment were fundamentally divergent.

In the following decade, the interests of Polish eugenicists turned towards German eugenics, which began to displace Anglo-Saxon eugenics in *Zagadnienia Rasy* as early as the 1920s. Changes also occurred in the structure of the eugenic community. In 1928–1939 eugenics ceased to be the domain of physicians. Anthropologists from the Lvov Anthropological School and proponents of moral liberalism connected with the *Wiadomości Literackie* magazine took interest in eugenics. Anthropologists joined the PES, seeking a scientific confirmation of the existence of objective race indicators. Advocates of a reform of social mores gave their support to eugenics because they decided that a "new morality" should be based on rationalistic, scientific criteria. Thus, the eugenics movement was enriched by being joined by two milieux independent of each other.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NINETEEN THIRTIES

1. THE POLISH EUGENICS SOCIETY IN THE EARLY 1930S

In the late 1920s, the situation in health service management began to improve. In 1932, the proposal put forward by Polish physicians was met for the appointment of one central authority in charge of health matters. From that time on, they were the sole responsibility of the Minister of Labour and Welfare.¹ While this move did not meet the demands of physicians desiring a restitution of the Health Ministry, it was a serious step towards further reforms.

In 1926, a new institution destined to actively influence the health care model in Poland was established – namely, the Chief State Health Council (CSHC). Even though the first session of the council was delayed and not held until 1928, it later met regularly.² The Chief State Health Council was to be an advisory organization, issuing opinions on draft legislation submitted to it by the Welfare Minister. In fact, its role was broader. It became an instrument for exerting pressure on the Welfare Ministry as well as initiating numerous ideas and plans related to medical care. It deliberated in sections. In 1928, an administrative section, a section for combating tuberculosis, venereal and infectious diseases, and a pharmaceutical section were established. Their membership included hygienists, phthisiologists, and venereologists. From among the members of the Polish Eugenics Society, the following sat on the Chief State Health Council in its various sections: Leon Wernic, Witold Chodźko, Gustaw Szulc, Stanisław Ciechanowski, and Waclaw Borkowski. In the 1930s these persons most probably set up a eugenics section.

As compared to the earlier period, i.e., the 1920s, the protests of the medical community against the public health service (that were never joined

¹ Cf. *Dwadzieścia lat publicznej służby zdrowia w Polsce Odrodzonej 1918–1939*, Warszawa, 1939.

² Cf. “Pierwsze Posiedzenie Państwowej Naczelnej Rady Zdrowia”, *Lekarz Polski*, 7 (1929): 157.

by eugenicists) slowly subsided. It was already ten years since independence had been recovered and a young generation of doctors was growing up for whom the public health service was simply the reality they knew. Secondly, the economic crisis made numerous advocates of a private health practice accept a ceasefire. The “sick funds” (state-run health insurance institutions – the name being taken from the German *Krankenkasse*), and later the insurer, provided a small but steady income, while private doctors’ offices (with rare exceptions) were becoming empty.

Efforts to enlist the support of politicians for the eugenic idea were all in vain. Even though Wernic offered the readers of *Zagadnienia Rasy* assurances that “there is growing interest in this [eugenic] issue among the government of the Polish state”,³ these were exaggerated promises. Neither socialists, nor Christian Democrats, nor nationalists, nor even Piłsudski’s followers, who were the closest to eugenicists, showed any willingness to cooperate with the Polish Eugenics Society. Among the few exceptions was the speaker of the Senate, Professor Julian Szymański, who extended patronage over the society’s activities,⁴ MP Eugenia Waśniewska (a member of the Non-Party Block for Cooperation with the Government [BBWR], sitting on PES board), senator Stanisław Posner (socialist, PES member), and minister Gustaw Simon. In 1928, Waśniewska and Posner made a request in the Sejm to raise state subsidies for the Polish Eugenics Society.⁵

Unlike political acceptance, popular acceptance of eugenics was gradually growing. This is shown by a growing number of references to eugenics and PTE activities in medical and educational magazines. Even the editors of *Zdrowie*, otherwise fairly skeptical of Wernic’s work, noted the growing acceptance of eugenics among physicians.⁶ Eugenicists were consolidating their favourable image as propagators of hygiene and social reformers with progressive, left-leaning views. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in 1927, at the International Exhibition of Military Hygiene and Pharmacy, they were awarded a prestigious award: a gold medal for their overall achievement.

Eugenicists strove to win broader popular support. This is shown e.g., by an amendment to the Society’s Statute, which made it possible for organizations and young people to join. From 1928, the anthropologist Jan Mydlarski, who attracted other members of the Lvov School of Anthropology to the journal, became a regular contributor to *Zagadnienia Rasy* and chairman

³ L. Wernic, “Aktualne zagadnienia ruchu eugenicznego w ogóle, a w Polsce w szczególności”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 5 (1929): 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Cf. *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 4 (1928): 80.

⁶ Cf. *Zdrowie*, 10 (1931): 580.

of the science section.⁷ In 1929, the PES established contacts with the Union of Women's Civic Work and the Council for the Moral Protection of Young People. The same year, the society moved into premises located at 1 Nowy Świat, flat no. 5.⁸ In the new building, eugenicists set up a mothers' education section headed by Maria Olszewska. In 1930, the PES contributed to the establishment of the Committee of the Mental Hygiene League.⁹

PES members participated in several international conferences: Wiktor Borkowski was delegated to the International Conference of the Federation of Eugenics Societies (Munich 13 September 1928), Leon Wernic to an Anti-Venereal Congress at Nancy, Eugenia Waśniewska to a Social Work Congress in Paris.¹⁰ One year later, Wernic concluded that "the time has finally come" for eugenicists.¹¹

The society's work was noted by *Lekarz Polski*, the influential and opinion-making journal in medical circles. In 1929, the journal published papers by Wernic and Szczodrowski on the society's activities to date and broadly defined eugenic matters.¹² Similar notes appeared in *Służba Społeczna*, a bulletin published by the Ministry of Labour and Welfare.¹³

In the late 1920s, Wernic criticized the activities of Warsaw hygienists to date. He said that the "old" hygienists had squandered the capital of trust that both society and the Polish state had placed in them on the threshold of independence. He reproached hygienists for holding government jobs and squandering government funds as well as for incompetence in combating diseases and social pathologies. The mission of the "old" hygienists had come to an end, Wernic argued, because they had ignored the heredity factor: "All too often it has been forgotten that even at birth an individual is not a blank

⁷ Jerzy Raise was appointed head of the prevention and treatment section, renamed a section for combating race degeneration and venereal diseases in 1928, vice-president of the court of appeal Kazimierz Fleszyński was appointed head of the legal and social section, S. Żukrowski head of the propaganda section, and W. Giżycki head of the education section. Cf. "Sprawozdanie z działalności Towarzystwa Eugenicznego", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 4 (1928): 56–57.

⁸ Cf. *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 11–12 (1928): 101.

⁹ Cf. *Warszawskie Czasopismo Lekarskie*, 7 (1930): 400.

¹⁰ Cf. *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 4 (1928): 52.

¹¹ Wernic, "Aktualne zagadnienia", p. 15.

¹² Cf. L. Wernic, "Eugenika i wytyczne jej działalności w Anglii i w Polsce"; id., "Wymieranie narodów w przeszłości i narodów współczesnych oraz rola prawodawstwa i organizacji eugenicznych w chwili bieżącej"; H. Szczodrowski, "Co robi Towarzystwo Eugeniczne"; S. Blank-Weissberg, "O powstawaniu płci", *Lekarz Polski*, 5 (1929): 118–120.

¹³ Cf. "Działalność Polskiego Towarzystwa Eugenicznego", *Służba Społeczna. Tygodnik. Biuletyn specjalny poświęcony sprawom opieki społecznej, ubezpieczeń społecznych i dobroczynności*, 35 (1930): 69.

slate on which life will write everything [...], but that he is born into the world already as a book written in watermarks that should be brought to light. This is what eugenics has to do".¹⁴ It seems that this sudden turn against the hygienists, Wernic's original circle, was a sign that the eugenics society had become firmly established after 10 years of functioning.

At a Delegates' Congress in June 1930, the PES president delivered an extensive policy statement. Among the society's successes he counted the publication of 53 Eugenics Library volumes and 200,000 leaflets. He demanded reduced public funding of "hopeless" attempts to save the lives of patients suffering from cancer and advanced tuberculosis.¹⁵ Eugenics, he emphasized, was to eliminate the reproduction of "negative types".

More and more scientific articles on Mendel's laws and Pearson's statistical method in heredity research were published in *Zagadnienia Rasy*.¹⁶ In the late 1930s the society founded a scientific scholarship in science on heredity.¹⁷

In 1931, the PES' scientific section under the leadership of Ludwik Hirszfeld together with the State School of Hygiene organized a Course of Eugenics and Premarital Counselling for doctors. The syllabus covered medical problems (heredity, venereal diseases, tuberculosis) as well as social problems (marriage, birth control, alcoholism, drug addiction). The classes were held at the State School of Hygiene at 24 Chocimska Street in Warsaw from 29 April to 2 May 1931. In attendance were 50 physicians.¹⁸ The following year, a similar course was organized, but a third one, planned for 1933, was eventually cancelled "because the number of the candidates who enrolled was too small [...]".¹⁹ It was only in 1935 that another course was held, at which lecturers devoted more attention to matters connected with marital law reform, birth control, race, and planned sterilization legislation.²⁰ In 1933, delegates from the Polish Eugenics Society took part in the 14th

¹⁴ Wernic, "Aktualne zagadnienia", p. 15.

¹⁵ L. Wernic, "Uwagi praktyczne w sprawie rozwoju ruchu eugenicznego w Polsce", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 10–11 (1930): 194.

¹⁶ Cf. J. Mydlarski, "Dziedziczenie cech fizycznych u człowieka", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 10–11 (1929): 154; J.M. Szymański, "Dziedziczenie konstytucji fizycznej w patologii", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 12 (1930): 249; J. Neyman, "Statystyczne podstawy badań dziedziczności", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 9 (1930): 10; M. Skalińska, "Materialne podstawy zjawisk dziedziczności", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 10–11 (1930): 101.

¹⁷ The first PES scholarship holder was Walentyna Lwitska of the Biometric Section of the M. Nencki Warsaw Scientific Society Institute.

¹⁸ Cf. Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (*Archiwum Akt Nowych*, hereinafter: AAN), Akta ministerstwa Opieki Społecznej (Welfare Ministry Records), file no. 549, pp. 10–17.

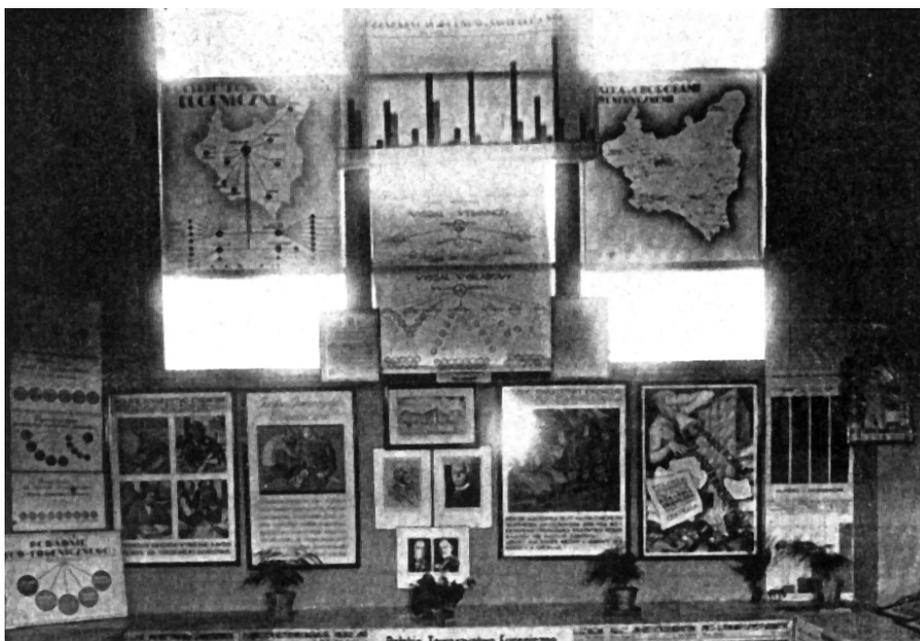
¹⁹ *Ibid.*, file no. 550, p. 33.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, file no. 551, p. 8.



Delegates of the Polish Eugenics Society at the 14th Congress of Physicians and Naturalists in Poznań, September 1933.

Source: *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3 (1933): 27.



A Polish Eugenics Society exhibition.

Source: *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3 (1933): 218.

Congress of Physicians and Naturalists in Poznań, where they organized a eugenic exhibition. In 1935, there were 25 eugenic clinics operating in Poland.²¹

The eugenics movement was developing outside Warsaw, as well. Starting from the second half of the 1920s, Tomasz Janiszewski taught a seminar on social hygiene at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. In 1930, the PES published Alfred Grotjahn's book *Higiena ludzkiego rozrodu* (*Hygiene der menschlichen Fortpflanzung*; *The hygiene of human reproduction*; Warszawa 1930) translated from German by Tomasz Janiszewski in cooperation with the participants of his seminar. Janiszewski confessed that the book was the closest to his own views on eugenics. He translated it with lawyers, civil servants, economists, and social activists in mind. The book was a major influence on the direction of the evolution of eugenic thought in Poland.

2. GROTJAHN'S EUGENIC THEORY

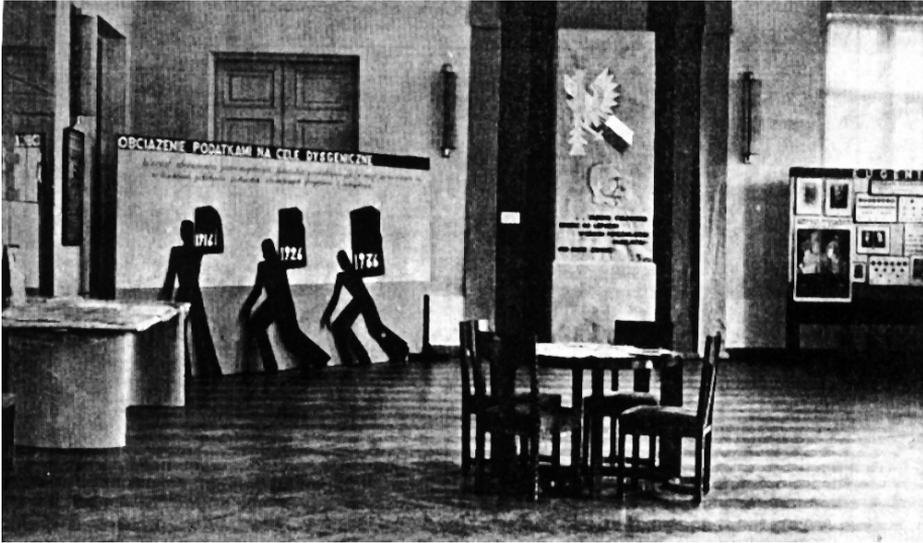
Alfred Grotjahn was a leading figure of the non-racist current of German eugenics, a lecturer with a professor's title at the university of Berlin. His book *Hygiene der menschlichen Fortpflanzung* was published in Germany in 1926. In its seven extensive chapters the author presented the origins and development of eugenic thought in Germany, with numerous references to European and American ideas. He discussed, among other things, the historical continuation and decline of nations, the principles of Malthusianism and neo-Malthusianism, and the attitudes of eugenics towards various social and political movements. One of Grotjahn's demands was to cut off eugenics from anthropology, racial prejudice, and anti-Semitism. He believed that eugenics could be more aptly termed "reproductive hygiene". He also criticized a eugenics whose the sole object was to "breed" outstanding families. "Aristogenics" ought to be replaced by egalitarian eugenics, a eugenics for everyone.

His book also exemplifies the minor but significant changes that had occurred in the scientific paradigm over the previous few years. One of the changes concerns the impact of alcohol on offspring. Grotjahn dismissed the thesis that alcohol was a degenerating influence, thus paving the way for the belief that children of alcoholics were not born with damaged genetic material.

Grotjahn claimed that eugenics was crucial for the workers' movement and for socialist ideology.²² He even predicted that eugenics, rather than

²¹ Cf. *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3–4 (1935): 100.

²² A. Grotjahn, *Higiena ludzkiego rozrodu* (Warszawa, 1930), p. 260.



A eugenic exhibition in an officers' mess in 1936.

Source: *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3 (1936).

Marx's or Malthus' ideas, would become the theoretical basis of socialism within the following few years. Already for Schallmayer and Plöetz, the "socialist worldview" was a starting point for eugenics. Grotjahn advocated economic privileges for "parenthood", i.a., the payment of social salaries for big families. Each working-class family should be able to comfortably raise at least three children. "A socialist population policy, oriented according to scientific eugenics, could also substantially contribute to imbuing German national socialism in general with a sense of responsibility that had guided socialists [...] when the war started", Grotjahn wrote.²³

The presence of ideological threads in eugenic writings in Germany and the United Kingdom did not have any counterpart in *Zagadnienia Rasy*. In the Polish eugenic press, one could at the most read about relationships between the women's movement and eugenics; nothing was written, however, about eugenics and the workers' movement, or socialist, national, or indeed any other ideology. The Polish eugenic press dealt extensively with social themes, eliminating the whole political contents of eugenics.

The absence of ideological themes in Polish eugenic writings may only in part be explained by the situation in Poland following the 1926 coup d'état. The reason for the apolitical stance adopted by Polish eugenicists was rather their unwillingness to highlight any ideological themes, a proclivity evident

²³ Ibid.

even before 1926. One may learn something indirectly about the political views of the founders of the Polish eugenics movement from publications outside eugenic milieux. For instance, like Stefan Kramsztyk, Tomasz Janiszewski also belonged to the sympathizers of the peasant movement. In 1923, Janiszewski published a pamphlet *Do czego powinien dążyć ruch ludowy* (What the peasant movement should strive to achieve), in which he expressed the belief that the peasant stratum, being the largest in Poland, should enjoy the special protection of the state.²⁴ Such views were not isolated back then. German eugenicists believed at the time that peasants constituted the healthy core of the nation, untainted by urban degeneration and universal immorality, hence it was not rare that their political sympathies turned towards peasant movements. Among members of the Polish Eugenics Society ere were also sympathizers of other political orientations. Leon Wernic was an ardent follower of Piłsudski. His political views were reflected in a symbolism characteristic of the Piłsudski camp. For example, at a eugenics exhibition in 1936, organized in Warsaw at an officers' mess in Aleja Szucha under a big portrait of Marshal Piłsudski at the centre of the room, the eugenicists placed a quotation from Piłsudski's writings: "To change man, to make him better, more sublime, more powerful, stronger: this is our task".²⁵ Wernic made Piłsudski's sentence, taken out of context, the motto of the eugenics exhibition, at which the audiences were frightened with photographs of cripples and mentally retarded children. In a sense, after 1926 eugenicists attempted to combine the nascent statehood idea with eugenics, but the effects of their efforts were negligible.²⁶ The PES anthem included the words: "The tribe of Polish eugenicists will strengthen the efforts of our legionnaires", but this was a unilateral declaration. At the famous debates held at Adam Skwarczyński's house, Aleksander Hertz pointed in his paper to two threats to national culture: the first was nationalism and the other was Boy-Żeleński's naturalism, which was associated with neo-Malthusian propaganda.²⁷ Thus, there was no chance of eugenics, something much more

²⁴ Cf. T. Janiszewski, *Do czego powinien dążyć ruch ludowy* (Kraków, 1923), p. 15.

²⁵ Cf. *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3 (1936): 267.

²⁶ Cf. T. Janiszewski, "Polska idea państwowa a polityka populacyjna", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3 (1933): 117.

²⁷ Andrzej Micewski, an outstanding historian and writer, in analysing a statement by Hertz, whom he highly regards for his apt assessment of many phenomena in interwar Poland, admits his helplessness in the face of the criticism directed at Boy. He even writes about a "misunderstanding" surrounding Boy: "The misunderstanding about 'Boyizm'", Micewski writes, "is probably attributable to factors that have nothing to do with the heart of the matter. Boy, who had rendered great service by familiarizing Poland with Western European culture, used to shock the interwar intelligentsia with his peculiar writings on moral issues, so he might have been regarded as a naturalist not only by narrow-minded

brutal than Malthusianism, becoming part of the state's dogmas. Piłsudski's followers seemed to consciously reject the vision of a nation defined in naturalistic, whether racial or eugenic terms.

The political and ideological void characterizing the writings published in *Zagadnienia Rasy*, along with highlighting progressive and reformist but very general mottos, was a very pronounced characteristic of the Polish eugenics community. What was the reason for this? The policy of reluctance to discuss political issues, of avoiding controversy, and consciously narrowing down political discourse seems to have been caused by the weakness of democratic culture in interwar Poland.

Another major problem raised by Grotjahn was compulsory sterilization. It should foremost cover tuberculosis patients and asthenic types prone to lung diseases. This is what Grotjahn says on the matter: "Each individual suffering from demonstrable tuberculosis should be regarded as permanently unfit for reproduction. Individuals with a doubtful asthenic constitution not suffering from tuberculosis should be deemed only conditionally fit for reproduction, i.e., they should have no more than three children".²⁸ Elsewhere he observes: "Asthenics and others possessing undesirable hereditary traits might disappear from among humanity without any loss whatsoever to society".²⁹ Grotjahn also enumerates epileptics, who should be sterilized unconditionally, irrespective of the advancement of the disease. Next, the following are listed: beggars, vagrants, criminals, alcoholics, drug addicts, homosexuals, and prostitutes: "These dregs of society are a threat to and a burden on every community, and are not without importance to eugenics, because no small number of them will find an opportunity to leave progeny after themselves".³⁰ Yet elsewhere he argued: "In a certain respect, prostitutes correspond to repeated criminals and vagrants. In 50 percent of their cases we are dealing with female imbeciles or at least morons".³¹ He believed

Church-going people. On the other hand, the author's argument against nationalism seems apt and creative, as it connects that phenomenon to specific social circumstances in Poland at that time", id., *W cieniu marszałka Piłsudskiego. Szkice z dziejów myśli politycznej II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warszawa, 1969), p. 99. In other studies on Boy-Żeleński's life and work, the eugenic threads in his writings have been likewise either overlooked or passed over in silence, and the neo-Malthusian campaign is only perceived in the narrow aspect of "combating obscurantism", "philistinism", "sanctimoniousness", etc. Cf. A. Stawar, *Tadeusz Żeleński-Boy* (Warszawa, 1958); J. Hen, *Błazen – wielki mąż. Opowieść o Tadeuszu Boyu-Żeleńskim* (Warszawa, 1998). On Boy's activism cf. the subchapter "Social and moral liberalism and eugenics" further on in the present chapter.

²⁸ Grotjahn, *Higiena*, p. 171.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

that the sick and retarded should be separated from the rest of society and institutionalized. He was relatively lenient towards the mentally ill. In his opinion, some of the psychopaths and schizophrenics should be “left to reproduce”, because they can render great services to society owing to their talents.³²

Professor Grotjahn, who dissociated himself from racial prejudice and anti-Semitism, gave voice to strong social prejudice. After all, prostitution or begging could hardly be regarded a hereditary disease. The best evidence of this is in how he indicated the underclass as a group potentially destined for sterilization without exception or distinction (Grotjahn was not much interested in the differing degree of harm done to society by a beggar and a criminal). The point was, consequently, to eliminate not the existing but the potential sources of threats to the race, to eradicate all misfits from society along with diseases.

3. ANTHROPOLOGY AND EUGENICS

Leon Wernic on many occasions complained about the lack of institutional scientific support for eugenics. Unlike the United Kingdom, Germany, and Denmark, in Poland eugenics developed only within the framework of a learned society. There were no chairs of eugenics, or eugenic laboratories or institutes. In the absence of scientific establishments, Wernic thought about developing eugenics as a science in the framework of interdisciplinary cooperation. In 1929, he noted: “the scientific movement in Polish eugenics [...] is very negligible. The first harbingers of our efforts, as it were, are works by the anthropologists Rosiński, Czekanowski, Mydlarski, and Stojanowski – and the serologists Hirszfeld, Świder, Wilczkowski, and others”.³³ As I have already indicated, cooperation between serologists and eugenicists was established in the second half of the 1920s. Eugenicists were interested in research into differences between organisms based on blood groups. In the second half of the 1930s, Stanisław Żejmo-Żejmis announced that attempts to develop a racial systematics based on blood and protein characteristics had failed.³⁴

Contacts between serologists and eugenicists might have been established in 1926, after Witold Chodźko was appointed director of the National Institute of Hygiene, which included a serological laboratory. In the New Records Archive, Ludwik Wernic’s skimpy correspondence concerning the organization

³² Ibid., p. 181.

³³ L. Wernic, “Referat zjazdowy”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 5 (1929): 79.

³⁴ Cf. S. Żejmo-Żejmis, “O rasie, rasach i rasizmie”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1936): 28.

of eugenic courses for physicians has survived.³⁵ In *Zagadnienia Rasy*, one can come across sporadic articles by serologists. Hirszfeld published one article on the methods of establishing paternity.³⁶ Thus, cooperation between them and eugenicists was loose. By way of contrast, one may speak of intensive collaboration as regards anthropologists, in particular Jan Mydlarski.

In 1928, Jan Mydlarski was appointed to the PES board. The same year, a science section was organized within the PES and at the initiative of Gustaw Szulc and Jan Mydlarski the latter was appointed its head. In 1931, he was replaced by Hirszfeld, and Mydlarski was made the section's deputy chairman. In addition to Kazimierz Stołyhwo, the names of other well-known Polish anthropologists appeared in *Zagadnienia Rasy*, including Stanisław Żejmo-Żejmis and Bolesław Rosiński.³⁷ It was Mydlarski, however, who was the most prolific writer. In 1928-1930, he published a dozen or so articles concerning the concept of race, anthropological type, and the inheriting of physical traits. The problem of race appeared in the eugenics context also outside *Zagadnienia Rasy*. Stanisław Żejmo-Żejmis, Karol Stojanowski, Stanisław Studencki, Halina Milicerowa, and others wrote on the subject in journals such as *Prosto z mostu* (Point-blank), *Kosmos*, *Kwartalnik Psychologiczny* (The Psychological quarterly), and *Przegląd Antropologiczny* (Anthropological review). Except for Milicerowa, the attention of these writers was riveted by German racism (especially in the second half of the 1920s) as a social and political phenomenon on which they were trying to define their position.³⁸

Anthropology played a positive role in the development of eugenics. Francis Galton and Karl Pearson began their scientific research with anthropology. Their names appear in most academic textbooks. After eugenics emancipated itself as a scientific discipline, the concept of race was used in a variety of contexts. Even so, eugenicists willingly employed the racial criteria developed by anthropologists. In the interwar years, Polish anthropologists joined in the debate between advocates of various concepts of race. Jan Czekanowski, leaning towards the typological definition of race, worked out his own anthropological assumptions. Under the influence of the biometric

³⁵ Cf. Chapter 5.

³⁶ Cf. J. Hirszfeld, "O dochodzeniu ojcostwa drogą badań biologicznych", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 2 (1931): 3.

³⁷ Cf. B. Rosiński, "Emigracja polska w Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki Północnej", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1931): 89-100.

³⁸ K. Stojanowski, *Niemiecki ruch nordyczny w świetle nauki i polityki* (Poznań, 1930); id., *Rasizm przeciw Słowiańszczyźnie* (Poznań, 1934); id., *Polsko-niemieckie zagadnienia rasy* (Poznań, 1939); S. Żejmo-Żejmis, "Doktryna rasizmu", *Prosto z Mostu*, 41 (1937): 3; id., "Doktryna rasizmu", *Prosto z Mostu*, 42 (1937): 5; id., "Doktryna rasizmu. Perspektywy", *Prosto z Mostu*, 43 (1937): 3; S. Studencki, "O tak zwanej rasie nordyjskiej", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3 (1933): 186.

school, he developed in Poland the mathematical foundations of the methods of trait variation analysis. He also tried to alleviate the tension that arose in the 1920s between the Mendelian and the biometric schools. “The controversy between the geneticists and the biometricians”, he wrote, “is eliminated by [...] concluding that K. Pearson’s heredity indices are a computational consequence of Mendelian laws”.³⁹ Jan Mydlarski also had a high regard for Pearson. In his opinion, the identification of anthropological types was made possible only thanks to the introduction of Pearson’s statistical methods into anthropology.⁴⁰

Czekanowski and his collaborators proposed distinguishing three basic human varieties (white, black, and yellow), six racial elements (Nordic, Mediterranean, *Armenoid*, Lapponoid, Arctic, and Negritic or Sudanese), and 15 anthropological types resulting from crossbreeding between the anthropological elements that split in the process of crossbreeding in accordance with Mendelian laws (the Subnordic, Sublapponoid, Northwestern, Dinaric, Alpine, Littoral, Paleoasian, Central Asian, Pacific, Paleoamerican, Negroid, *Mediterranoid*, *Meridional*, *Australoid*, and Austro-African types).

The Polish anthropologist Martyna Gryglaszewska-Puzynina used a slightly different classification of races and racial types in her research.⁴¹

The basic research material for Polish anthropologists was the military anthropological photograph carried out under Mydlarski’s supervision.⁴² “Owing to that”, Czekanowski wrote years later, “Poland became the *most thoroughly investigated* country [in anthropological terms]”.⁴³ Anthropologists kept drawing ever bolder conclusions from the collected body of material. Initially, scientists used the military anthropological photograph to determine the racial components of the population (anthropological types) and their settlement areas. In the late 1920s, Mydlarski published an article with a detailed description of races inhabiting Poland with maps showing the distribution of individual anthropological types across the country.⁴⁴ Based on the above, Czekanowski drew a conclusion: “The most important result, one now clearly emerging, is the conclusion that racial diversity is not limited to morphology, but extends into the areas of physiology, psychology, and

³⁹ J. Czekanowski, “Główne kierunki w antropologii polskiej”, *Kosmos*, 1 (1928): 218.

⁴⁰ J. Mydlarski, “Podstawowe zagadnienia eugeniki”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 6 (1929): 122.

⁴¹ Cf. M. Gryglaszewska-Puzynina, “Spostrzeżenia nad sprawnością fizyczną dziewcząt różnych typów rasowych”, *Przegląd Fizjologii Ruchu*, 3–4 (1936): 6.

⁴² Cf. Chapter 4.

⁴³ J. Czekanowski, *Człowiek w czasie i przestrzeni* (Warszawa, 1967), p. 179. The material basis for this project was almost completely destroyed by the Germans during the Second World War.

⁴⁴ Cf. J. Mydlarski, “Przyczynek do poznania struktury antropologicznej Polski i zagadnień doboru naturalnego”, *Kosmos*, 53 (1928): 195–210.

Table 4
Racial types according to B. Rosiński. Source: *Kosmos*, 2 (1929)

Nordic type (α)Nordic type (α)Subnordic type (γ)Subnordic type (γ)Pre-Slav type (β)Pre-Slav type (β)Laponoid type (λ)Laponoid type (λ)Laponoid type (λ)



Alpine type (ω)



Dinaric type (δ)



Dinaric type (δ)



Armenoid type (χ)



Armenoid type (χ)



Mediterranean type (ρ)



Ibero-Insular type (ϵ)



Ibero-Insular type (ϵ)

pathology”.⁴⁵ Mydlarski shared this view: “for while identifying the races of, e.g., various domestic animals, we base our judgment on external morphological traits, and we may judge their mental and physiological characteristics. Would not, therefore, this connection between the external morphological traits and mental and physiological characteristics existing in the animals fail to exist in man?”⁴⁶ In *Zagadnienia Rasy* he published an article in which he argued that differences in pupils’ intellectual abilities had a racial basis.⁴⁷

Evidence in support of that thesis was provided by Ludwik Jaxa-Bykowski, who carried out anthropological studies of school-age youth. He investigated the intelligence quotient and intellectual abilities according to racial criterion.⁴⁸ In one of his articles, Bykowski argued that the Alpine and Subnordic types achieved better results at work as a result of competition, while the Pre-Slav type achieved worse ones. According to Bykowski, the Subnordic type stands out thanks to its “fertile imagination and perceptiveness”; the Nordic type “excels in strict/precise reasoning and the focusing of attention”; while the Pre-Slav type “most often found among the proletariat, generally ranks lower in intellectual terms”.⁴⁹

Table 5. Mental and physical differences between the races

	General fitness	Attention shifting	Intelligence			Spatial imagination	Hand agility	Psycho-motor pace
			General	Technical	Practical			
Subnordic	3.21	3.15	3.31	2.99	3.29	3.14	2.73	3.12
Nordic	3.18	2.93	2.89	3.22	3.43	3.57	3.27	2.70
Pre-Slav	2.92	2.75	3.1	3.05	3.30	3.34	2.77	2.70
Alpine	2.95	2.78	2.81	3.10	3.43	3.33	3.22	2.88
Dinaric	2.85	2.65	2.50	3.20	3.33	2.75	2.3	3.13
Mediterranean	(2.4)	(3.4)	(2.88)	(2)	(2.5)	(3.25)	(3.1)	(3.6)

Source: S. Studencki, “On the mental and physical type of the Polish man”, *Kwartalnik Psychologiczny*, 1 (1931)

⁴⁵ Czekanowski, “Główne kierunki”, p. 216.

⁴⁶ Mydlarski, “Podstawowe zagadnienia eugeniki”, p. 130.

⁴⁷ J. Mydlarski, “Z zagadnień konstytucjonalizmu”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 6 (1929): 343.

⁴⁸ L. Jaxa-Bykowski, “Badania eksperymentalne nad znaczeniem współzawodnictwa”, in: *Prace psychologiczne*, ed. J. Joteyko (Warszawa, 1923), pp. 1–79.

⁴⁹ L. Jaxa-Bykowski, “Właściwości antropologiczne a psychotechnika”, *Psychotechnika*, 5 (1928): 8–10; L. Jaxa-Bykowski, “Właściwości antropologiczne a psychotechnika”, *Psychotechnika*, 5 (1928): 8–10; cf. *idem*, “Przyczynki do znajomości wśród naszej młodzieży szkolnej”, *Kosmos*, 1–4 (1926): 935–940.

Stanisław Studencki presented similar conclusions in *Kwartalnik Psychologiczny* and *Zagadnienia Rasy*.⁵⁰ Using tables, he sought to prove that individual races differ in temperament, sensitivity, abilities, resilience, temperament, and the pace of work. According to Studencki, the Nordic type displays the following traits: “self-control”, “emotional stability”, “prudence”, “proclivity toward depression”, and “unsociability”. The Subnordic type is the opposition of the former: “reckless, impulsive, sensitive, emotional, sociable, cheerful, daring, spiritually developed”. The Pre-Slav and Dinaric types are distinguished by “emotional variability”, “impulsiveness” and “negativism”. The Alpine type stands out by “daring and a lively temperament”.

Bolesław Rosiński characterized races in a similar way: “Man of the Nordic type is systematic and precise, a good organizer, reacts to sensations slowly but resolutely, he has a considerable aesthetic sense even in daily life [...] The Subnordic type is a kind of opposite to the Northern type. Man of the Subnordic type has a sense of restlessness. He is always dissatisfied with his state of possessions, however, he is optimistic in working towards future changes. He has an uneven character and attains his objectives mainly to satisfy his ambition, which is highly developed”.⁵¹

Table 6. Mental and characterological differences between the races

	Live lines of temperament	Emotional change ability	Resilience	Sociability	Impulsiveness	Emotional sensitivity	Conscientiousness	Daring	Motor control	Depressiveness	Introversion	Coartation
Subnordic	35%	36%	27%	38%	11%	20%	44%	15%	18%	15%	15%	15%
Nordic	15%	18%	8%	8%	0%	8%	23%	8%	48%	48%	30%	55%
Pre-Slav	27%	42%	12%	31%	11%	15%	44%	15%	23%	40%	23%	50%
Dinaric	66%	50%	12%	20%	?	11%	70%	11%	11%	33%	0%	35%
Alpine	45%	27%	22%	22%	?	?	?	33%	18%	45%	11%	33%

Source: S. Studencki, “On the mental and physical type of the Polish man”, *Kwartalnik Psychologiczny*, 1 (1931)

⁵⁰ S. Studencki, “O typie psycho-fizycznym Polaka”, *Kwartalnik Psychologiczny*, 1 (1931); id., “Próba charakterystyki psychologicznej typów antropologicznych wśród młodzieży polskiej”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 12 (1930): 241.

⁵¹ B. Rosiński, “Spostrzeżenia z pogranicza antropologii i psychologii”, *Kosmos*, 2 (1929): 274.

Adrian Demianowski studied racial differences in psychopathology. On the basis of research carried out in the Kulparków mental hospital, he claimed that the category of suicide attempt survivors is distinctly biased towards the Nordic type, while the Dinaric type prevails among killers and arsonists, and the Pre-Slav type among murderers.⁵²

Equally sharp differences were seen between individual nations. Studencki claimed that there was a dominant set of characterological traits making up a given national type: that of the Frenchman, the Englishman, the Italian, and the German.⁵³

For the above-mentioned authors, experiments carried out in Western Europe were an inspiration and the basis for their research. In Poland, fewer studies of that kind were conducted. The most important ones included the achievements of a group of researchers (Jan Mydlarski, Teresa Lipkowska, Halina Milicerowa) from the Anthropology Section established at the Central Institute of Physical Education in 1929.⁵⁴

In 1931–1934 88 selected female students of the Institute were examined in terms of intellectual abilities and physical fitness according to the racial criterion and Kretschmer's constitutional type. The research observations were presented by Halina Milicerowa in a pamphlet entitled *Wychowanie fizyczne kobiet w świetle antropologii* (The physical education of women in the light of anthropology). Her observations of the groups of women led Milicerowa to confirm the well-known thesis that race largely determines an individual's mentality and character.⁵⁵ "The concept of the racial type", she wrote, is very deep, for it goes beyond the morphological structure, comprising also the mental make-up and the functional aspect of the body".⁵⁶ Even the friendships and feelings of fondness that arose in the groups under examination were

⁵² A. Demianowski, *Umysłowo chorzy pacjenci szpitala kulparkowskiego* (Lwów, 1923).

⁵³ Cf. S. Studencki, *Psychologia porównawcza narodów* (Warszawa, 1935).

⁵⁴ Cf. *Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego 1929–1950*, ed. Z. Gilewicz (Warszawa, 1950). The section had excellent equipment and apparatuses, which made it possible to undertake large-scale work. Anthropological material from all over Poland was collected; anthropometric data was processed for the purposes of the Ministry of Military Affairs as well as for the industry. Mental traits were also examined, with students being divided into groups according to racial types.

⁵⁵ "From among the racial types," Milicerowa wrote, "the Nordic type comes to the fore, with good marks and only a lowered mark for discipline. Except for the low score on nervous resilience, the Armenoid group gets good and very good traits. The group of exotic half-breeds is characterized by very good moral and social traits as well as good control of the nerves, but it is not very agile or mobile", H. Milicerowa, *Wychowanie fizyczne kobiet w świetle antropologii* (an offprint from *Przegląd Antropologiczny*, Poznań, 1939), p. 51. Her article is entirely made up of such opinions and judgments.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

based on “racial affinity”, she concluded. The prominent anthropologist Jan Mydlarski regarded the research carried out by Bykowski, Studencki, and Demianowski in all seriousness. He believed that even though research into race had only just begun, one should support the thesis that psychological differences had a biological, racial basis.⁵⁷

The direction of research into racial differences illustrates the process taking place at that time both in Europe and the United States, i.e., that of an invasion of physical anthropology into sociology, pedagogy, psychology, medicine, and politics.⁵⁸ Beginning from the late nineteenth century, anthropology had increasingly become a science concerned with human psychology, and humankind’s natural or innate tendencies and predispositions. Anthropological studies pointed to a strong connection between race, mentality, and character. Thus, scientific sanction objectivized and strengthened racial prejudice. Research into race provided a convenient “starting point” for eugenicists seeking to work out objective indicators of an individual’s biological and social value.



Individual no. 89,
mixed: Pacific-Nordic

Individual no. 90,
mixed: Oriental-Armenoid

Source: H. Milicerowa, *Wychowanie fizyczne kobiet w świetle antropologii* (Poznań, 1939).

For indeed, the eugenic selection of the population was by no means limited solely to eliminating sick individuals, but aspired to ordering the chaotic life of society according to the biological usefulness of human beings. These engineering ambitions seem to have been a shared characteristic of eugenicists and experts on race. Jan Mydlarski, who explicitly stated what follows in an article, did not dissociate himself from such ambitions, either: “The possibility of... resolving the population into its component parts that display coherent morphological, physiological, and mental traits allows a great simplification of analysis of biological and social phenomena, which

⁵⁷ Cf. Mydlarski, “Z zagadnień konstytucjonalizmu”, p. 344.

⁵⁸ Cf. T. Szczurkiewicz, *Rasa, środowisko, rodzina. Szkice socjologiczne* (Warszawa–Poznań, 1938).

provides a starting point for practical eugenic measures”.⁵⁹ Karol Stojanowski, for whom eugenics was a practical application of racial anthropology, took a similar stance. According to Stojanowski, more or less worthy eugenics should aspire to protect and promote races of the highest value to society. He proposed granting titles analogous to the titles of nobility, with legal and political privileges attached, to “the most gifted elements” and “physical health” identified in the course of examinations. It was pointed out that privileges should concern the elite of academics, military officers, and civil servants. In addition to the creation of a new caste of “worthy” people, Stojanowski saw the need to put a halt to the assimilation of the Ruthenians and Jews. He argued that racially they were physically weaker.



Individual no. 87,
mixed: Mongoloid-Nordic



Individual no. 86, Individual no. 85,
mixed: Oriental type
Mongoloid-Nordic

Source: H. Milicerowa, *Wychowanie fizyczne kobiet w świetle antropologii* (Poznań, 1939).

For Stojanowski, Jews presented a threat to the spiritual culture of the nation, something which eugenics should serve to promote: “I conclude that the assimilation of Jews is undesirable for eugenic reasons. They must either emigrate or limit their natural increase or simply die out”.⁶⁰ Anti-Semitic and xenophobic opinions of this kind appeared sporadically in the context of eugenics, though not on the pages of *Zagadnienia Rasy*. Even for anthropologists with right-wing views, Stojanowski’s views were a kind of heresy. Stanisław Żejmo-Żejmis, a PES member, combated the use of the term “race” in the context of ethnicity. In *Prosto z mostu*, he reiterated emphatically that there is no such thing as “the Polish race” or “the Jewish race”.⁶¹ He believed that Gobineau’s theory had been a negative influence on anthropology: “Neither racism nor anthropology can from now on [that is from the publication of the essay “The Inequality of Human Races”] get

⁵⁹ Mydlarski, “Podstawowe zagadnienia eugeniki”, p. 131.

⁶⁰ K. Stojanowski, *Rasowe podstawy eugeniki* (Poznań, 1927), p. 68.

⁶¹ Żejmo-Żejmis, “Doktryna rasizmu”, p. 3.

rid of the nonsense on the Semitic and Aryan races [...] or the ‘racial’ type and the ‘truly’ Polish type”.⁶² On the other hand, he vindicated “racism” as a scientific discipline situated on the border between anthropology and sociology investigating the qualities of human races.⁶³

Even if it distanced itself from anti-Semitism, physical anthropology provided eugenicists with instruments for a selection of the population. It also furnished irrefutable proof for the power and impact of heredity within a given race.

4. THE PROBLEM OF WAR AND EUGENICS

The increasingly tense international situation was an important context of the press debate on eugenics. In 1932, Janiszewski, having been on the PES board since 1930, published an article “Wojna obronna ze stanowiska eugeniki” (Defensive war from the standpoint of eugenics) in the *Lekarz wojskowy* journal.⁶⁴ In it, he tabled a thesis, well-known to eugenicists, concerning “the dysgenic character” of progress in industry and in the army. As muscle power had been replaced by machine work, modern industrial plants had employed more and more “inadequate human material”, which “was being paid as much as healthy individuals”, something Janiszewski disapproved of. Modern war brought about results no less dangerous. At the frontline, healthy and fit soldiers perished. Janiszewski believed that the “dysgenic” tendency of modern-day wars should be reversed, a conscription reform should be instituted. He proposed that military conscription should cover all men, without regard to their age or health. Only the mentally ill and dying should be exempted. On the other hand, in Janiszewski’s opinion, the sick should be employed to operate combat machines and to fulfill auxiliary functions in the battlefield. Dr Janiszewski, a former health minister, saw future soldiers even among the very seriously ill. Among them, with the exception of the dying, there will be ones who will prefer to sacrifice the rest of their lives for the welfare of the state, rather than idly wait for inevitable

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ His views provoked a polemic from Wojciech Wasiutyński, who accused Żejmo-Żejmis that the science of races thus promoted by him was a manifestation of another form of materialism after Marxism: “According to this theory, spiritual life, culture, and politics are a superstructure of the race, like the superstructure of the economy in Marxism. And this is precisely materialism, no longer an economic one, but a more modern one, an anthropological one”, W. Wasiutyński, “Rasizm, materializm i antropologia”, *Prosto z Mostu*, 7 (1936): 7.

⁶⁴ *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 4 (1932): 201.

death in their beds.⁶⁵ He suggested extending conscription up to the age of 60, and to abolish the age limit altogether in conscription during wartime. Old people, rather than wait in their homes for death, would come to meet it in war: "I clearly realize that a man of sixty could not be used as a soldier in an attack on an enemy position or for strenuous marches [...] however, such a sixty-year-old soldier placed at a post with a machine gun to check an enemy advance [...] could fulfill his task very well despite his advanced age [...] Which one of us would not willingly sacrifice the little that remained of his life in such a situation?".⁶⁶ Janiszewski also believed this: "All things considered, the loss of a certain number of young people in war represents a far greater loss to society and to the state than losing the same number of old people".⁶⁷ During the war, the "worthy material" should be protected and replaced by those "of little value" wherever there was the greatest risk to life. That is why he suggested abolishing all restrictions concerning the health and age of conscripts to the army.

Janiszewski took care not to make his plan too costly for the state budget. Hence, he planned for full military service and preparation for warfare only for the strong and healthy, and periodical training for the rest.

In Janiszewski's proposals concerning the art of war there was an overtone well known from preceding debates. When he calls the last years of old people's lives simply "the remains of life" that will gain value if they are useful for the general public, we are confronted with a contempt for human life equal to that which led him to eugenic demands to "restrict the reproduction of types of little value". The prime objective of eugenic war was only ostensibly the protection of the strong. For even more importantly, the point was to turn war into an effective and efficient selection machine in order to get rid of the weak and the "inferior" in a simpler and quicker way than sterilization would ensure. This was to be the main advantage of eugenic war.

The editors of *Lekarz wojskowy* failed to distance themselves from Janiszewski's views. From the late 1920s, more and more information on eugenics and the Polish Eugenics Society appeared in this magazine. In 1929, a report was published from the conference of international federations of eugenics societies held in September 1928 in Munich.⁶⁸ In 1930, five articles from *Zagadnienia Rasy* were reprinted: Jan Mydlarski's "Podstawowe zagadnienia eugeniki" (The basic issues of eugenics), S. Bogdanowicz's "Współczesne prądy

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 206.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 207.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 1 (1929): 32–34.

w wychowaniu na tle kryzysu kulturalnego” (Current trends in upbringing against the background of the cultural crisis), Stefan Markusfeld’s, “Eugenika – nauka o hodowli ludzi a prawo” (Eugenics: a science of human breeding and the law), E. Wilczkowski’s “Dziedziczenie cech psychicznych” (Heredity of mental traits), and St. Balej’s “Psychologia kobiety i mężczyzny” (The psychology of man and woman).⁶⁹ Notes on eugenics in Western countries were also published, reprints and summaries from foreign eugenic journals.⁷⁰ In 1932, information was published on a course in eugenics and premarital counselling.⁷¹ In 1935, the editors of *Lekarz Wojskowy* reported that doctors of high military rank – Col. Dr Waga and Col. Dr Jan Nelken – had joined the scientific council of the Polish Eugenics Society.⁷²

The question of eugenics featured prominently at the third scientific congress of officers of the medical service in 1935. In the papers presented at that venue it is evident that eugenics was ever more often evaluated in the context of a potential armed conflict. Gustaw Szulc in his paper “Lekarz wojskowy jako eugenista” (The military doctor as a eugenicist)⁷³ continued deliberations on the possibility of reducing the “dysgenic” character of war. He believed that war of conquest had the most negative impact on societies. In order to capture foreign territories, the strongest and fittest recruits must be called to arms. By contrast, in order to defend one’s own territory, an older and more experienced soldier is needed. “Given the present-day technical measures, a very old element is fit for defense, which in a campaign for conquest would be completely worthless”,⁷⁴ the speaker assured. The idea of drafting women, and organizing female military formations he believed to be “against the interests of the species and the aspirations of eugenics”.⁷⁵ In a similar spirit to Janiszewski, though more cautiously, he admitted that in making plans for defence and a conscription system, eugenic guidelines should be taken into account.

Mieczysław Naramowski, who in *Zagadnienia Rasy* had suggested higher pay for officers in order to check the falling birth rate in military families,⁷⁶ at the congress delivered the paper “Eugenika a obronność kraju” (Eugenics and the country’s defence capacity).⁷⁷ In it he focused on two subjects: the

⁶⁹ Cf. *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 2 (1930): 80–83.

⁷⁰ Cf. *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 9 (1933): 866–867.

⁷¹ Cf. *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 10 (1932): 612.

⁷² Cf. *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 6 (1935): 58–59.

⁷³ Cf. *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 4 (1935): 193–199.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Cf. M. Naramowski, “Eugenika a wojsko”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1934): 71–72.

⁷⁷ M. Naramowski, “Eugenika a obronność kraju”, *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 7 (1935): 401–409.

size of the population and the eugenic selection of the population and the army. He believed that from the point of view of the defense capacity of the country, of crucial importance was not the number of Polish citizens, but the number of ethnic Poles as compared to national minorities. He emphasized that national minorities do not show a tendency to limit the number of offspring and that is why he rejected the idea of birth control. He distanced himself from the opinion that Poland was overpopulated. Poland's problem was not overpopulation, but unemployment. When the economic situation improved, the phenomenon of overpopulation would disappear as well.

Criticizing neo-Malthusianism, Naramowski at the same time pointed out an urgent need for the state to pursue a population policy. Following Kretschmer, he adopted the assumption that there was a connection between physical and mental traits, that spiritual qualities, as permanent as features of the build of the body, corresponded to certain physical types. In order to improve the quality of human types in the population, one should identify certain psycho-physical types characterized by the highest values for the nation, and subsequently lead to their largest possible reproduction by way of selection. Naramowski deemed his plan to be feasible. Considering that the distribution of particular racial types in given territories was known thanks to the military anthropological photograph, on the basis of this knowledge an introductory selection of the population should be embarked upon. He proposed to make proper use of the racial study of the residents of Poland for the benefit of both society and of the army. "Anthropological research has identified in various anthropological types certain qualities proper to them, i.e., selection qualities. This has practical importance for the defense of the country, if these are qualities detrimental to this defense capacity. For example, certain anthropological types are particularly predisposed to contract certain infectious diseases, while others display a certain immunity to the same diseases". Mydlarski found a liability to diphtheria and scarlet fever in the people of Volhynia. And because Volhynia is inhabited by the Subnordic or Dinaric type, most probably one of these types has a lower inborn immunity to these diseases. Rutkowski found in the Nordics of the Płońsk district a higher percentage of those suffering from tuberculosis than in other anthropological types of the same district. Most interesting in the context of Mydlarski's research is that he believed he had discovered that in several districts in Małopolska, the recruitment boards eliminate the Alpine type at draft in favour of the Subnordic and Pre-Slav types. In terms of drafting, the most valuable types: Subnordic, pre-Slav, and Northern European get eliminated in favour of Jews and the Alpine and Dinaric types.⁷⁸ Voices

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 407.

inspired by eugenics and the *Volkist* ideology that had arisen in Germany in the late nineteenth century also appeared at the congress. The name “volk” (the folk) was used to denote the spirit and vital force of a nation.⁷⁹ The *volk* was determined by two factors – nature (countryside) and history: they explain and determine the objective of human development. According to *völkisch* assumptions, man needs to be rooted, something which he can obtain in the bosom of nature, in the rural countryside that is natural to him. This being rooted in the countryside was contrasted with migration to cities that came to symbolize uprooting. The enmity towards the city invariably accompanied the development of *völkisch* thought. The bourgeoisie was seen as a destructive element, alienated from the community. The strength of the nation flowed from villages and small towns.

A dislike of the urban lifestyle and the city that smelled of *volkism* appeared in the congress paper delivered by Ernest Matuszek.⁸⁰ He believed that civilization was threatened with collapse as a result of neo-Malthusian practices. Neo-Malthusianism, first embraced by the higher classes, then by the petty-bourgeoisie, and finally by the workers, led to the propagation of the social scum – criminals and deviants who gradually seize control of the cities. “What is eventually left of depopulated city-giants is a sea of stone, where the remains of the mob nest in primitive conditions, like man in prehistoric times used to nest in caves in the rock. As depopulation advances, the villages fare no better. An influx of talented individuals and fresh blood cannot save the giant city, because village youths quickly lose their positive qualities in starting out on life on foreign ground. The positive qualities we appreciate in the village folk are an obstacle to the peasant living in the city, for they deprive him of various opportunities and expose him to contempt; hence the willingness to erase his folk traits as soon as possible, followed by the severing of the spiritual tie to the countryside accompanied by a subconscious dislike of the city. What is finally left in the country is the common people deprived of talented and worthy individuals, which fact turns them into a landless, unorganized throng. From a civilized nation there remains a lifeless society, incapable of organized resistance to the invader, constituting nothing but a motley crew that an accidental conqueror displaces at will”.⁸¹ That is why the object of eugenics should be to increase the number of births and the care for the elite, a quick reproduction of the “most worthy”

⁷⁹ Cf. G.L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York, 1964).

⁸⁰ Cf. E. Matuszek, “Realizowanie postulatów eugenicznych”, *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 1(1936): 48–53.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 50–51.

strata. Matuszek criticized “the misconceived humanitarianism of present-day civilization”,⁸² which extends protection to individuals of little value to the detriment of the healthy.

All the above-mentioned speakers called for introducing compulsory sterilization as the only foolproof measure protecting the health of the population. Matuszek pointed to the economic benefits resulting from segregation and sterilization.⁸³ Less money for the prison system, more for welfare.⁸⁴ Following Grotjahn he quoted a list of disorders, according to which those to be deprived of the possibility to reproduce should include: asthenics, provided that they suffer from tuberculosis, the mentally retarded, mentally ill, epileptics, Graves’ disease and Huntington’s chorea sufferers, alcoholics and drug addicts, sexual deviants (homosexuals, masochists, and sadists), the deaf and the dumb, the blind, diabetes sufferers, patients with chronic protein secretion, women whose father, brother, or uncle suffers from haemophilia, the physically handicapped, as well as persons suffering from diseases classified as “rare” (congenital cataract, retinopathy).⁸⁵

Minor corrections to this list were made by Szulc.⁸⁶ In his opinion, asthenics and diabetes sufferers should be struck from the list. There was agreement as to the remaining cases.

5. SOCIAL AND MORAL LIBERALISM AND EUGENICS

In the interwar years, a peculiar, non-political strain of liberalism emerged, and the milieu surrounding the weekly *Wiadomości Literackie* came to symbolize it. *Wiadomości Literackie* (Literary news), established by Mieczysław Grydzewski in 1924, became a point of support for the Skamander poetic group comprising: Antoni Słonimski, Jan Lechoń, Julian Tuwim, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Kazimierz Wierzyński, Stanisław Baliński, and Józef Wittlin. The weekly’s regular contributors included Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, Emil Breiter, Józef Wasowski, Ksawery Pruszyński, Irena Krzywicka, and Paweł Hulka-Laskowski.⁸⁷ *Wiadomości* was a genuine institution in the intellectual life of interwar Poland. It played a great role in shaping the literary tastes of

⁸² Ibid., p. 51.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ In a separate paper, Radzisław Tchórznicki addressed the question of venereal diseases in the army. Cf. id., “Walka z chorobami wenerycznymi w wojsku jako zagadnienie eugeniki”, *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 5 (1937): 304–309.

⁸⁵ Naramowski, “Eugenika a obronność”, pp. 406–407.

⁸⁶ G. Szulc, “Lekarz wojskowy jako eugenista”, *Lekarz Wojskowy*, 4 (1935): 193–199.

⁸⁷ Cf. A. Paczkowski, *Prasa polska w latach 1918–1939* (Warszawa, 1980).

its readers. They helped numerous young commentators and prose writers, such as Michał Choromański and Zbigniew Uniłowski, in launching their careers. Apart from admiration, *Wiadomości* also attracted caustic criticism. It was not without importance to its numerous critics that it was regarded as a magazine not only of the intellectual, but also of the political elite. After the 1926 coup d'état, *Wiadomości* maintained an amiable neutrality towards the Piłsudski camp. Słonimski confessed: "What connected us with Piłsudski's followers was the whole tradition of the struggle for independence, the Marshal himself, the cult of Piłsudski's Legions, as well as liberal and left-wing ideas, rather than those hearkening to National Democracy or the right-wing camp".⁸⁸ Even the arrest of the politicians from the Centrolew party alliance, and later the Brześć trial, provoked only a weak and belated response in the magazine.⁸⁹

Some of the magazine's regular contributors, for example Słonimski and Krzywicka, were connected, mainly through their parents' activism, with left-wing political movements. In the interwar years, however, there came a distinct shift in political opinion towards the centre. Contributors to *Wiadomości* became advocates of liberalism. As Koźniewski defined it, "an intellectual liberalism concerning ideas, art and science" that shunned liberal solutions in the economy (most contributors were in favour of socialist visions) and politics in the narrow sense of the term.⁹⁰ The freethinking views of *Wiadomości* contributors, their drawing on the Enlightenment's traditions, were present in various forms in the magazine. On the front page of *Wiadomości* one could read Bertrand Russell's extensive essay "A Free Man's Worship", Boy-Żeleński's articles critical of Polish Catholicism, and Antoni Słonimski's columns criticizing Jewish religious schools.

Furthermore, with great interest *Wiadomości* followed the development of culture in the USSR. The social and political transformations in that country were regarded as a large-scale experiment. In order to look at the transformations from close up, Słonimski, following the example of many other intellectuals (Shaw, Wells, Gide) set out on a journey across Russia. Słonimski's impressions from his journey to the USSR,⁹¹ published in installments, and the 1933 issue of *Wiadomości* devoted entirely to the "culture

⁸⁸ *Wspomnienia o Antonim Słonimskim* (Warszawa, 1996), p. 232.

⁸⁹ The attitude of *Wiadomości* towards politics following the coup d'état of May 1926 is a subject that deserves a separate essay. Important information on the opinions of *Wiadomości* contributors on the Brześć trial is provided by *Wspomnienia o Antonim Słonimskim*, including an interesting interview with Słonimski, *ibid.*, pp. 224–246.

⁹⁰ K. Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień. Szkice o tygodnikach społeczno-kulturalnych* (Warszawa, 1976), p. 42.

⁹¹ Cf. A. Słonimski, *Moja podróż do Rosji* (Warszawa, 1932).

of nascent socialism”, provoked sharp and mostly negative responses in the Polish press. The special issue was published immediately after Poland and the USSR had signed the London convention (July 1933), but the magazine’s editors declared that the idea of the issue had emerged earlier: “The issue, conceived as much as a year ago, falls at a time of an increasingly cordial agreement between the Republic of Poland and the USSR. If this manifestation of Polish-Russian friendship should play even the most modest role in the work towards this agreement, which immensely contributes to the maintenance of peace and largely determines the future of Europe, defending itself in various ways against a deluge of barbarism, the editors of *Wiadomości Literackie* will consider their mission to have been accomplished”.⁹² This statement was received as a political provocation. Grydzewski’s adversaries would keep reproaching him for the “pro-Bolshevik” issue of *Wiadomości* in nearly every statement.

However, despite the interest it took in the culture of Soviet Russia, *Wiadomości* remained within the circle of Western, mainly French and Anglo-Saxon culture.⁹³ English-language literature, books by Bertrand Russell, George Herbert Wells, and Ben Lindsey, caused interest in moral issues in the magazine. Towards the end of the 1920s, *Wiadomości* embarked simultaneously on three campaigns concerning moral issues: in support of birth control, a reform of marriage legislation, and sex education. From the name of Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, the reformers of bourgeois morality were dubbed “boyownicy”, a modification of the Polish word “bojownicy” (fighters). The ideological opponents of *Wiadomości* quickly coined their own description “boyszewicy” (boysheviks), erroneously seeking the source of inspirations on moral issues in the conditions prevalent in the USSR.

All three campaigns concerning moral issues were pervaded by eugenic argumentation, though it had not been the case from the beginning. In the second half of the 1930s, the circle of “boyownicy” entered into cooperation with eugenicists from the Kraków magazine *Życie Świadome*. Using the example of the three campaigns concerning moral issues, I would like to show an evolution of the attitudes of boyownicy, who, departing from liberal positions, over the course of time adopted the eugenic vision for correcting the population.

⁹² *Wiadomości Literackie*, 47 (1933): 1.

⁹³ A statement by Ksawery Pruszyński was characteristic: “In spite of everything, the people from *Wiadomości* are closer to the West than to the East, and in spite of everything their cultural orientation is directed towards Paris, London, America, Rome, not towards Moscow. In the present years, this is very valuable in our world of cultural and ideological phenomena”, id., “W obronie *Wiadomości Literackich*”, in: id., *Niezadowoleni i entuzjaści. Publicystyka*, vol. 1: 1931–1939 (Warszawa, 1990), p. 170.

6. BIRTH CONTROL

American researchers of the history of eugenics point to three movements that played a crucial role in the shaping of the eugenic lobby: birth control advocates, pacifists, and advocates of prohibition. The American historian James H. Timberlake emphasizes that in the USA prohibition was part of “the progressive era”, as the first two decades of the twentieth century came to be known.⁹⁴ Social activists of the progressive orientation, in striking against the distilling industry, on the one hand wanted to curb the power of the industrial and financial plutocracy, and on the other hand to eliminate one of the factors causing social ills including poverty, crime and disease. The basis for the crackdown on alcoholism was the rigid Protestant ethic and the fear of immorality that destroys both the spirit and the body. Prohibitionists believed alcohol to have degenerative influence on the drinker’s offspring. Alcohol was particularly dangerous at the time of conception; it damaged the embryo, causing irreversible changes in its structure. As a result, babies at birth were equipped with imperfect biological material.⁹⁵ The fear of degeneration and of the collapse of civilization was so strong that, as Carol McCann observes: “Racial betterment, regardless of how race was defined, was a key ideological element of the Progressive Era”.⁹⁶ No lesser role was played by heredity, which provided, if not a complete than at least a partial answer to the question about the source of poverty and crime. The humanitarian impulse manifested in the efforts undertaken by philanthropists and social activists in combating social pathologies and poverty sometimes brought surprising results. The very same people who one day propagated the need to build social housing for the poor, the following day went to the committee demanding the introduction of compulsory sterilization.⁹⁷ Even among the supporters of pacifism, eugenic arguments could be heard: that war was believed to eliminate the most valuable individuals from society, it caused an increase in the numbers of ill and inadequate individuals. The high natural increase provided legions of disciplined soldiers that served as cannon fodder. Arguments of this kind were accepted by women’s activists, beginning with Margaret Sanger.

In Poland, neither prohibition nor pacifism played an equally important role. The birth control movement, which had arisen in the socialist commu-

⁹⁴ J.H. Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement 1900–1920* (Cambridge, 1963).

⁹⁵ These views were present on the pages of *The Eugenics Review*. Cf. C.W. Salceby, “Racial Poisons. Alcohol”, *The Eugenics Review* (April 1911– January 1912): 30.

⁹⁶ C.R. McCann, *Birth Control Politics in the United States 1916–1945* (New York, 1994), p. 14.

⁹⁷ For more on the subject, see M. Haller, *Eugenics. Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* (New Brunswick, 1963), p. 77.

nity, was relatively stronger. But proper renown was brought to it only by the *Wiadomości Literackie* campaign of 1929-1932.

The idea of deliberately limiting the number of offspring had been undergoing a major evolution since the eighteenth century. It was born thanks to the English minister Thomas Malthus. Less than ten years after the French Revolution, he published *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), in which he showed that overpopulation in the lowest social strata was the main source of poverty and destitution.⁹⁸ Moreover, overpopulation may threaten not only the poor, but the population as a whole because of the exhaustion of food supplies. The population law developed by Malthus said that while populations grow in geometric progression, food supplies grow only in arithmetic progression. Consequently, Malthus predicted the ever-deepening poverty for the poor as a result of his merciless population law. The more vibrant the economy, the higher the pay, the more emaciated the poor will be, because full employment and high wages will lead to the expansion of the population and an intensification of the struggle for survival among the poorest.⁹⁹ The population, Malthus claimed, is only able to feed itself because there are two kinds of checks: positive, such as hunger, disease, war, and infanticide, and negative, i.e., postponement of marriage, sexual abstinence, and artificial contraceptive measures. Both kinds of checks lead to unhappiness and misdeeds. As the poor are subjected to greater population pressure, misdeeds are the most widespread among them. *An Essay on the Principle of Population* sparked animated debate and a wave of criticism against Malthus' theses. Under the pressure of these criticisms, five years later Malthus published a new edition of his work, in which he revised his theses. He claimed that the poor may mitigate the merciless effects of the population law by limiting the number of their offspring through sexual abstinence. On the matter of artificial contraception, his position remained unchanged.

Malthus' theory had a major impact on the philosophers and social thinkers over the next century, since it turned around Western societies' traditional way of thinking – namely, that welfare depended on the size of the family: the more family members, the higher probability of “a better” life. Most nineteenth-century thinkers, including Jeremy Bentham, James and John Stuart Mill, Francis Place, Richard Carlile, Robert Dale Owen,

⁹⁸ C.f. W.L. Langer, “The Origins of the Birth Control Movement in England in the Early Nineteenth Century”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (Spring 1975): 267–284.

⁹⁹ On the subject see G. Himmelfarb, “Ubóstwo a dwa oświecenia”, in: *Oświecenie dzisiaj. Rozmowy w Castel Gandolfo*, transl. M. Łukasiewicz, J. Migasiński, A. Parelu (Kraków, 1999), pp. 140–174.

and George and Charles Drysdale agreed with Malthus, though unlike him they recommended the use of contraceptives.¹⁰⁰ Thus the neo-Malthusian movement was born that slowly spread to the entire continent of Europe.¹⁰¹ In 1877, the first neo-Malthusian organization, the Malthusian League, was set up in London by Charles Drysdale. Five years later, Aletta Jacobs, the first Dutch female physician, established a family planning clinic in Amsterdam, and in 1896 Ligue de la Régénération Humaine was established in France and Regeneration Humana, based in Barcelona, in 1904. Numerous pamphlets, magazines and leaflets promoting a variety contraceptive methods were published.

The third phase of the movement to limit the number of offspring is connected with the name of the US social activist Margaret Sanger (1879–1966). She came from a big Irish family that had settled in the United States. She graduated from The Nurses Training School of White Plains, and afterwards from the Post Graduate School of The Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital. In 1900, she married William Sanger, an architect and committed Labour activist. After several years of marriage, with three children, she filed for divorce. She remarried in 1922. Her long hospital practice drew her attention to the connection between big families and poverty. In 1913, she founded a periodical *The Woman Rebel*, in which she pointed to the need for women to use contraceptive techniques. In place of the grim nineteenth century term neo-Malthusianism, she coined a new one: birth control. Since US law prohibited neo-Malthusian propaganda, Sanger escaped to Europe fearing legal action. In Britain, she befriended George Herbert Wells and Havelock Ellis. She returned to the United States in 1916, and continued her work there. She set up the first birth control clinic and the American Birth Control League. Margaret Sanger's campaign was supported by the anarchist Emma Goldman, the Swedish feminist Ellen Key, and Sanger's British counterpart, Maria Stopes.

Stopes (1880–1958) came from a middle-class English family. She was the first woman in Britain to earn a doctoral degree in paleobotanics. In 1911, she married a Canadian botanist. Their marital life did not fare

¹⁰⁰ John Stuart Mill wrote about a group of young philosophers gathered around Bentham: "Their mode of thinking was not characterized by Benthamism in any sense which has relation to Bentham as a chief or guide, but rather by a combination of Bentham's point of view with that of the modern political economy, and with the Hartleian metaphysics. Malthus' population principle was quite as much a banner, and point of union among us", *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, vol. 1: *Autobiography and Literary Essays*, eds. J.M. Robson and J. Stillinger (Abingdon, 1996), p. 107 (<http://www.utilitarianism.com/millauto/four.html>).

¹⁰¹ Cf. A. McLaren, *A History of Contraception: from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford, 1990).

well. Despite her university education, with the ignorance typical of early twentieth-century women Stopes did not realize that her husband was impotent, and the marriage remained unconsummated. In 1914, she started to seek an annulment. Shocked with her own ignorance, she embarked on studying sexuality. These studies resulted in a book entitled *Married Love* (1918), which proved to be a genuine sensation. It was reprinted in millions of copies. In 1921, Stopes founded the first birth control clinic in London.

The dynamically developing movement for the limitation of the number of children not only changed its name, but also underwent deeper transformations. Promoting birth control, women's movement activists separated the problem of fertility and reproduction from other political and economic connections that the movement had had in the nineteenth century. They gave it a positive dimension: not only did a limitation of the size of the family protect one against poverty, but also ensured a satisfying sex life between the spouses. Thus, the birth control movement slowly turned into a lifestyle compatible with the challenges of the revolution in social mores that occurred in the 1920s.

Paradoxically, Margaret Sanger, the woman who did the most to promote birth control, did not share feminist views on the woman's role and place in society and in the family. Nor did she support the demand for free love that was fashionable in the 1920s. She believed that while a woman must not be a reproductive "machine", motherhood and the family remained her main destiny. Donald H. Pickens believes that Sanger represented the conservative current of progressivism.¹⁰² Her book *Women and the New Race* called for race improvement through birth control. She spoke with approval of Galton and Pearson. She believed that the increase in the numbers of the physically and mentally disabled posed a serious threat to civilization; that is why she agreed with eugenic demands for state control of the reproduction of the disabled. Sanger supported the idea of sterilization, including for economic reasons. She believed that taxes were high because of the necessity to support and treat an increasing number of the sick. She even proposed a state pension for those who underwent voluntary sterilization.¹⁰³

Members of the British eugenics movement, initially distrustful of Sanger's activities, came to accept her birth control demands after the First World War. The introduction of the subject of birth control to The Eugenics Review became possible thanks to Havelock Ellis, among other supporters. In 1918, he published an extensive article there pointing out the convergence

¹⁰² D.K. Pickens, *Eugenics and the Progressives* (Nashville, 1968), p. 82.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

of the aims of eugenics and those of birth control.¹⁰⁴ He described Margaret Sanger as a “heroic pioneer”, who with a “noble passion” and “humanitarian zest” was fighting against the unjust law prohibiting women access to information on contraceptives. There was feedback, too: The Birth Control News was filled with articles discussing the problems of race, degeneration, and eugenics in thinking about society. In the English-speaking countries in the 1920s and 1930s, eugenic and neo-Malthusian circles took up many joint initiatives together.¹⁰⁵

In Germany, where the birth control movement was very strong, a similar cooperation occurred between sexual culture reformers and eugenicists. Atina Grossmann says that a lot of birth control propagators saw sterilization as a way of liberating society from the economic burdens resulting from the necessity to support and treat alcoholics, tuberculosis sufferers, the deaf, and the mentally retarded. When in the early 1930s Margaret Sanger visited a birth control clinic in Frankfurt, she was surprised to note that Doctor Hertha Riese ordered a sterilization procedure in several dozen cases within a single day.¹⁰⁶ Hans Harmsen, a hygienist, eugenicist, and activist in Protestant social organizations, noted that within the 12 years of its existence (up to 1931), 1,200 women were sterilized in a Freiburg gynecological clinic.¹⁰⁷

A similar phenomenon occurred in Canada in 1915. The foremost Canadian women’s organization, the National Council for Women, submitted a request to the prime minister to establish a royal commission on mental diseases, and proposed compulsory sterilizations ten years later. In the 1920s, many other women’s associations developed programs of health care for children and adolescents. A tendency to care for family health turned into an extreme proposal for eliminating the source of inherited diseases through migration restrictions, isolation of the mentally ill, and ultimately also their sterilization. According to Angus McLaren, this was determined by the type of activist attitude popular among women in the wake of the First World War, one he terms “maternal feminism”. It seems that the involvement of women in the eugenics movement was a common experience of English-speaking countries.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. H. Ellis, “Birth Control and Eugenics”, *Eugenics Review* (April 1917–January 1918): 32–41.

¹⁰⁵ By that I mean the numerous conferences on birth control, at which papers on contraception and sterilization were delivered. Cf. *Sexual Reform Congress, London 8–14 IX, 1929, World League for Sexual Reform*, ed. N. Haire (London, 1930); *The Practice of Contraception. An International Symposium and Survey*, eds. M. Sanger, H.M. Stone (London, 1931).

¹⁰⁶ A. Grossmann, *Reforming Sex. The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920–1950* (New York–Oxford, 1990), p. 73.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

In Poland, an organized family planning movement did not emerge until after the First World War. In the nineteenth century, Malthus' population law had not caused as stormy debates as was the case in the West. Moreover, the demographic processes that provided an important backdrop for the population debate took a different course. Unlike Western European countries, Poland had not experienced such a dramatic decline in the number of births in the years 1870-1920, called the "demographic transition". It is calculated that in Germany over the course of two generations reproduction declined by 65 percent. In Britain the couples that married in the 1890s had 6.2 children on average, whereas couples who wed in the years 1920-24 had only 2.3 children. A similar process occurred in the United States, where reproduction fell by 50 percent over the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁸ It was France that had the lowest natural increase: from the mid-nineteenth century, the term "the French family" meant a family made up of parents and two children. Demographers explained this phenomenon as follows: in traditional, pre-industrial societies the population number was stable, because it balanced between a high mortality rate (notably infant mortality) and a high birth rate. In the eighteenth century, as a result of civilizational advances, progress in hygiene and medicine, the levels of deaths considerably declined, but the birth rate remained the same. This resulted in a huge baby boom in the years 1750-1850. Afterwards, population stability was achieved, but not on account of diseases and mortality, as had been the case before, but rather through artificial birth control methods. Unfortunately, this theory does not explain why France reduced the number of births the earliest, overtaking other countries by a good half century. The second theory saw the reason for the decline in births in the peculiar natures of each of the European nations and in the dynamics of social and economic changes in the nineteenth century, resulting in secularization and growing prosperity among the middle classes.

In further contrast to Western nations, the Poland of the interwar years was an agricultural economy, and a weakly urbanized one. Slow industrialization processes encouraged people to abandon farming, but at the same time did not cause the industrial workers group to swell. Thus, the transitional sphere between backward agriculture and modern industry was growing.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, industrial modernization was advancing very slowly, while Poland's population was growing rapidly. In 1921, Poland had a population of over 27 million, and according to 1938 statistics, about 35 million. Between

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 178.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. J. Żarnowski, "Epoka dwóch wojen", in: *Spółczesność polskie od X do XX wieku*, eds. I. Ichnatowicz, A. Mączak, B. Zientara, J. Żarnowski (Warszawa, 1988), pp. 597-600.

1926 and 1930, the natural increase ratio was at an annual average level of 15.5 per 1000 residents, while at the same time natural growth in France was 1.4 per 1000 citizens, 4.4 in Britain, and 6.6 in Germany. A high birth rate made it necessary to find jobs for 100,000-150,000 people every year, a task which was obviously beyond the state's realistic capacity.¹¹⁰

In the early years of Poland's independence, a population debate was undertaken primarily by physicians and eugenicists. The first eugenics congresses were haunted by the fear of what was perceived as depopulation.¹¹¹ Doctors voiced opinions in the magazines *Zdrowie* and *Ginekologia Polska* that bore testimony, rather, to a rejection of Malthusian principles. One doctor argued, clearly in opposition to the author of the *Essay on Population*: "Population brings prosperity, and the denser the population, the richer and happier the country".¹¹² The depopulation had been brought about by the war on the one hand, and by the ever more frequent abortion procedures on the other hand. Doctors argued that the number of abortion procedures had been growing since the beginning of the twentieth century. Kazimierz Bocheński, a gynecologist, argued first in *Ginekologia Polska* and later also in *Zdrowie* that the number of miscarriages was growing as compared to the number of births, citing statistics from a gynecological and obstetrics clinic. While between 1900 and 1904 the relation between the percentages of births and miscarriages remained stable, from 1904 there had been a steady increase in miscarriages, with a culmination in the wartime years.

Doctors' opinions on the acceptability of abortion were very deeply divided. Physicians, including eugenicists, generally believed that abortion may only be performed in exceptional circumstances. For example, Szulc reserved that abortion on eugenic grounds should occur very rarely. He believed that even the mother's tuberculosis was not a sufficient reason for performing an abortion.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ As evident from the calculations made by Jerzy Zdzisław Holzer, concerning the fertility of women in the first half of the 20th century, there were on the average 6.2 children per woman during her fertile years (15–49) in 1900–1901 and 3.5 in 1931–1932 (the so-called total fertility rate); there were, however, major differences between the fertility of rural (4.1 in 1931–1932) as compared to urban women (nearly twice lower at 2.2). Cf. J.Z. Holzer, "Przyczynek do analizy rodności i płodności kobiet w latach 1950–1960", *Statystyka Polski* (1962): 40; id., *Demografia* (Warszawa, 1980), p. 265; after R. Renz, "Kobiety a planowanie rodziny w latach międzywojennych (w świetle źródeł kościelnych z Kielecczyny)", in: *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego. Wiek XIX i XX. Zbiór studiów*, vol. 5, eds. A. Żarnowska, A. Szwarc (Warszawa, 1997), p. 115.

¹¹¹ Cf. Chapters 2 and 3.

¹¹² K. Bocheński, "Neomaltuzjanizm i sztuczne przerywanie ciąży jako zagadnienia społeczne", *Zdrowie*, 2 (1924): 95.

¹¹³ Cf. K. Tarnowski, "Wskazania do legalnego przerywania ciąży", *Nowiny Lekarskie*, 3 (1923): 129.

Social reasons for performing the procedure were universally rejected in medical circles. Wiktor Grzywo-Dąbrowski was an exception at that time in allowing abortion for social reasons.¹¹⁴ Representative of the physicians of that era was the opinion of Szulc, who declared: “Abortion for social reasons, because we assume that the mother will not be able to raise the child, is a transgression of the same kind as murdering an individual who will probably be unable to find a job”.¹¹⁵

All doctors agreed that abortion used as a birth control measure was widespread in Polish society, and in all social strata. In the lower strata, the phrase “to have an abortion” was replaced with the euphemism “to bring on a period”. Women underwent abortions if the pregnancy was not more advanced than the third month, for women from the poorer strata believed that up to that point a pregnancy was nothing more than clotted menstrual blood.¹¹⁶ In rural areas, professional panders were active who gathered pregnant women from a given area (villages, mostly) and took them to an abortionist in town. “Medical services” of this kind often resulted in infections. One village doctor complained: “Three to four times a week I hear the same thing: ‘I put my hands up, I lifted a child, and a hemorrhage broke out.’ All of them wives of insured men, naturally, they pay the midwife five zlotys for the wire and the infection. The doctor’s work they get for free. An abortion season”.¹¹⁷

Wiktor Grzywo-Dąbrowski calculated that between 1918 and 1924 in Warsaw, most illegal abortions were detected in working-class communities. Female workers constituted the biggest group, followed by workers’ wives and servants.¹¹⁸ Women from the intelligentsia had abortions just as often, but the detection rate of that illegal procedure was much lower among the intelligentsia. A beam of light is thrown upon that phenomenon by an anonymous survey carried out in doctors’ families. Out of 255 returns, in 174 cases women admitted to having had an abortion.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ W. Grzywo-Dąbrowski, *Przerywanie ciąży z punktu widzenia społecznego, prawnego i lekarskiego* (Warszawa–Lwów, 1926).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

¹¹⁶ This superstition was equally popular in Great Britain. Working class women used the same euphemism for abortion and had abortions up to the third month unaware that they were breaking the law, cf. McLaren, *A History of Contraception*, p. 216.

¹¹⁷ *Pamiętniki lekarzy*, selection and introduction by J. Borkowski, with a foreword by M. Wańkiewicz (Kraków, 1987), p. 25.

¹¹⁸ W. Grzywo-Dąbrowski, “Przyczynki do statystyki poronień i dzieciobójstwa w Warszawie w latach powojennych”, *Lekarz Polski*, 6 (1927): 11. The detection rate of illegal abortion was low. For Warsaw it was 56 cases in 1919, 98 cases in 1920, 103 cases in 1921, 92 cases in 1922, 95 cases in 1923 and 126 cases in 1924.

¹¹⁹ Cf. M. Kacprzak, *Badania nad rozrodczością*, part 2: *Ankieta wśród lekarzy* (Warszawa, 1933), p. 24.

The problem of abortion became the subject of public debate as a result of the work of the Codification Commission. The first draft of the criminal law, published in 1929, provided for a penalty of up to five years for the woman, and of up to 15 years for the perpetrators of abortion, without any clauses or exceptions. This aspect, the penalization of abortion procedures, was raised by Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński in *Kurier Poranny* in October 1929. In his article entitled “Największa zbrodnia prawa karnego” (The worst crime of criminal law), he attacked the Codification Commission’s members for making a “dead” law. He attributed responsibility for the victory of traditionalism and moral hypocrisy to the Roman Catholic clergy.¹²⁰ His columns criticizing the proposed legal solutions and pointing to the mass scale of abortions performed were published in the magazine throughout the year.¹²¹ Collected, they were published as a brochure as *Piekło kobiet* (Women’s hell). Almost at the same time, Boy published a series of articles aimed at the clergy in the magazine *Wiadomości Literackie*, later published as a collection entitled *Nasi okupanci* (Our occupying force).¹²² Socialists, too, ran their own campaign in favour of birth control. The socialist magazine *Głos Kobiet* (Women’s voice) published a series of articles by Henryk Kłuszyński entitled “Znaczenie regulacji urodzeń dla klasy robotniczej” (The importance of birth control for the working class).¹²³

Motivated by these public declarations, eugenicists took a stance on the question of birth control. *Zagadnienia Rasy* published an extensive article by W. Jerzy Babecki, entitled “Zagadnienia zapobiegania ciąży i eugenika” (Birth control issues and eugenics).¹²⁴ The author argued: “Everything that has been said above about birth control propaganda and the neo-Malthusian movement must primarily concern Polish eugenicists, all the more so because both birth control issues and abortion for social reasons have been raised in recent times on several occasions in the daily press, in *Kurier Poranny*,

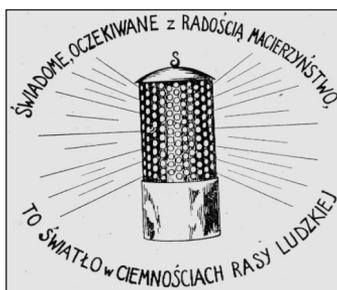
¹²⁰ T. Żeleński-Boy, “Największa zbrodnia prawa karnego”, *Kurier Poranny*, 291 (1929).

¹²¹ Cf. T. Żeleński-Boy, “Argumenty”, *Kurier Poranny*, 298 (1929); id., “W jaskini lwów”, *Kurier Poranny*, 305 (1929); id., “Paragraf a lancet”, *Kurier Poranny*, 312 (1929); id., “Prawnicy przeciw prawu”, *Kurier Poranny*, 319 (1929); id., “Rzeczywistość”, *Kurier Poranny*, 326 (1929); id., “Błogosławieństwo boże”, *Kurier Poranny*, 333 (1929); id., “Lwy ugłaskane”, *Kurier Poranny*, 340 (1929); id., “Błogosławieństwo czy przekleństwo”, *Kurier Poranny*, 347 (1929); id., “Życie mówi...”, *Kurier Poranny*, 354 (1929); id., “Zamknięcie bilansu”, *Kurier Poranny*, 359 (1929).

¹²² In 1929, another of Boy’s works was published, entitled *Dziewice konsystorskie* (Consistory Virgins), ridiculing the institution of consistories, or ecclesiastical courts, which gave rulings on church marriage annulments on the basis of falsified evidence.

¹²³ Cf. *Kurier Poranny*, nos. 298, 305, 312, 319, 329, 333, 340, 347, 354, 359 (1929); *Głos Kobiet*, 12 (1929), *Głos Kobiet*, 1–4 (1930).

¹²⁴ *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 7–8 (1929): 300.



Conscious, joyfully desired motherhood is a light in the darkness of the human race

Source: *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 7–8 (1929): 311.

and even in *Robotnik*. Society in general and the medical world in particular have the right to expect an opinion on the matter from the Polish Eugenics Society. Therefore, we need to adopt a clear stance on these issues”.¹²⁵ Babecki believed that the birth control movement should be given a eugenic character, so as to make people with negative hereditary traits, and, secondly, the poor who could not afford to bring up their progeny, avoid producing offspring. He even proposed including advice on birth control methods in eugenic premarital counselling.

However, in the Polish eugenics community there was no consensus on incorporating neo-Malthusianism in the race-betterment program. Some eugenicists claimed that social circumstances might not be a sufficient reason for consciously avoiding offspring. The community was also divided on abortion. Wernic consistently opposed abortion in the belief that sterilization was the only effective measure of preventing the births of individuals “of little value”. Eugenics’ opinions on the issue were divided abroad, as well. One of the foremost German eugenicists, Hans Harmsen, was an advocate of birth control and sterilization, while at the same time opposing liberalization of the abortion law.¹²⁶

Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński was aware that there was no consensus among eugenicists on birth control. He wrote: “Eugenics has long been interested in the issue of planned parenthood. Our eugenic clinic covers that area, too, but it does that so timidly and fearfully that nobody even knows it exists. The eugenicist physicians stick to strictly eugenic indications: open tuberculosis, epilepsy, mental illnesses, etc. But is it possible to separate these matters from the social question? [...] It is difficult to reach any agreement on that point with eugenicist gentlemen; they nod, when cornered, they even agree,

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 319.

¹²⁶ Cf. Grossmann, *Reforming Sex*, p. 73.

but immediately afterwards they begin to talk about the need for a populous Poland, well, about the “yellow peril”, even [...] That is why their clinic, even though it does exist, exists in such a way as if it did not exist. Hence it was necessary to set up a new, completely independent one”.¹²⁷

Ultimately, the provisions concerning abortion in the new criminal code (which took effect on 1 September 1932) read as follows: “Article 231. The woman who aborts her foetus or allows it to be aborted by another individual is liable to a penalty of imprisonment of up to 3 years. Article 232. Whoever aborts a foetus with the pregnant woman’s consent or aids and abets her in that, is liable to a penalty of imprisonment of up to 5 years. Article 232. There is no crime under Articles 231 and 232, if the procedure has been performed by a physician and:

- a) It was necessary because of the woman’s health, or
- b) The pregnancy was the result of a circumstance specified in Article 203, 204, 205 or 206”.¹²⁸

The above-mentioned articles concerned minors, the mentally retarded, rape, an abuse of a relationship of dependence, or exploitation of a critical situation, and, lastly, incest. Thus, as we can see, the penalty of imprisonment for the woman was reduced from 5 to 3 years, but at the same time the scope of legal abortion was narrowed, most importantly by deleting the provision that a woman may undergo an abortion for social reasons. Boy-Żeleński commented: “Let us say right away that the struggle has ended in a defeat of common sense and humanity. The new code has thwarted the result of the work of the Codification Commission, namely its most important achievement: the daring and clear citing of social and financial reasons”.¹²⁹

After the codification of the criminal law, the women’s press (*Kobieta Współczesna* and *Bluszcz*) became silent on the problem of birth control. Institutionally, however, the birth control advocacy movement continued to develop.

At the initiative of socialists (and more precisely, of the Birth Control Section of the Workers’ Social Service Society, and thanks to the inexhaustible energy of Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka), the first Planned Parenthood Clinic was opened in Poland on October 25, 1931. It was located at 53 Leszno Street in Warsaw. The clinic was set up at a time that was very difficult for the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). In September 1930, the authorities had arrested a dozen or so members of the opposition against the ruling Sanacja political camp, including six PPS members: Herman Lieberman, Norbert

¹²⁷ T. Boy-Żeleński, “Jak skończyć z piekłem kobiet?”, in: *Pisma*, vol. 15 (Warszawa, 1958), p. 243.

¹²⁸ T. Boy-Żeleński, “Piekło kobiet wciąż otwarte”, *Wiadomości Literackie*, 32 (1932): 7.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

Barlicki, Adam Pragier, Adam Ciołkosz, Stanisław Dubois, and Mieczysław Mastek. The prisoners were placed at the Brześć stronghold, where they were kicked, beaten, and verbally abused; fictional executions were staged to intimidate them. A wave of demonstrations rolled through Warsaw and other cities, involving bloody clashes with the police. Several Polish Socialist Party members, including Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, were brought to trial, accused of organizing illegal parades. After the 1930 parliamentary elections, notorious for their abuses, the trial of the politicians released from the Brześć stronghold was held. The bill of indictment accused them of having plotted to stage a coup d'état and of inciting crowds to hatred and revolution. The defendants were prevented from publicly revealing the truth about the Brześć stronghold. Journalists from *Robotnik* were helpless, too, as their articles were confiscated by the censor, and the magazine filled up with blank spots.

While socialists became increasingly involved in the struggle in defense of democracy and the rule of law, *Wiadomości Literackie* valiantly ran a campaign for birth control. Boy-Żeleński noted with satisfaction that the Leszno clinic was more and more often referred to as “Boy’s clinic”. On another occasion he complained: “Our dailies, preoccupied with political struggles, do not realize that mores are perhaps even more important than the form of government and the wording of the constitution”.¹³⁰ He complained about the lack of solidarity between progressive milieux, about his “solitude in the struggle against bigotry and backwardness”. *Robotnik* responded to Boy-Żeleński’s complaints with violent polemics. In 1932, a dispute broke out between socialists and the liberals from *Wiadomości Literackie* which caused their relations to cool considerably.¹³¹

At the same time, in 1932, *Wiadomości* published its first *Życie Świadome* (Conscious Life) supplement, with Margaret Sanger as its honorary patron. In 1933, at Boy-Żeleński’s inspiration, a League for the Reform of Mores was founded, as a branch of the London-based World League for Sexual Reform.¹³² The League’s prime objectives included the propagation of humanitarian thought and the principles of secular ethics by means of striving towards the abolition of: the death penalty, the criminalization of abortion procedures, restrictions on prostitution, as well as by promoting sex education for children and youth, neo-Malthusianism, eugenics, and seeking to secure the institution of civil marriages. Among the signers of the appeal concerning the founding of the League were Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, Helena Boguszewska,

¹³⁰ “U źródeł nędzy i ciemnoty”, *Wiadomości Literackie*, 19 (1931).

¹³¹ On the subject see M. Gawin, “Wpadnij do Mieszczkańskiej”. O konflikcie między socjalistami a *Wiadomościami Literackimi*”, *Res Publica Nowa*, 1–2 (2000): 38–43.

¹³² Cf. T. Boy-Żeleński, “Liga Reformy Obyczajów”, *Wiadomości Literackie*, 16 (1933): 1.

Irena Krzywicka, Maria Morska-Knasterowa, Henryk Rubinraut, Wincenty Rzymowski, and Józef Wasowski.

Boy-Żeleński was the animator of the whole project. He believed that the low level of sexual culture in Poland was caused by the backwardness and politicization of Polish culture in general.¹³³

Antoni Słonimski, one of the pillars of the magazine, did not play an active role in the campaign for birth control. He contented himself with translating a pacifist poem from a book by Max Hodann, the German sexual reform advocate, author of numerous sex education books for children and youth, and the head of Berlin's Sexual Clinic.¹³⁴

Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska joined the ranks of birth control propagators, supporting the campaign with her poems, above all Boy-Żeleński, who was attacked both by the right and by the left alike. The "depravator" Irena Krzywicka gained notoriety on the wave of speeches and articles devoted to planned parenthood. In addition to appeals for birth control and sex education, she advanced the controversial demand for a labour code amendment to provide for a 3 days' leave per month for each female employee in connection with menstruation.¹³⁵ Someone else called for respect for the sexual rights of old maids.¹³⁶ Paweł Hulka-Laskowski, Wanda Melcer, Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, Henryk Rubinraut, and Józef Wasowski also published in "świadomiak", as the supplement to *Wiadomości* came to be colloquially called.

The question of eugenics became increasingly visible in the reform of social mores. In 1930, in *Kurier Poranny*, Boy offered his comments on the book *Hymen, or the future of marriage*, by Norman Haire, the well-known British eugenicist and co-founder of the World League for Sexual Reform.¹³⁷ Haire described in his book the contradictions between universally recognized/accepted moral norms and the dictates of health. A childless incestuous relationship does not pose a risk to the race, but is met with the moral condemnation of the general public. Under the criminal code, people living in such a relationship face a penalty of imprisonment. On the other hand, a relationship between two deaf and dumb individuals does not arouse any similar emotions, even though it will produce "inevitable race degeneration": deaf and dumb children. "Rather than getting sappy about them", Boy-Żeleński recounted, "they should be sterilized, the way it is already done in many American states [...]" The founding concepts of eugenics

¹³³ Cf. id., "Walka o reformę seksualną", *Wiadomości Literackie*, 28 (1931): 1.

¹³⁴ *Wiadomości Literackie*, 20 (1932): 7.

¹³⁵ Cf. I. Krzywicka, "Sekret kobiety", *Wiadomości Literackie*, 39 (1932): 8.

¹³⁶ R.B. Kerr, "Prawa seksualne starych panien", *Wiadomości Literackie*, 10 (1934): 7.

¹³⁷ "Nicco pedagogii", *Kurier Poranny*, 3 (1930): 8; N. Haire, *Hymen, or the Future of Marriage* (London, 1927).

have dissociated themselves from their objectives and turned into taboos; this taboo is offended by sexual relations between a father and a daughter, even if the union is childless, but not by a union (provided that it is legal) between the deaf and dumb, who may 'with impunity destroy public health to universal applause'.¹³⁸ In the future, the state was to take upon itself the responsibility of bringing up children. Each sick individual would be subject to sterilization; otherwise, the child would be destroyed as an embryo or killed immediately after being born. In order to reduce the risk of abuse, children would be subject to detailed examination by a committee made up of doctors.

The visions of an ultimately rationalized world had already appeared in the works by Herbert George Wells and Aldous Huxley.¹³⁹ The latter's brother, Julian Huxley, was an advocate of eugenics. In the 1930s, a translation of one of the books by Julian Huxley, a member of the British eugenics society, was published: *Co śmiem myśleć?* (What Dare I Think?).¹⁴⁰ In his reflection on the ways of contemporary civilization, Julian Huxley subscribed to the opinion that it was necessary to artificially support natural selection with eugenic measures. He believed a collapse of civilization to be a realistic threat, even if, as he admitted, for the time it was a distant one. He associated it with the failure to follow eugenic recommendations and with detrimental biological race modifications. In his opinion, the state had the right to control population growth, even if this involved limiting citizens' personal freedom. A voluntary limitation of the right to freely use one's person is a trait of all modern societies and states. Just as conscription and obligatory vaccinations, so is checking the population growth is conducive to the common good. While distancing himself from the idea of sterilization (which he viewed as advisable in the case of criminals only), Huxley proposed linking population growth mechanisms to public relief. Offices providing financial help to families of limited means would at the same time exert pressure on the recipients to limit the size of their families, making the continuance of relief conditional upon no further children being brought into the world. For those fecklessly producing offspring, Huxley proposed a peculiar method of instilling a sense of responsibility: labour camps.¹⁴¹

Huxley associated permanent progress in race betterment not so much with restrictive preventive measures (though he believed that the mentally

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ I am referring to *A Modern Utopia* (1905) by G.H. Wells and the *Brave New World* by A. Huxley.

¹⁴⁰ J. Huxley, *What Dare I Think?: The Challenge of Modern Science to Human Action and Belief* (London, 1933). Full text of "What Dare I Think?": https://archive.org/stream/whatdareithink032938mbp/whatdareithink032938mbp_djvu.txt.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 88.

ill must be prevented from producing offspring) as with discoveries in the field of genetics. Only by revealing the mechanisms of creation of genes causing heritable retardation, would scientists be able to indicate the best way to proceed. In Huxley's opinion, scientific humanism would defuse the tension that had arisen between human nature and science: "It [humanism] insists on human values as the norms for our aims, but insists equally that they cannot adjust themselves in right perspective and emphasis except as part of the picture of the world provided by science".¹⁴²

Russell, widely read by Boy-Żeleński's followers (known as "boyownicy", a neologism coined on the basis of the word "bojownicy", i.e., "fighters"), arrived at similar conclusions. In his book *Marriage and Morals* he shared Huxley's concerns over excessively drastic methods for the eugenic correction of the population, but did not doubt that moral values and norms would be shaped by science in the future.¹⁴³

In the 1920s, intellectuals joined physicians, hygienists, eugenicists, and social reformers to form one wide front for sexual culture reform. The congresses of the World League for Sexual Reform brought together intellectuals, writers, and social activists both from European countries and the United States. Russell, Lindsey, Sanger, and Wells made appearances at these gatherings. Thus, the disappointment of Henryk Rubinraut, a physician and planned parenthood advocate, a delegate of the Polish chapter of the league to the congress at Brno in 1932, was all the greater when it turned out that none of the invited celebrities had turned up. Even so, *Wiadomości Literackie* published an extensive account of the congress' deliberations.¹⁴⁴ One can infer from it that the venue was not accidental. It had been in Brno that Gregor Mendel had lived and worked for many years. The first day of the congress began with a collective tour of the museum commemorating Mendel, whom Rubinraut dubbed "the father of eugenics" (*sic!*).

At the Brno congress, the question of "sexual minorities" was discussed for the first time. Magnus Hirschfeld, a German physician and sexologist, the founder of the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute of Sexual Research) in Berlin,¹⁴⁵ was the spiritual leader of the homosexual minority. Influenced by Hirschfeld's activities, Boy-Żeleński twice raised the issue of homosexuality in the Polish press. On one of these occasions, he called for tolerance and abrogation of regulations treating homosexuality

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹⁴³ B. Russell, *Marriage and Morals* (London, 1929).

¹⁴⁴ *Wiadomości Literackie*, 48 (1932): 8; on the same subject H. Rubinraut, "Paragraf Sepsy", *Wiadomości Literackie*, 54 (1932): 16.

¹⁴⁵ M. Hirschfeld was an opponent of the idea of forced sterilization of humans, cf. his statement in *Wiadomości Literackie*, 54 (1932): 15.

as a crime.¹⁴⁶ The Polish eugenic press also addressed this problem. One of the contributors to *Zagadnienia Rasy* pointed out the need for legislative reform concerning some sexual deviations.¹⁴⁷ He thought that deviations which were highly detrimental to society, such as sadism, pedophilia, etc., should be punishable. On the other hand, the criminal code provisions punishing homosexuality should be abrogated.

Magnus Hirschfeld published an article “Zagadnienie wyjąławiania u ludzi” (The problem of sterilization in humans) in *Wiadomości Literackie*.¹⁴⁸ In it he took a stance against forced human sterilization, given the limited knowledge of heredity. He left voluntary sterilization for debate. The Danish physician J. H. Leunbach expressed a slightly different opinion on the issue in *Wiadomości*.¹⁴⁹ He believed that forced sterilization was necessary in the case of the mentally ill. He justified this not so much with heredity as with the possibility of giving more freedom to inmates in mental institutions. *Wiadomości* did not comment on any other forms of sterilization.

In 1932, *Wiadomości Literackie* reported that Ludwik Szczepański, a writer and journalist, had founded a Society for the Promotion of Planned Parenthood in Kraków. Another note concerned eugenics: “In Gorlice a Eugenics Society was founded, with a special emphasis on planned parenthood counselling. The promoter of the project is Dr Gebel, a physician, in whose private office the clinic is located for the time being. A general assembly of the Gorlice society passed a resolution to pay the highest tribute and homage to Boy-Żeleński for his indefatigable and excellent campaign to ‘demythologize’ our public life and social ethics, and for his educational struggle against backwardness in society and in the family, and in particular for a reform of sexual ethics and women’s rights to self-determination”.¹⁵⁰

There were also contrary cases. In Białystok, the Society for the Promotion of Planned Parenthood and the women’s clinic accepted eugenic recommendations.¹⁵¹

In his pamphlet *Regulacja urodzeń. Rzecz o świadomym macierzyństwie* (Birth control. On planned parenthood),¹⁵² the socialist activist Henryk

¹⁴⁶ Cf. “Literatura ‘mniejszości seksualnych’”, *Wiadomości Literackie*, 51–52 (1930); T. Boy-Żeleński, *Pisma*, vol. 17 (Warszawa, 1959), pp. 250–259.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. A. Mikulski, “Niezbędność reform prawodawczych w stosunku do niektórych zбочeń popędu płciowego”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 8 (1920): 5. Cf. W. Morawski, “Zagadnienie interseksualizmu”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1934): 73.

¹⁴⁸ M. Hirschfeld, “Zagadnienie wyjąławiania u ludzi”, *Wiadomości Literackie*, 54 (1932): 15.

¹⁴⁹ J.H. Leunbach, “Głód erotyczny u chorych umysłowo”, *Wiadomości Literackie*, 54 (1932): 8.

¹⁵⁰ *Wiadomości Literackie*, 54 (1932): 16.

¹⁵¹ Cf. *Wiadomości Literackie*, 39 (1932): 8.

¹⁵² H. Kłuszyński, *Regulacja urodzeń. Rzecz o świadomym macierzyństwie* (Warszawa, 1932).

Kłuszyński devoted one of the chapters to a discussion of sterilization. Voluntary sterilization on health grounds should, in his opinions, apply exclusively to women. Criminals and “sexual deviants” should be sterilized forcibly. “In their case”, he argued, “public interest is at stake, rather than that of a single individual, Legislation should intervene in this area. Actually, the procedure in question in such cases is castration, because sterilization, which does not reduce the sex drive, does not diminish it in sexual offenders, either”.¹⁵³

The socialist and freemason Włodzimierz Spasowski, the former director of the Pedagogical Institute in Warsaw, took a stance in support of birth control and forced sterilization. The eugenic correction of the population, as well as strict state control of citizens’ natural growth, formed an integral part of his vision of society as presented in the book *Wyzwolenie człowieka w świetle filozofii, socjologii pracy, i wychowania ludzkości* (Human liberation in the light of philosophy, the sociology of labour, and the education of humanity).¹⁵⁴ According to Spasowski, forced sterilization should be applicable to a major part of the population. He did not want to deprive merely deviants and criminals of their fertility, but also all the sick whose defects adversely affected offspring.

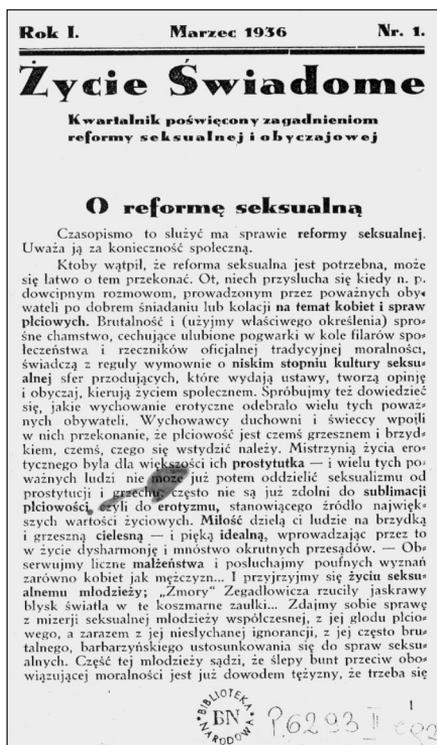
In 1934, birth control advocates meet at the First All-Polish Congress on Birth Control and Sexual Reform. The congress adopted the following resolution: “The protection of the health of the present generation and the concern for the health of future generations belong to the foremost responsibilities of the state. That is why the state should, based on objective achievements of the science of heredity and hygiene, prevent by law the bringing into the world of ill offspring or progeny burdened with a hereditary disease. Casual selection should be superseded by conscious selection, based on eugenic recommendations.

The following should be considered the foremost measures towards this end: (1) forced sterilization of individuals suffering from a severe hereditary disease; (2) institution of a legal obligation for premarital certificates, covering, in addition to the state of health, also pathological hereditary traits; such certificates should be issued free of charge to those of limited means; (3) the possibility of terminating a pregnancy on eugenic grounds; (4) the organization of as many premarital and eugenic clinics as possible”.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁵⁴ W. Spasowski, *Wyzwolenie człowieka w świetle filozofii, socjologii pracy, i wychowania ludzkości* (Warszawa, 1933).

¹⁵⁵ *Życie Świadome*, 1 (1936): 47.



The front page of the first issue of *Życie Świadome* magazine
Source: *Życie Świadome*, 1 (1936).

Internal conflicts quite swiftly arose in Warsaw's League for the Reform of Morals.¹⁵⁶ The contributors to *Życie Świadome* from Warsaw: Irena Krzywicka, Paweł Hulka-Laskowski, and Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, directed their writings on issues of morals to a new journal published in Kraków from 1936, entitled *Życie Świadome. Kwartalnik poświęcony zagadnieniom reformy seksualnej i obyczajowej* (Conscious life. A quarterly devoted to the issues of sexual and moral reform). The journal survived for only two years. It was a joint platform for debate for eugenicists and sexual reform advocates. It is noteworthy that Odo Bujwid, a world-famous bacteriologist, a pioneer of hygiene, and a propagator of Esperanto, not only lent his name to the journal, but actually became its editor-in-chief. The editors included physicians who were also social activists: Zofia Ślęczkowska, Mieczysław

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński's letter no. 367 of 17 October 1934 to Ludwik Szczepański, the head of the Kraków chapter of the league, in: T. Żeleński-Boy, *Listy*, ed. B. Winklowska (Warszawa, 1972), p. 416.

Steinbach, Józef Kirschner, Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, as well as writers and commentators such as Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, Irena Krzywicka, Emil Zegadłowicz, Leon Kruczkowski, Paweł Hulka-Laskowski, and Ludwik Szczepański. The journal's mission statement announced that its main object was to raise the level of sexual culture by means of promoting birth control and sex education. In the social analysis offered by the reformers, echoes of rather superficially assimilated Freudian theory¹⁵⁷ reverberated: "All the time we have to do with people in whom flawed sex education has left behind a mental trauma and harmful complexes. Misconceived religious guidelines and moral prejudices have planted in the minds of a multitude of people the belief that sexuality is something ugly and sinful, something that needs to be fought and suppressed".¹⁵⁸

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 Branzasa Dr. Słaczkowej p. t. „Co to jest świadome macierzyństwo? Porada i nieszkodliwie środki zapobiegania ciąży” (łączenie z wysiłek gr. 48 — należy przesłać w znaczku) — Ceny na żądanie oddzielnie. — Wysyłka dyskretna.

Drukarnia Literacka, Kraków, Plac Zgody 4.

Advertisements and notifications in the *Życie Świadome* magazine
 Source: *Życie Świadome*, 1 (1936).

¹⁵⁷ On the reception of Freudian theory, see the following subchapter "Reform of the institution of marriage and sex education".

¹⁵⁸ "O reformę seksualną", *Życie Świadome*, 1 (1936): 1.

Życie Świadome addressed a variety of issues connected with a reform of morals, mostly secondary to the earlier stage of the campaign led by *Wiadomości Literackie*. Boy-Żeleński criticized medical circles and Irena Krzywicka women's advocacy circles for ignoring the planned parenthood campaign. Hulka-Laskowski argued that a proper direction needed to be given to the spontaneous changes occurring in the area of morals, while Halina Krahelska emphasized that these changes had their source in the mass invasion of women into the labour market. Each issue encouraged women to consult planned parenthood clinics and to read pamphlets and leaflets concerning contraceptive methods.

In the final issue of 1936, the problem of sterilization laws proposed by eugenicists was raised. Józef Kirschner enthusiastically commented on draft provisions concerning the forced sterilization of criminals and individuals affected by hereditary disorders.¹⁵⁹ In an article entitled "Walka z eugeniką" (Combating eugenics) Józef Litauer, a barrister, attacked the physicians from the Union of Polish Catholic Doctors for rejecting the draft sterilization law, accusing them of hypocrisy.¹⁶⁰ He himself argued that sterilization was merely "a minor medical procedure", and that "all it did was prevent conception".

7. REFORM OF THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE AND SEX EDUCATION

In the other two campaigns for a reform of morals – namely, ones concerning an amendment of the marriage law and sex education – Boy's followers (again, *boyownicy*) were on many points in agreement with eugenicists.

Both the former and the latter were in favour of a secular marriage formula, firmly opposed by the Church, and advocated sex education. But while they were in agreement on general issues, they differed on detailed solutions. Moreover, eugenicists and *boyownicy* meant to use the main aims of their campaigns (marriage as a secular contract that may be dissolved, and explaining the facts of life to children and young people) for promoting different, sometimes contradictory values and lifestyles. In the case of the campaign for a reform of the marriage law, we may distinguish between its two dimensions: the universal and the local. In the local dimension, two worldviews clashed in the Polish debate: the conservative-Catholic and the liberal. In the universal dimension, the Polish disputes were part of a broad

¹⁵⁹ J. Kirschner, "Uwagi o projekcie ustawy eugenicznej", *Życie Świadome*, 4 (1936): 23.

¹⁶⁰ J. Litauer, "Walka z eugeniką", *Życie Świadome*, 4 (1936): 20.

context of the reform of the institution of marriage, both in legal and in moral terms, as initiated in the West in the 1920s.

The dispute over the marriage law flared up after the Codification Commission (charged with drafting civil law) published a draft marriage law in 1929. The Roman Catholic Church was the first to protest. Its criticism was aimed against civil marriages that the draft law provided for. Up to that time, only the German law in force in the former Prussian partition treated marriage as a contract under civil law and allowed for the possibility of dissolving a marriage through divorce. In the former Russian partition, there were religious regulations, either allowing or, as was the case with Catholics, absolutely precluding divorce. Legal provisions in force in the former Austrian partition had a mixed, partly secular and partly religious character. A marriage was contracted before a cleric, and unbelievers could enter into a civil marriage. The Austrian law allowed for divorce for all except Catholics.¹⁶¹ As a result of the protests of the Church against divorce, a fierce polemic flared up in the press between advocates and opponents of civil marriage legislation.

Eugenicists had long taken an interest in the marriage law. They assumed that the old marriage selection (which they termed “social selection”), based on a prenuptial contract, adversely affected offspring.

Eugenicists believed that the “ancient order” was guarded by tradition and class prejudices, in many cases upheld by the Catholic Church. An opinion expressed by Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska in 1923 is a good illustration of the way eugenicists viewed the problem of marriage: “The protection of the living generation, caring for hygiene, raising the levels of affluence and educational standards, and social policy are not enough. For all manner of reforms, even though desirable and giving credit to the development of humanitarian sentiments, will not counterbalance the negative traits, if an individual inherits these from his parents or forebears. For a man and a generation are but a link in the chain of humanity, strictly dependent on its past condition”.¹⁶² That is why Daszyńska-Golińska noted with satisfaction the toughening of the immigration law in the United States, not only vis-à-vis the seriously ill, alcoholics, and drug addicts, but also vis-à-vis the dregs of society: beggars, prostitutes, and vagrants. “I do not want to decide that it is already possible to impose a universal obligation concerning health certificates for persons about to enter into matrimony [...] Even so, I believe that one

¹⁶¹ Cf. J. Bardach, B. Leśnodorski, M. Pietrzak, *Historia ustroju i prawa polskiego* (Warszawa, 1994), p. 559.

¹⁶² Z. Daszyńska-Golińska, “Ustawodawstwo eugeniczne wobec małżeństwa”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 6 (1923): 2.

should use the work of the codification commission sitting at the present time and basically settle the matter in line with eugenic recommendations. The marriage law that is being considered by the commission should include those severe illnesses that may be inherited and those that pose a risk to the other spouse among obstacles to marriage”.¹⁶³

Daszyńska-Golińska belonged to those eugenicists who did not blame working women for race degeneration. On the contrary, and against Wernic’s opinion, she believed that neither education nor gainful employment disqualified the woman from her main vocation: motherhood.¹⁶⁴ Gainful employment gives a woman financial independence, and thus she need not seek in her future husband the sole provider to support the family. Health becomes the priority in spouse selection, rather than the future husband’s financial status, as has been the case thus far. An independent woman is able to guarantee her husband a satisfying married life and to build a lasting, happy union.

As I have written above, eugenicists believed that those affected by hereditary disorders and old people should not marry. That is why they proposed creating legal barriers to prevent such unions. Sometimes eugenicists’ restrictive inventiveness went decidedly further. Witold Chodźko wondered, for example, whether marriages of “eccentric individuals” should be tolerated. He believed that by tolerating eccentricities, one paved the way for mental diseases.¹⁶⁵

Boy’s followers also gave their support to the secular marriage formula.¹⁶⁶ The problem of the marriage law was highlighted by Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński in 1929 in a series of articles in *Kurier Poranny* (published later in the form of a pamphlet under a collective title *Dziewice konsystorskie* [Consistory virgins]). Boy-Żeleński ridiculed there the institution of the Church annulment of marriage. The “consistory virgins” from the title are women whose marriages have been annulled on the *non consummatum* grounds. The pamphlet was a fierce attack on ecclesiastical realities, showing the abyss between the values officially preached by the Church and everyday realities. It criticized the Church for upholding unreflective faith and impeding modernization processes. Boy’s next pamphlet, *Nasi okupanci* (Our occupying force) had an even more anticlerical character. However, *Wiadomości* published a series of articles and reviews of books by (mainly English-speaking) writers who

¹⁶³ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶⁴ Z. Daszyńska-Golińska, “Kwestia kobieca a małżeństwo”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1925): 1.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. W. Chodźko, “Społeczne zadania lekarza praktyka w opiece nad umysłowo chorymi”, *Praca i Opieka Społeczna*, 4 (1932): 352.

¹⁶⁶ T. Boy-Żeleński, “Nowa ustawa małżeńska”, *Wiadomości Literackie*, 43 (1931): 1.

presented a new form of reformed secular morality. Their proposals were used in the campaign for a new marriage law.

Bertrand Russell's and Ben Lindsey's works on morals were the main source of inspiration for Boy's followers on matters concerning marriage and morality. They were translated into Polish by people with links to *Wiadomości*. The two books of the greatest importance to the movement, i.e., Russell's *Marriage and Morals* and Lindsey's *The Revolt of Modern Youth*, were translated by a co-organizer of a planned parenthood clinic, Antonina Bołoz-Antoniewiczowa.¹⁶⁷ Helena Potulicka, on the other hand, translated Ben Lindsey's *The Companionate Marriage* (1932). In the marriage campaign, authors from outside the English-speaking world were also cited: the Dutch physician and author of *Ideal Marriage: Its Physiology and Technique*, Theodoor H. Van de Velde, and the Swedish feminist Ellen Key were fashionable writers.

Lindsey, an American examining magistrate in a juvenile and family relations court in Denver, revealed in his books the moral hypocrisy of the American middle class – the growing gap between declared values and their cultivation in real life. The cases of premature sexual initiation, alcoholism, and drug addiction that Lindsey described aroused lively reactions among the readers. Lindsey believed that the only means with which to re-establish the severed intergenerational bond between parents and children and overcome the crisis of the family was to adjust legal norms to the new morals. Lindsey did not preach the end of the traditional model of marriage, but pointed to the need to build an alternative to it. A new form of a union between man and woman was the concept of the companionate marriage which he presented. “A companionate marriage”, Lindsey wrote, “is legal marriage with legalized birth control, and with the right to divorce by mutual consent for childless couples, usually without payment or alimony”.¹⁶⁸ Childless spouses were to enjoy the same rights to their respective property as they had before marriage. A divorce was to be granted earlier, by shortening the term of abandonment to 6 months, without unnecessary charges and costs. Lindsey also demanded a legal abolition of the birth control prohibition (on this point, he invoked the eugenic idea on many occasions, justifying the need for birth control with the risk posed by those affected by hereditary disorders and unable to work¹⁶⁹) and a regulation of the work of planned parenthood clinics.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. an account of these events by I. Krzywicka, *Wspomnienia gorszycielki* (Warszawa, 1992), p. 241. Krzywicka also mistakenly attributed to this translator Lindsey's work *The Companionate Marriage*, which was translated by Helena Potulicka.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted after: B.B. Lindsey, Harvey O'Higgins, *The Beast* (Boulder, Colour2009), p. xiii.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. B.B. Lindsey, W. Evans, *The Revolt of Modern Youth* (New York, 1925).

The companionate marriage idea won the support of many European left-wing and liberal intellectuals. For understandable reasons, it was also approved by eugenicists. At the First Eugenics and Premarital Counselling Course for Doctors in 1931, Jerzy Babecki presented Lindsey's proposal, agreeing with its main theses.

Eugenicists who took a fancy to the companionate marriage idea feared the reaction of the Church, however. They understood that only a secular form of marriage could be easily linked with eugenic control measures. Consent to marriage could be made contingent upon a health certificate. Thus, the "unfit", those affected by hereditary disorders, "dysgenic" individuals would be denied the possibility to marry. That is why they regarded the forcing of civil marriages, introduction of obligatory premarital counselling, and a prohibition of marriages for those affected by hereditary disorders as closer, more realistic goals. The problem of marriage law reform was one which eugenicists followed closely until the outbreak of the war.¹⁷⁰

At the same time as the problem of marriage, eugenicists also raised the question of sex education for children and youth at home and at school. They believed that children acquainted from an early age with the principles and dictates of hygiene, free from false shame and sex-related prejudices are the best guarantee of successful race development. In the 1920s, *Zagadnienia Rasy* contributors followed with interest the evolution of the sex education idea in the United States.¹⁷¹ They did not, however, develop their own program until the 1930s. In 1934, members of the Polish Eugenics Society and Polish Anti-Venereal Union conducted a survey on the sex life of academic youth.¹⁷² The same year, Teodora Męczkowska, a PES member, published a pamphlet *Wychowanie seksualne dzieci i młodzieży* (The sex education of children and young people).¹⁷³ She proposed that a school board including a physician, the school psychologist, and teachers should be appointed at each school to develop a basic sex education curriculum adjusted to the pupils' age and intellectual level.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Cf. M. Lucius, "Reforma prawa małżeńskiego", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1934): 26; id., "Nowe prawo kanoniczne", *Eugenika Polska*, 1 (1938): 40.

¹⁷¹ Cf. W. Borkowski, "O wychowaniu seksualnym w Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki Północnej", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 6 (1923): 7.

¹⁷² 23,000 copies of the survey were sent to "almost" (a reservation made by the authors) all academic centres in Poland, halls of residence and "centres where academic life was concentrated (Departmental Circles and the like)". About two thirds of the returns came from officers' schools. Overall, 2,227 surveys were received. Women answered the survey in small numbers, with a mere 74 female students sending in their returns, cf. T. Welfe, "Życie płciowe młodzieży akademickiej", *Eugenika Polska*, 2 (1938): 101.

¹⁷³ T. Męczkowska, *Wychowanie seksualne dzieci i młodzieży* (Warszawa, 1934).

¹⁷⁴ Cf. S. Bogdanowicz, "Zagadnienie wychowania seksualnego młodzieży szkolnej", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 9 (1930): 46.

Ankieta w sprawie życia płciowego młodzieży akademickiej.**Polskiego Towarzystwa Eugenicznego i Związku Przeciwwenerycznego.**

Ankiety podobne były w Polsce rozpisane 2-krotnie, ale jeszcze w epoce naszej niewoli i wyniki nie daly oczekiwanych rezultatów. Zagranicą ankiety podobne przyjmowane są poważnie i rzadko się zdarza, żeby ktoś nie odpowiedział na podobne pytania. Poczucie się do obowiązku odpowiedzi świadczy o poziomie kultury społeczeństwa.

Ankieta ta rozpisana została w trosce o przyszłe pokolenie młodzieży, prosimy przeto o odpowiednie i poważne potraktowanie jej i danie możliwie wyczerpujących odpowiedzi.

1. Wiek
 2. Narodowość
 3. Uczelnia Wydział Kurs
 4. Stan (panna, mężatka, kawaler, żonaty, wdowa, wdowiec, rozwiedziona, -ny)
 5. Ile wydaje na swoje potrzeby (wraz z całkowitym utrzymaniem) miesięcznie?
 6. Czy zarobkuje (tak, nie), jeśli tak, to od którego roku życia?
 - ile zarabia miesięcznie?, jaki ma rodzaj zajęcia?
 7. Zajęcie ojca, lub matki?
 - ile ma siostr i braci?
 - czy ma dzieci? (tak, nie), ile?
 8. Czy rodzice żyją?
 - czy w rodzinie nie było poważniejszych długotrwałych chorób lub obciążeń jak: wybitnego nadużywania alkoholu, chorób umysłowych, chorób wenerycznych, morfinizmu, kokainizmu i t. p.
 - czy były poronienia?
 9. W jakim wieku i w jakich warunkach został (a) uświadomiony (a) co do życia płciowego?
 10. W jakim wieku pojawiła się dojrzałość płciowa (miesiączkowanie, polucje, chęć zaspokojenia płciowego)?
 11. Czy i w jakich okolicznościach i w jakim wieku miał (a) pierwszy stosunek płciowy, czy uczynił (a) to z własnej ciekawości potrzeby, z czyjej namowy, w stanie nietrzeźwym, z kobietą lekkich obyczajów i t. p.
-
12. Jak często miewa stosunki płciowe?
 - z jedną czy kilkoma osobami?
 13. Czy łatwo znosi wstrzemięźliwość płciową?
 - co robi dla powstrzymania się od stosunków płciowych?
 14. Czy ma jakie zbrocenia płciowe?
 - jakie?
 - w jakich okolicznościach i w jakim wieku one powstały?
 - kto Go (Ja) do nich naprowadził?
 - (onanizm, pederastia, kōzirodztwo, podniecenia płciowe na widok części garderoby, zadawanie bólu osobie przeciwniej i odwrotnie i t. p.)
 15. Czy chorował (a) i w jakim wieku na choroby weneryczne i na jakie (syfyllis, tryper, szankier miękkie)?
 - czy leczył (a) się dostatecznie, dokładna ilość przebytych kuracji i wynik leczenia?
 - jeżeli nie leczył (a) się, to dlaczego?
 - czy choroba weneryczna przeszkodziła w pracy?
 16. Czy używa napojów wysokokowych i narkotyków?
 - jak często i w jakiej ilości?
 - czy był (a) w stanie nietrzeźwym w czasie zażenienia się chorobą weneryczną?
 - czy utrzymuje stosunki w stanie nietrzeźwym?
 17. Czy i jakich używa środków zapobiegawczych?
 18. Jakich sportów używa i ile im czasu poświęca?
 - czy sport wpływa na pobudliwość płciową?
 19. Jakiej treści książki najczęściej czytuje (erotyczne, podróże, naukowe, historyczne i t. p.)
 20. Jak często chodzi do kina i na jakie obrazy?

A survey on the sex life of academic youth of the Polish Eugenics Society and Polish Anti-Venereal Union

Source: *Eugenika Polska*, 2 (1938).

Boy's followers, too, supported the sex education idea. Irena Krzywicka wrote a novel *Pierwsza krew* (The first blood; 1930), regarded as a sex education novel for young people. She also published articles on the method of explaining the facts of life to children and young people in *Wiadomości Literackie*.¹⁷⁵

The conservative wing among eugenicists feared the freedom that would result from mastering neo-Malthusian practices. Accordingly, the thing which liberal birth control propagators regarded as their principal objective – namely, winning freedom, the possibility of choosing one's lifestyle – represented a major threat in the eyes of eugenicists. To liberals, the demand for sex education for children and youth was a kind of victory over repressed bourgeois culture and superstition. *Wiadomości* commented: "It is hard to decide whether matters of sex play such a prominent role in human life as the Freudian idea attributes to them [...], but we already know today that unless sexologist demands are met, education and legislation become a mainstay of ignorance and injustice [emphasis mine – M.G.]"¹⁷⁶.

Meanwhile, eugenicists regarded sex education as yet another preventive measure, disciplining young people in the name of race protection. Thus, while liberals embraced the perspective of individualistic ethics aimed towards the well-being of the individual, eugenicists gave priority to the collective good. Even so, both in Poland and in English-speaking countries, these two currents met on the same plane of action in the interwar years.

8. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN POLAND ON EUGENICS AND BIRTH CONTROL

The official position of the Roman Catholic Church on eugenics and birth control was stated in the papal encyclical *Casti Connubii* of December 30, 1930. One year earlier, the encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri* was published, sharply criticizing the idea of sex education of youth at schools.

The author of both encyclicals was pope Pius XI, who in the years preceding his pontificate, 1918-1920, had served as papal nuncio to Poland. He was a witness of the Polish-Bolshevik war and was the only member of the diplomatic corps to refuse to leave Poland's capital during the Soviet advance against the city. He later sat on the Inter-Ally Plebiscite Commission in Upper Śląsk (Silesia).

¹⁷⁵ Cf. I. Krzywicka, "Dzieci a sprawy drażliwe", *Wiadomości Literackie*, 17 (1933): 11; ead., "Co odpowiadać dzieciom na drażliwe pytania", *Wiadomości Literackie*, 7 (1933): 8.

¹⁷⁶ *Wiadomości Literackie*, 28 (1932): 8.

In the encyclical *Casti Connubii* Pius XI condemned the use of contraceptives, warning that the avoidance of offspring through artificial methods brought punishment already in a person's lifetime. He rejected the idea of companionate marriage as contrary to the Christian faith. In the same encyclical, he commented on the eugenic doctrine. He criticized plans for a legal prohibition of marriage for and sterilization of the sick. He only allowed discouraging the sick from entering into marriage.¹⁷⁷ The eugenic doctrine (both in its positive and negative variants) was judged much more severely by the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office. In its Decree on eugenics of March 21, 1932, it declared that the theory "should be completely rejected and deemed false and condemned".¹⁷⁸

The Polish clergy did not take an interest in eugenics until the early 1930s. It was only as a result of the planned parenthood campaign¹⁷⁹ that extensive articles on eugenics appeared in the Catholic press. In spite of the differences that appeared between eugenicists and liberals in the course of the campaigns to reform morals, the Catholic Church in Poland came to view the slogans of eugenics, birth control, sex education, and civil marriage legislation as part of the same secular, progressive worldview. Stanisław Podoleński, a *Przegląd Powszechny* contributor, noted: "Birth control, or a limitation of births by artificial means, so widely discussed in Anglo-Saxon countries, is the focal point in the activities of various eugenic and neo-Malthusian societies in Great Britain and partly also in the United States; the knowledge of these methods, as a way of limiting the number of births and improving race quality, is propagated among the general public by means of numerous publications, magazines, clinics, and counselling practices. More serious members of the eugenics movements are aware of the risk involved in a broader propaganda of contraceptive devices, however. They admit that they facilitate immoral intercourse between individuals, that they may become a double-edged sword and instead of bettering the race, they will easily lead to 'disastrous consequences'. In order to forestall these dangers, they demand improving the standards of sex education of young people".¹⁸⁰

In Podoleński's opinion, both the positive and the negative aspects of eugenics are burdened with serious errors. Eugenics derives from extreme materialistic and utilitarian assumptions that make a family a value only provided that it meets the health criteria as required by eugenicists. A disabled person or a family with disabled children represent no value whatsoever to

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Pope Pius XI, the encyclical *Casti Connubii*.

¹⁷⁸ S. Podoleński, "Eugenika i ruch eugeniczny", *Przegląd Powszechny*, 579 (1932): 319–331.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. a commentary of a reviewer of eugenic publications in *Przegląd Powszechny*, 577 (1932): 111.

¹⁸⁰ S. Podoleński, "Eugenika dzisiejsza, jej drogi i bezdroża", *Przegląd Powszechny*, 581 (1932).

eugenicists. On the contrary, they pose a serious threat to the rest of society, against which they declare their will to fight. In the eugenic interpretation, Podoleński explains, human life is degraded to the level of animal life. The spousal selections proposed by eugenicists offend human and parental dignity. They are contrary to natural law and Christian morality. Eugenic theory ignores the dimension of human spirituality, and on the other hand usurps the right to interfere with the most intimate corners of human existence according to the adopted principles of selection and heredity.

Podoleński was aware of the fragility of the scientific foundations of eugenics. Unlike other writers, he did not regard this as the main reason for rejecting eugenics. The question that he asked concerned the use that humanity intended to make of scientific achievements, and not the scientific competence of experts on heredity. He gave an unequivocal answer to the question thus framed – namely, that science could not settle the dispute on the value of the human being. He emphasized that inherent in all varieties of eugenics was the same stigma: one of cruelty and ruthlessness with regard to the weak, the sick, the “unfit”, the poor, the racially “inferior”, and misfits. He wrote: “As long as eugenics adheres to its present-day program that commends absolutely ‘regulating’ procreation and destroying everything that is unfit, that belongs to the race of the poor, to the *sous-humain*, the idea of violence and cruelty must remain linked to it”.¹⁸¹

Not all statements of the clergy went to the crux of the matter. Sometimes, as in an article by Alojzy Poszwa in *Ateneum Kapłańskie* (Priestly Atheneum),¹⁸² resentment against advocates of neo-Malthusianism took an upper hand, completely obscuring the genuine threats posed by eugenics. This commentator distinguished between eugenics as a science and eugenics as a social movement. In his opinion, the Eugenics Society brought together the liberal wing of eugenicists, while *Wiadomości Literackie* attracted the radical wing (*sic!*). He wrote that it was “a loud, even boisterous faction”.¹⁸³ Among the radicals he counted Boy-Żeleński, Kłuszyński, and Korczak, all in one go.¹⁸⁴ Thus, people who at the most sympathized with eugenics and supported

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 186.

¹⁸² A. Poszwa, “Dążenia eugenistów polskich w świetle katolickich zasad”, *Ateneum Kapłańskie*, 5 (1932): 433–445.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 433.

¹⁸⁴ The attack against Korczak may be explained in the following context. His play *Senat szaleńców* (A senate of madmen; on the play, see Chapter 4) was staged at Warsaw’s Ateneum Theatre in 1931. One year later, H. Kłuszyński’s pamphlet on the birth control and planned parenthood (*Regulacja urodzeń. Rzecz o świadomym macierzyństwie*, Warszawa, 1932), including extensive quotations from Korczak’s work, appeared on the market. This was enough for Korczak to become a symbol of neo-Malthusian and eugenic propaganda in certain clerical circles.

eugenic recommendations – to varying degrees, incidentally – became more dangerous than radical eugenicists such as Wernic, Janiszewski, and Borkowski. It is beyond doubt that the neo-Malthusian propaganda terrified the Catholic commentator more than segregation and sterilization.

Only rarely was the consensus between positive eugenics and the Church's teachings stressed in statements made by the clergy. This point of view was presented in the book by Tihamér Tóth *Katolicyzm a eugenika* (Catholicism and eugenics):¹⁸⁵ the book had been officially admitted to circulation by the Roman Catholic Church, and had *Nihil obstat* and *Imprimatur* on the cover. That consensus was also highlighted in a pamphlet by the Rev. Zygmunt Kozubski.¹⁸⁶ None of the statements by Catholic writers concerned any form of negative eugenics.

Among the opinions most critical of eugenics was that voiced by the Catholic writer Maria Kępińska in her essay *Świadome macierzyństwo* (Planned parenthood). In her opinion, eugenic doctrine is inherently loaded down with hatred of a class character, as it manipulates the lives of the poor. Its hatred is also of a racial character, for in linking civilization, culture, and affluence to health characteristics and good heredity, it may condemn to sterilization not only individuals, but also whole peoples and races deemed to be less worthy. She felt that eugenicists might pass smoothly from individual selection to mass selection, manifested, for example, in a legal prohibition of mixing races. She regarded the eugenic doctrine as fundamentally undemocratic, for it questioned the equality of people, and non-humanitarian, as one consequence of thinking in eugenic terms was the physical extermination of the incurably ill.¹⁸⁷ The demands of Christian eugenics come down to recommendations and admonitions. Christian eugenics imposes on spouses an obligation to care for their own and their offspring's health through premarital chastity and sexual abstinence during the marriage.

9. DRAFT EUGENIC LAWS

Wernic's optimism, characteristic of the late 1920s, slowly melted. Even though government representatives continued to be regularly invited to eugenic exhibitions, eugenics failed to win popularity among politicians.

¹⁸⁵ T. Tóth, *Katolicyzm a eugenika* (Poznań, 1935).

¹⁸⁶ Z. Kozubski, *Problem potomstwa* (Warszawa, 1930).

¹⁸⁷ This grim prophecy was explicitly expressed by Kępińska. "One step further," she wrote, "and the ending of the lives of the incurably ill will be legalized, all charity institutions blown up, and the cultural achievements of the Western civilization will come to nothing", *ead.*, *Świadome macierzyństwo* (Poznań, 1934), p. 125.

Ignoring medical opinions by politicians is well illustrated by the case of the constitutional amendments that eugenicists proposed.

After the 1930 parliamentary election, which brought a decisive victory to the BBWR camp (Non-partisan Bloc for Co-operation with the Government), the issue of the constitution found itself on the agenda. Tomasz Janiszewski contacted the speaker of the Sejm, Stanisław Car, to consult him about the possibility of amending the law. By the end of that year, a committee headed by Janiszewski was set up at the Medical Department of the University of Warsaw to oversee the incorporation of the amendments in the final version of the constitution. In the general section of the constitution, in the fragment: "Labour is the foundation of the development and power of the Republic. The state extends its protection to labour and supervises working conditions", Janiszewski proposed substituting "health" for "labour"¹⁸⁸ and adding a provision that the government and local governments are obliged to care for and protect the citizens' health. In the section on "citizens' responsibilities", he proposed adding a sentence: "Each citizen of the state is also obliged to take care not to recklessly risk his own health or the health of his closest relatives or any of his fellow citizens".¹⁸⁹ In 1934, Speaker Car personally notified the committee that the amendments proposed by physicians would not be incorporated in the constitution.

In 1935, the Chief Medical Chamber (CMC) and the Chief State Health Council (CSHC) sent petitions for a reactivation of the Public Health Ministry, which however met with no response.¹⁹⁰ Since the number of countries introducing compulsory prenuptial certificates and voluntary or forced sterilizations was quickly growing in the 1930s, the eugenic community felt this rejection by government circles more strongly than did other medical circles.

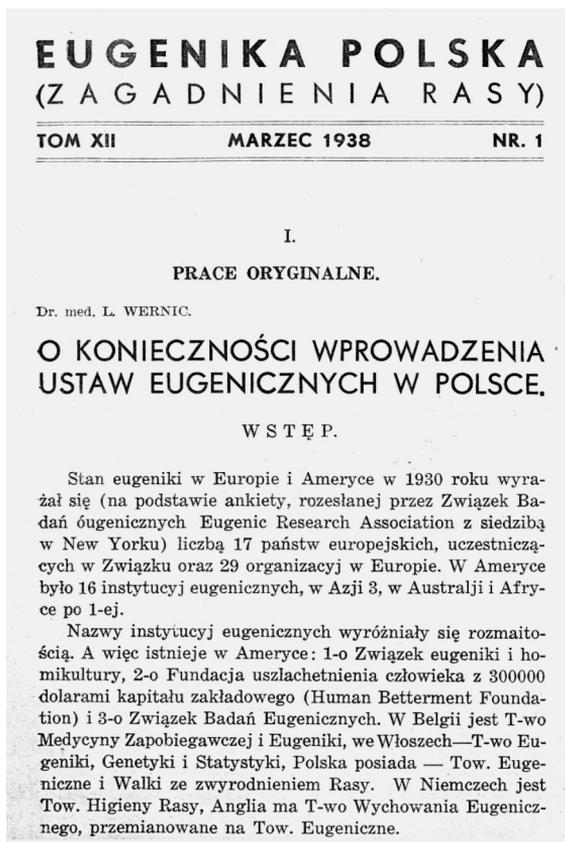
The United States was the first country to apply sterilization operations. In 1907, a sterilization law was passed in Indiana. The law provided that offenders, "idiots", and "imbeciles" may be subject to sterilization pursuant to a ruling by a board of experts to the effect that in the given case procreation was inadvisable. A breakthrough in the history of sterilization was the Supreme Court ruling in the case *Buck versus Bell* (1927), which stated unequivocally that the sterilization law of the state of Virginia was

¹⁸⁸ T. Janiszewski, *Nowa konstytucja polska z 26 stycznia 1934 r. a sprawy zdrowia publicznego* (Warszawa, 1934), p. 4.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. "Memoriał Naczelnej Izby Lekarskiej do Prezesa Rady Ministrów w sprawie przywrócenia Ministerstwa Zdrowia", *Dziennik Urzędowy Izby Lekarskich*, 1 (1937): 7–11, and a resolution of the Chief State Health Council of 29 April 1935 on the reactivation of the Ministry of Health, *ibid.*

not void under the fourteenth amendment to the constitution of the United States. This ruling caused a rapid increase in sterilization procedures in individual states.



The front page of the *Eugenika Polska* quarterly, vol. xii, no. 1
Source: *Eugenika Polska*, 1 (1938)

Landman, an enthusiast of sterilization, confessed that the Buck case “had an extraordinary influence on race betterment”. It was a time of growing crime that puzzled American intellectuals. Both criminologists and eugenicists saw that the Virginia sterilization law was the only solution to pressing social problems and crime. The court ruling invigorated the movement for sterilization. It seemed to be a panacea, a means of eliminating undesirables from society.¹⁹¹ While in 1928 a new sterilization law was passed in one state only (Mississippi), in 1929 similar legislation was enacted in 11 states: Arizona,

¹⁹¹ J.H. Landman, *Human Sterilization* (New York, 1932), p. 104.

Delaware, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Utah, and West Virginia. Two years later, in 1931, sterilization was introduced as a eugenic measure in Indiana, Oklahoma, and Vermont. In the mid-1930s, people were sterilized (and sometimes also castrated) in as many as thirty states.¹⁹² Only in six states was sterilization contingent upon the consent of the patient or his legal guardian: in the others the procedure was performed under coercion. The grounds for performing a sterilization procedure included: mental retardation, mental diseases, epilepsy, and sexual crimes, in the case of which castration was performed. According to official statistics, by 1935 more than 20,000 hospital patients and care institutions inmates had been sterilized, of whom 9,000 were male and over 11,000 female. By 1939, the number of sterilized individuals grew to over 31,000. The highest number of sterilization procedures were performed in California (almost 13,000 individuals), where three various eugenics laws were in force. The Eugenic Statute of 1909, amended several times, was the most important of them, as it provided for coercive sterilization of anyone who had been committed under a court order to a state psychiatric institution, if that person was suffering from: a chronic mental disease, mental retardation, or syphilis. Individuals convicted at least twice for rape or thrice for any other offence and manifesting “permanent moral depravation features” while in prison, faced a threat of castration. Sterilizations were performed in institutions for the mentally retarded. In one of the biggest, the Sonoma State Home, it was customary not to allow any inmate to leave the institution unless he or she had undergone sterilization. Meanwhile, the only reason for committing a person to the institution was an intelligence quotient diagnosed on the basis of the Binet-Simon test.

Sterilizations were also introduced by two Canadian provinces: Alberta (from 1928) and British Columbia (from 1933). On the European continent, the introduction of coercive sterilization was preceded by voluntary sterilization. Denmark enacted a voluntary sterilization law in 1929, concerning primarily the mentally ill. In 1934, a new law was passed allowing coerced sterilization of the institutionalized mentally retarded. As was customary in Californian institutions, no patient could leave a home without the consent of the director, who was the applicant for sterilization. Moreover, sterilization for social reasons was allowed, if a given individual was considered incapable of supporting any children he or she might have. In 1935, another law was enacted (abrogating the two earlier ones), which distinguished between three kinds of sterilization: for genetic reasons (i.e., because of a risk of passing

¹⁹² Cf. a detailed discussion of sterilization legislation: H. Żółtowski: “Obezplodnienie w świetle nauk społecznych”, *Higiena Psychiczna*, 1–3 (1936): 36–58.

on a disease to the offspring), for psychiatric reasons, and castration for criminals. Thus, in the space of 6 years, Denmark overcame the principle of freedom of decision, enacting a regulation permitting sterilization of people “with a negative genotype, phenotypically healthy”. This meant in practice that a perfectly healthy individual could be sterilized. The victims of this regulation were for the most part individuals without a family to support them (orphans, care institution inmates) and people from the underclass.

In 1934, coercive sterilization was introduced by Norway and Sweden, and one year later by Finland. By 1945, the number of sterilized patients was over 3,500 in Denmark, over 1,100 in Norway, over 8,200 in Sweden, and at least 588 in Finland.¹⁹³ In all the Nordic countries it was mainly women who were sterilized. One of the strictest eugenic laws was introduced by the Third Reich. On 14 July 1933, the Nazi government published a “Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases”, which took effect on 1 January 1934. It reads as follows:

- § 1 (1) Anyone suffering from a hereditary disease can be sterilized by a surgical operation if, according to the experience of medical science, there is a high probability that his offspring will suffer from serious physical or mental defects of a hereditary nature.
- (2) Anyone suffering from any of the following diseases is considered hereditarily diseased under this law: 1. Congenital mental deficiency, 2. Schizophrenia, 3. Manic-depression, 4. Hereditary epilepsy, 5. Hereditary St. Vitus’ Dance (Huntington’s Chorea), 6. Hereditary blindness, 7. Hereditary deafness, 8. Serious hereditary physical deformity.
- (3) Furthermore, anyone suffering from chronic alcoholism can be sterilized.¹⁹⁴

Some 375,000 people had been sterilized under this law by the outbreak of the war.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ *Eugenics and Welfare State, Sterilization Policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland*, eds. G. Brobert, N. Roll-Hansen (Michigan, 1996), pp. 60, 178, 234.

¹⁹⁴ English translation: “Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases (July 14, 1933)”, in: *US Chief Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*. vol. 5 (Washington, 1946), Document 3067-PS, pp. 880–83. (English translation accredited to Nuremberg staff; edited by GHI staff.) Source of original German text: “Das Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses (14 Juli 1933)”, in *Reichsgesetzblatt*, part I, p. 529; reprinted in *Dokumente der deutschen Politik*, ed. P. Meier-Benneckenstein, vol. 1: *Die Nationalsozialistische Revolution 1933*, ed. A. Friedrichs (Berlin, 1935), pp. 194–95 (see: <http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/English30.pdf>).

¹⁹⁵ These are estimates. The precise number of victims of the sterilization law is unknown. Out of the overall number of 375,000 people, 200,000 were feeble-minded, 73,000 schizophrenics, 57,000 epileptics, and 30,000 alcoholics. Cf. R. Grunberger, *A Social History*

The Free City of Danzig copied the German eugenic laws. According to statistics published in the Polish medical press, 505 people were sterilized there in 1933–35.¹⁹⁶

As evident from the above, the Third Reich's sterilization law did not provide for sterilization on social grounds, as was the case in Nordic legislation. Even so, coercive sterilization was also used in practice in cases where there were no eugenic grounds for performing it. There are known cases of sterilization motivated by antisocial behaviour, immorality, or minor physical injuries which according to eugenic expert opinions made it impossible for a given individual to efficiently function in society and support a family. The definition of "mental deficiency", or rather a lack thereof, left a lot of room for abuse. Both in Nazi Germany and in the Nordic countries "mental deficiency" used to be attributed to perfectly healthy individuals, who due to social and linguistic barriers (in Germany, this concerned ethnic minorities) or barriers of a different nature (resulting from lack of education) failed to correctly solve intelligence tests or did not do well at interviews. In the case of the Nordic countries, "hereditary" disorders such as "inclinations to sell illegal alcohol", "chicken stealing" and "a strong sex drive" were grounds for sterilization.

The sterilization program in the Third Reich differed from the Nordic model both in terms of pace and scale of the procedures performed, as well as in terms of time. After the Second World War, both voluntary and forced sterilizations in Finland intensified.¹⁹⁷

Polish eugenic bills were modelled on German legislation. In Nazi Germany the racist doctrine started to coexist with eugenics as early as the mid-1930s. After the enactment of the Nuremberg laws on Heinrich Himmler's order, SS functionaries founded the Lebensborn e.V. organization. Lebensborn's statutory tasks included supporting racially and genetically valuable families with many children and providing shelter to pregnant women who (after their families had been examined by the SS Central Office of Race and Settlement) could be expected to produce valuable offspring.¹⁹⁸ 1935 also saw the introduction of obligatory "fitness for marriage certificates" issued by health offices. In addition to numerous forms of harassment of Jews and non-Aryans in general, mixed marriages were legally prohibited. Eugenic tax relief and cheap housing credits for families with many children were introduced.

of the Third Reich (Harmondsworth, 1974), p. 288.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *Eugenics and Welfare State*, p. 235.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. I. von Oelhafen & T. Tate, with Dr D. Schmitz-Köster, *Hitler's Forgotten Children: a True Story of the Lebensborn Program and One's Woman Search for Her Real Identity* (New York, 2016).

Polish draft eugenic laws were first published in *Zagadnienia Rasy* in 1934, and then in an amended version in 1935. The draft law comprised four sections: (I) On premarital counselling, (II) On assistance to newlyweds, (III) On health records, and (IV) On the reduction of welfare burdens.¹⁹⁹

In Section I, it was proposed that social insurance entities and municipal authorities should establish premarital clinics. The clinics were to issue health certificates for candidates for marriage. Such certificates were to remain valid for two weeks after the date of issue. After that, the candidate had to apply for a new certificate. Within the first 5 years after the promulgation of the law, registry office employees were to encourage the candidates to seek medical advice. Thereafter, they were to demand medical certificates. In Article 2, Item 3, a reservation was made that a registry office employee might forbid marriage if he were informed that one of the candidates for marriage had been infected with a venereal disease after the date of issue of the medical certificate. In such a case, the candidate had to report for a further medical examination.

Section II proposed assistance for newlyweds of limited means. It was to include an exemption from any charges due at marriage (all the costs were to be covered by the community), a 5-year-long exemption from taxes, and state-sponsored dowries for girls of limited means. Moreover, a permanent tax on bachelors and childless marriages was proposed. Individuals with a eugenic value disqualifying them for marriage were to be exempt. The tax was to be used for assistance to newlyweds. Only physically and mentally valuable newlyweds were eligible for state assistance. Section II, Article 1 specified that these included “individuals coming from families of merit in social activity” as well as “newlyweds creative at work” (Article 4). Not in the text of the law itself, but in comments on it, the following were described as valuable individuals: “model employees in all kinds of production”, “healthy mothers, caregivers and housewives”, and “selfless social activists”.²⁰⁰ Themes taken from the *Volkist* thought ran through this grotesque tangle of expressions. Dowries for girls were intended by the authors of the draft to “keep them in the country and protect the rural population against depopulation in the case of mass and chaotic migration to the cities”.²⁰¹

Section III was devoted to genealogy certificates. An obligation was imposed on municipal as well as communal authorities to set up archives of birth certificates, to collect genealogical information (e.g., concerning hereditary diseases, gifts, family talents). An extract from the birth certificate

¹⁹⁹ Cf. *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1–2 (1935): 45–70.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

was to be enclosed to a medical certificate necessary for obtaining marriage license.

Section IV was entitled "A draft law on the reduction of welfare burdens". I here quote the original:

Article 1

In order to reduce the burden of expenses on supporting individuals with severe hereditary disorders (congenital mental retardation, hereditary epilepsy, schizophrenia, manic-depressive madness, hereditary deafness and hereditary blindness, severe physical defects, and lastly, severe alcoholism) the following measures should be applied, depending on the circumstances:

- (1) Commitment to institutions observing segregation between the sexes (institutions for the mentally ill, workhouses for offenders, vagrants, and beggars);
- (2) Application of measures to limit the reproduction of undesirable types;
- (3) Surgical sterilization of individuals burdened with the above-mentioned mental disorders and hereditary deafness and hereditary blindness.

Article 2

(1) Sterilization procedures may be performed on medical, social, and eugenic grounds, in accordance with the existing criminal code provisions, exclusively in public medical establishments.

(2) A sterilization request may be made by the party concerned or by the physician in charge of the institution of which the candidate is an inmate.

Article 3

Sterilization and other medical procedures may not be performed unless approved by a medical board.

Article 4

- (1) A medical board on the matters described above convenes at the request:
 - (a) of the individuals concerned,
 - (b) state or government authorities.

(2) The board consists of two physicians, specialists: a eugenicist and a psychiatrist, and a representative of the sanitary authorities.

Article 5

Only a board is entitled to grant permission for the performance of sterilization procedures on the person who volunteers for this kind of procedure.

Whoever performs the above procedure on a person who does not hold a permission issued by a medical board, shall be liable to a penalty of imprisonment of up to 5 years.

Article 6

In order to consider cases concerning coercive sterilizations and other surgical procedures, departments on heredity shall be set up at district courts and similar departments at courts of appeal as an appellate authority for cases of this kind.

Article 7

An adjudication panel of the departments referred to in Article 6 shall consist of 5 members, including 2 professional judges, one physician conversant with the science of heredity and eugenics, and one public prosecutor and a defense lawyer.

Those board members who are professional judges and their deputies shall be appointed for a three-year term by the Minister of Justice at a request from the President of the Court of Appeal; the member who is a physician and his deputy shall be appointed for the same period by the Minister of Welfare at a request from the competent voivode.

An adjudication panel is obliged to listen to the opinions of no less than 2 medical experts indicated by the relevant medical chamber.

The individual whose case is being considered has the right to demand an opinion of a physician indicated by that person.

Article 8

Sessions of the court on matters of heredity shall be held behind closed doors.

Judicial proceedings shall be held according to the principles adopted in criminal procedure.

Article 9

The verdict shall be handed to the applicant and to the individual concerned, or to the legal representative of the latter.

The verdict of the court of appeal is final.

If new circumstances arise that may influence a change in the verdict not yet executed, the court shall reopen its proceedings and withhold the execution of the verdict.

A request for sterilization may be reconsidered only provided that new facts have arisen that substantiate the need for sterilization.

If a candidate sentenced to sterilization offers resistance, a public treatment facility has the right to request the assistance of security authorities in executing the verdict.

Article 10

Details concerning the performance of the procedure shall be specified by the Minister of Welfare in a regulation.

Article 11

Whoever discloses information from judicial proceedings concerning sterilization, shall be liable to a penalty of arrest or a fine of up to 3,000 zlotys. The costs of the proceedings concerning persons tried at a request from public administration and the costs of the medical procedures shall be paid by the state treasury. If a sentenced individual requested a procedure to be performed in the 2nd or 1st class of a public treatment facility, the costs of the procedure shall be payable by the sentenced individual.

Article 12

The implementation of the present law is hereby entrusted to the Minister of Welfare and the Minister of Justice. The law shall take effect 3 months after its promulgation in the Journal of the Republic of Poland.²⁰²

Even though they followed the German model, Polish eugenicists saw “the German Nordic movement” as a major threat to Poland. This well illustrates the quite complex attitude of Polish eugenicists towards Nazi

²⁰² Ibid.

policy. While they did approve of the selection of the population into more and less valuable types and recognized the need for coercive sterilization, at the same time they were amazed at the scale and consistency with which the German eugenic social engineering project was being carried out. They also watched with concern how easily the chief “racial hygiene” principle – the selection of the population – was turning against them. For, being Slavic, they represented “a lower race”, i.e., a worse, less worthy one in the eyes of German eugenicists. Thus, on the one hand, they invalidated pseudo-scientific anthropological theories, and on the other hand they believed that in order to ensure Poland’s well-being, sterilization laws should be enacted as soon as possible along the same lines as in Germany.

The phenomenon of the attraction of German eugenics is rendered in M. Lucius’ article “*Zagadnienia Rasy a hitleryzm*” (*Zagadnienia Rasy and Hitlerism*).²⁰³ In the author’s opinion, “new ideas” and “new truths” were being forged in Germany in order to “air the old junk room of human culture with an enlivening breath of the creativity of the Nordic race”.²⁰⁴ Lucius saw many good qualities in *Mein Kampf*, e.g., “an interestingly discussed race theory”. In support of the above, he quoted extensively from Hitler: “every racial mixture leads, of necessity, sooner or later to the downfall of the mongrel product, provided the higher racial strata of this cross-breed has retained within itself some sort of racial homogeneity [...] Those who do not wish that the earth should fall into such a condition [a uniform mish-mash] must realize that it is the task of the German State in particular to see to it that the process of bastardization is brought to a stop. Our contemporary generation of weaklings will naturally decry such a policy and whine and complain about it as an encroachment on the most sacred of human rights. But there is only one right that is sacrosanct and this right is at the same time a most sacred duty. This right and obligation are: that the purity of the racial blood should be guarded, so that the best types of human beings may be preserved and that thus we should render possible a more noble development of humanity itself”.²⁰⁵ Removing Jews, outstanding academics, students, and office workers from civil service jobs and universities and the prohibition of mixed marriages provoked only a feeble response in *Zagadnienia Rasy*. In Lucius’ opinion, racism “had remodelled Germany’s entire social life too strongly”.²⁰⁶

Stanisław Studencki had a more critical view of German racism. He wrote: “the German nation is at present in a state of some insane possession”, and

²⁰³ M. Lucius, “*Zagadnienia Rasy, a hitleryzm*”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 2 (1934): 215.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223; A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200601.txt>.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, s. 230.

elsewhere: “the German movement [...] is essentially reactionary, militant and imperialist, narrow-minded and fanatical”.²⁰⁷ Żejmo-Żejmis spoke about racism in a similar vein.²⁰⁸

It was not until 1938, on the growing wave of Nazi terror, that the *Zagadnienia Rasy* editors decided to change the journal’s title to *Eugenika Polska* (Polish eugenics). It is also worth noting that eugenicists tried to mitigate their proposed law’s repressive character in 1934 and 1935 by changing the draft. The proposed sterilization law of 1934 was entitled: “A restrictive or negative eugenics law”. In a later draft of 1935, terms such as “negative eugenics”, “restrictive eugenics” and “segregation” had been eliminated. The new title was apparently innocent: “Law on the reduction of welfare burdens”.

The draft eugenic laws were sent to the Chief State Health Council, to its eugenic section, for further amendments. In the Special Collection of the Medical Library Archive, the minutes of four meetings of the CSHC eugenic section devoted to sterilization have been preserved. The meetings were held on 12 February, 4 March, 11 March and 25 March 1936. Jan Adamski, the head of the Health Service Department, chaired the deliberations. Those present at the sessions included: Bohdan Ostromięcki, deputy head of department, Gustaw Szulc, director of the National Institute of Hygiene, Ludwik Hirszfeld, head of section at the National Institute of Hygiene, and Witold Wojnarski, a counselor at the Welfare Ministry. Also present were the members of the section: Wiktor Borkowski, Wiktor Grzywo-Dąbrowski, Jan Mydlarski, Jan Nelken, Eugenia Stołyhwowa, Henryk Szczodrowski, Tadeusz Welfle, Kazimierz Fleszyński (a Supreme Court judge), Marcin Kacprzak (an acting Head of Department at the Ministry of Welfare), Stanisław Tubiasz, and others.²⁰⁹ Only some opinions from the debates were recorded in the minutes.

At the first meeting, Ludwik Hirszfeld took the floor. He said that from the medical point of view, sterilization raised very serious doubts. Wernic, Grzywo-Dąbrowski, and Kacprzak contested his opinion. Grzywo-Dąbrowski pointed out that in Denmark, 5 years after the law had taken effect, favourable effects of sterilization could be observed. Wernic expressed his concern over “leaving idiots, schizophrenics, and morons at large”. He was supported by Kacprzak, who pointed out that neither scientific demands nor public opinion allowed one to view eugenic questions negatively: “Undoubtedly individuals of little value, not supporting themselves from their own work, reproduce

²⁰⁷ S. Studencki, “O tak zwanej rasie nordyjskiej”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3 (1933): 187.

²⁰⁸ S. Żejmo-Żejmis, “O rasie, rasach i rasizmie”, *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 1 (1936): 28–42. Cf. On the same subject: id., “Doktryna rasizmu”, *Prosto z Mostu*, 41 (1937): 3; *ibid.*, 42 (1937): 5; *ibid.*, 43 (1937): 3.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Warsaw, The Central Medical Library Special Collection, file no. D 1/1501. *Ministry of Welfare – the Eugenic Section of the Chief State Health Council*, 1936.

at an immeasurably greater pace than the valuable ones, hence the burden on society is growing. Bearing that in mind, the Health Service Department initiated this issue as long ago as 1932 and upon discussion transferred it to the Eugenics Society. The drafting of the eugenic law that we are discussing is a great service rendered by the Eugenics Society.” The suggestion contained in this statement that the eugenic laws had been initiated by doctors from the state administration is difficult to verify.²¹⁰ The first two meetings ended without any conclusions being formulated.

At the third meeting, Witold Łuniewski, director of the Tworki mental hospital, took the floor. He supported Hirszfeld’s opinion that medical grounds for eugenic sterilization (i.e., the kind intended to protect the race) were doubtful. On the other hand, he supported sterilization for social reasons and castration of sexual offenders. Paradoxically, Łuniewski belonged to the most severe critics of the German sterilization law. He presented his negative opinion concerning it at a meeting of the Chief State Health Council as early as 1935. He argued then: “From the standpoint of liberal ethics, as well as from the standpoint of Christian ethics, the German law of 14 July 1933 is an example of a blatant violation of individual rights that we have come to respect. The whole race protection systems has traits of blind fanaticism headed up a blind alley with no way out. From the biological and medical standpoint, the German sterilization law raises a number of doubts. We know the way a disease is inherited in the case of one illness only – namely, Huntington’s chorea. This disease occurs rarely and usually reveals itself [too] late for the sterilization of affected individuals to serve its purpose”.²¹¹ He warned against the law being motivated by any kind of economic considerations: “If economic considerations were to determine the fate of the mentally ill, then a much more effective way to get rid of the expenses would be not sterilization but, e.g., the poisoning or shooting of all the [mentally] ill”.²¹² Thus, Łuniewski understood that the embracing of eugenic arguments may lead to a mass killing of the ill. This makes his standpoint in support of sterilization on social grounds all the more paradoxical.

At the fourth meeting in the conference room of the Welfare Ministry’s Health Service Department, held on 25 March 1936, four different draft eugenic laws were presented: a “Eugenic law” by Bohdan Ostromęcki (deputy director, Health Service Department), “Proposals concerning sterilization and castration” by Wiktor Grzywo-Dąbrowski, “On checking undesirable

²¹⁰ The Central Medical Library Archive contains unprocessed and uncatalogued records concerning the interwar health service that are not made available to the readers.

²¹¹ W. Łuniewski, “Prawo niemieckie o zapobieganiu potomstwu obciążonemu chorobami dziedzicznymi”, *Trzeźwość*, 1–2 (1935): 189.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 190.

reproduction” by Witold Łuniewski, and “On checking the reproduction of dysgenic individuals” by Leon Wernic.

At the New Records Archive a document that is probably one of the last draft eugenic laws has been preserved, and it bears a handwritten annotation: “A draft available for the agenda of the Chief Health Council sessions of 13 June 1938”.²¹³ The date of the document bears out the statement of Prof. Stefan Dąbrowski, the dean of the Poznań Medical Department, that draft sterilization laws were repeatedly reconsidered by the Chief State Health Council. This means that attempts to introduce coercive sterilization continued almost until the outbreak of the Second World War.

The contents of the last available draft law show that a compromise was eventually reached within the SCHC eugenic section. The draft provided for coercive sterilization both on eugenic and social grounds. “Individuals with their reproductive drive preserved, who are unable because of their mental impairment to understand the nature of their parental duties [...] and bring forth into the world abnormal offspring, may be sterilized also without their consent pursuant to a request from a competent medical board and a sentence passed by a competent (special) court”.²¹⁴

A file containing the minutes of the SCHC eugenics section sessions found in the archive of the Central Medical Library sheds new light on the issue of eugenics. Sterilization laws were not forced sporadically by the Eugenics Society; rather, they were proposed by a government body. There is circumstantial evidence (quoted above) in Kacprzak’s account that eugenic legislation could have been initiated by the Health Service Department.

10. RESPONSES TO DRAFT EUGENIC LAWS

THE RIGHT

Of the right-wing magazines, the daily *ABC* responded animatedly to draft eugenic legislation. The daily was published from 1926, with Stanisław Strzelecki serving as its editor-in-chief. Its circulation oscillated between 20,000 and 30,000. In addition to the magazine’s Warsaw edition, it also had its provincial mutations. Politically, *ABC* was related to the Great Poland Camp (OWP), and partially with the Zarzewie camp, which maintained its autonomy in the national movement.

In issue no 369 of 1935, the editors published a summary of the Polish draft sterilization law. It also presented eugenicists’ arguments in support

²¹³ New Records Archive, *Projekt ustawy eugenicznej*, file no. 532, p. 30.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.

of enacting the laws. With this article, the editors opened a debate: should the draft eugenic laws be implemented in Poland? Representatives of the legal, medical, and ecclesiastical circles – along with readers – were asked for opinions. It is not entirely clear whether the draft laws indeed provoked a “storm” among readers, as the editors advertised the series (“A draft that provoked a storm”). Although the sensational style of the editors on this particular occasion probably did coincide with readers’ genuine interest in the draft legislation under discussion.

After summarizing the eugenic laws, an interview was published with Tadeusz Welfle, a physician and the secretary of the Central Council of the Eugenics Society.²¹⁵ In that interview, Welfle described the Polish draft sterilization law as “cautious”. For coercive sterilization, he argued, was limited to “absolutely certain and serious cases”. Welfle denied any imitation of the German laws and offered assurances that the Polish draft would not lead to sterilization procedures on a mass scale. He admitted that in the survey concerning sterilization held by the Chief State Health Council, the opinions of doctors were deeply divided.

Disguising the repressive character of the laws was part of the eugenicists’ regular repertoire. Their object was for their drafts to provoke as few reservations as possible and not to create “unnecessary” confusion. Obviously, the Polish draft eugenic law did not restrict sterilization to “certain cases”, but rather covered whole masses of ill and potentially ill individuals. In the interview under discussion, Welfle did not show any concern whatsoever over this fact. He hardly mentioned a variety of opinions existing in the medical circles, while it is evident from other sources that medical communities in particular – e.g., the Polish Catholic Doctors’ Union – did protest against the draft law.²¹⁶ It is also known that physicians accused the eugenicists of “blindly imitating the German laws”.²¹⁷ Such criticisms were frequently repeated. They made eugenicists such as Welfle ostentatiously – and against the facts – dissociate themselves from any German inspirations.

Even though the position of the Catholic Church on the matter was clear from the start, the Rev. Zygmunt Kaczyński, director of the Catholic Press Agency, was asked to comment on the draft eugenic laws.²¹⁸ Invoking the papal encyclical *Casti Connubii* of 1930 he criticized both the sterilization draft and the draft law to prohibit ill individuals from marrying. In his opinion,

²¹⁵ “Nie ma jednomyślności lekarzy”, *ABC*, 30 (1935): 4.

²¹⁶ Cf. *Kurier Warszawski* (5 November 1935): 7.

²¹⁷ Cf. S. Dąbrowski, “Sterylicacja w świetle etyki”, *Życie Medyczne*, 18–19 (1938): 6.

²¹⁸ “Przymus sterylizacji nie jest uzasadniony”, *ABC*, 1 (1936): 5.

the draft law neither withstood scientific criticism, nor was it in conformity with the basic principles of social life. People prohibited by law to marry would resort to extramarital relationships. The idea of sterilization is based on medical knowledge that does not legitimize drawing radical conclusions. Kaczyński opposed the collectivist social visions, defending individual interests. He concluded: "The Church is a conservative institution and takes a stance in defense of individual rights that are all too often trampled and ignored today".²¹⁹ It was only the law on assistance to newlyweds that Kaczyński welcomed.

Subsequently, the magazine published opinions of readers in favour of the laws.²²⁰ It quoted an extensive statement by Stefan Olszewski, a student of Stefan Batory University. Here are its fragments: "I am a believing Catholic and a representative of the young national generation, ready for the highest sacrifices in the service of the fatherland. In our opinion, the future of Poland lies in the upbringing of morally and physically healthy new generations. In order to raise such generations, we need to sever the threats linking us to the degeneration of the past, grafted on us by aliens in the time of our bondage; moreover, we need to resolve a number of issues, e.g., the Jewish question, which is almost a matter of life and death to our society. Crushing and destroying the factors of spiritual and physical gangrene, we need to combat its moral and physical manifestations, and not with half measures, but radically. It is only strict measures that may help today. In defense against physical degeneration, one of the measures of the intended revival is the eugenic law in its present shape [...] I do not agree with the reservations that [...] coercive sterilization may be abused. Indeed, abuses are always possible, but if that were taken into account, no action at all could be undertaken, for there may always be abuses [...] There are also other reservations, that one must not destroy or injure those body parts that are designed by nature for certain natural purposes, unless the health of the body as a whole so requires. In my opinion, elevating an individual to the detriment of the nation as a whole is not right".²²¹

The opinion of the young nationalist was in fact a polemic with the position of the Rev. Zygmunt Kaczyński, and indirectly with the standpoint of the Catholic Church as a whole. Olszewski claimed, for example, that a law to prohibit sick people from marrying would not lead, despite the fears of the Church, to an increase in the number of extramarital relationships.

²¹⁹ Ibid. S. Poddeński spoke on the subject in a similar vein in an article: "Projekt polskiej Ustawy Eugenicznej", *Przegląd Powszechny*, 612 (1934): 387–393.

²²⁰ "Przyszłość Polski w wychowaniu zdrowych pokoleń", *ABC*, 7 (1936): 3.

²²¹ Ibid.

The legislation of the nation-state, whose advent he heralded, would heal social morality, defeat pathologies, alcoholism, and prostitution.

The readers' opinions show how differently the draft eugenic laws were interpreted. One of the readers called for allowing voluntary sterilization and castration of healthy people.²²² In the readers' opinion, procedures of this kind were justified in cases of an excessive sex drive, threatening to break up a marriage and a family.

On the other hand, the opponents of the eugenic laws, who were also given an opportunity to speak, accused eugenicists of blindly imitating the German models, resorting too easily to coercion and repression, and a desire to start a grotesque human "breeding" project. "We, the young nation", an opponent of the laws wrote, "do not need a hatchery; what we need is to create an environment to foster the development of living creative forces".²²³ Another reader observes that state intervention should not penetrate the most intimate areas of human life.²²⁴

We do not precisely know the proportion between favourable and negative opinions concerning eugenic legislation. The editors wrote: "Out of the numerous letters that we have been receiving in response to the question we have asked: 'Should eugenic laws be enacted in Poland?', a vast majority has been in favour of enacting the laws [emphasis mine – M.G.]."²²⁵ However, it was admitted in the summing up of the readers' debate that even the advocates of eugenic legislation offered numerous reservations concerning the Polish draft. They pointed out to eugenicists that the idea of sterilizing alcoholics was pointless, given the impossibility of precisely defining alcoholism, that epilepsy had its mechanical and hereditary varieties, and thus not all affected individuals should be sterilized. They also wrote about the poor economic situation of the country that often was the greatest impediment to early marriage and starting a family.

Finally, the editors asked a lawyer for comment. An anonymous solicitor favoured the enactment of eugenic laws. He believed that sterilization did not have a repressive character, but was, rather, "a kind of securing the public" against "the possibility of offensive behaviour" and a measure aimed at reducing welfare burdens.²²⁶ In his opinion, the 1935 constitution provided a basis both for enacting a law in line with the proposed draft, and for limiting sterilization to exceptional and necessary cases. Summing up

²²² Ibid.

²²³ "Nam nie potrzeba wylęgarni", *ABC*, 6 (1936): 3.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ "Bieda i niepewność przyszłości – wrogami rodziny", *ABC*, 4 (1936): 4.

²²⁶ "Jednostka w zbiorowisku – rodzina", *ABC*, 13 (1936): 4.

the survey, the editors expressed their hope that under the influence of the debate the drafts would be modified, and this would make their acceptance by the public easier: “However, we can already conclude today that the draft eugenic law has met with a favourable reception”, it was stated at the end.²²⁷

Jan Rembeliński, a commentator of *Mysl Narodowa* (National thought), the official organ of the National Party, took a different stance on eugenics and the draft eugenic laws.²²⁸ In 1938, he criticized the draft eugenic laws as a consequence of “the materialistic view of the world”. The ultra-right commentator Walenty Majdański expressed a similar opinion. Complaining about the corruption of mores and the moral decline of society, he distanced himself from the eugenic antidote: “The thing cannot be salvaged by eugenics or racism. For both these sciences palpate and examine man’s shell, looking at our organisms as a heap of meat”.²²⁹ His criticism of the fundamental principles of eugenics did not prevent him from accepting some of the demands put forward by it. Majdański welcomed plans to tax childless marriages. His own tax proposals went even further than those of eugenicists. He wanted to tax families with one child and impose financial penalties on childless marriages refusing to adopt orphans.

Władysław Wolert’s article published by *Kurier Warszawski* brought heavy criticism of eugenics in the right-wing press.²³⁰ While formally the magazine remained non-partisan, it in fact sympathized with the National Democracy. It was quite close to the Church, and in particular to the archbishop of Warsaw, Cardinal Aleksander Krakowski. Its circulation exceeded 50,000 copies.

Wolert regarded Polish draft eugenic laws as a blind imitation of German models. He underscored the fact that in Germany the sterilization law was an instrument of Nazi policy aimed at Poles. In his opinion, in Germany there were frequent abuses of the term “mentally retarded” with regard to Poles: “in the seaside districts, bordering on Pomerania and populated exclusively by Poles, landrats [heads of counties], through the agency of borough leaders, select candidates for sterilization [...] The use of this “scientific” method may lead to an extermination of the Polish population in the Reich’s eastern borderland, by calmly and discreetly preparing areas for colonization by German peasants. There is no need for expropriation, which always provokes some ado; it is enough to systematically sterilize the Polish population”.²³¹

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ J. Rembeliński, “Eugenika”, *Mysl Narodowa*, 33 (1938): 518.

²²⁹ W. Majdański, *Giganci. Studium katolickie o rodzinie* (Wilno, 1936), p. 57.

²³⁰ W. Wolert, “Eugenika jako narzędzie polityki”, *Kurier Warszawski*, 16 (1937): 4.

²³¹ Ibid.

The abuses against Poles in the German sterilization program have yet to be researched in Polish historiography.²³² That is why it is difficult to verify the information provided by Wolert. In the case of Upper Śląsk, representatives of the Polish minority sent complaints regarding forced sterilization decisions to the president of the Mixed Commission in Katowice. The complainants pointed out that the low IQ they had been diagnosed with by means of intelligence tests, and which was the basis for German doctors to diagnose them with “mental retardation”, did not reflect the actual state of affairs. Rather, their low scores in intelligence tests resulted from their inadequate knowledge of the German language.²³³

The statistics concerning the sterilization of Poles in the Opole, Warmia, Masuria (Mazury), Pomerania regions, and the Free City of Danzig remain unknown. Thus, we do not know how many individuals from among the group classified for sterilization were of a non-German ethnicity, nor do we know whether the sterilization campaign was more intense in ethnically mixed territories, or whether one may indeed speak of using sterilization to destroy the biological bases of ethnic minorities.

For a sizeable part of the right, eugenic sterilization was unacceptable for two reasons: the negative stance of the Catholic Church and the affinity to the German eugenics based on racist, anti-Slavic (and thus also anti-Polish) grounds. But even within the right-wing community we can see major differences in responses to eugenics. The editors of the magazine *ABC*, by publishing the opinions of those advocating the sterilization laws, gave voice to their own consent to (if not sympathy with) eugenic practices. What made eugenics attractive to *ABC*'s editors and part of *ABC*'s readers was the promise of a physical healing, of a true fitness of the Polish people. The draconian methods of eugenics were consistent with the vision of Poland as a power – of a national, disciplined Poland. Moreover, the nationalistic interpretations of eugenics as a proposal for “cleansing” Poland of Jewish blood were not without importance.

However, the closer a magazine was ideologically to the Church, the clearer was its negative attitude towards eugenics, as was the case with *Kurier Warszawski*. Right-wing commentators rejecting eugenics cited the stance of the Catholic Church and writings by representatives of clerical circles. Generational differences might have played some role here. *Kurier Warszawski* and *Mysł Narodowa* were magazines with a long tradition, with

²³² F. Połomski's article is an absolute exception: “Spór o stosowanie hitlerowskiego ustawodawstwa sterylizacyjnego do Polaków na terenie Opolszczyzny”, *Studia Śląskie*, 3 (1960): 179–185.

²³³ H.-W. Schmuhl, “Zreformowana psychiatria a masowa zagłada”, in: *Nazizm, Trzecia Rzesza a procesy modernizacyjne*, ed. H. Orłowski (Poznań, 2000), p. 395.

“old” national democrats as their contributors, unlike *ABC*, which was set up in the interwar years and had decidedly younger editors.

DOCTORS AND SOCIAL ACTIVISTS

Most of the opinions concerning the draft eugenic laws were contributed by the medical circles and by circles made up of doctors and social activists. Physicians involved in combating alcoholism and drug addiction were particularly interested in the draft legislation.

The anti-alcohol community was mostly made up of doctors. They published the journal *Trzeźwość* (Sobriety), which appeared irregularly in 1919, and later between 1928-1939. There was a section for combating alcoholism attached to the Chief State Health Council.²³⁴ In 1929, an Association of Teetotaler Doctors was founded under the leadership of Dr Witold Łuniewski and Marcin Kacprzak. These circles exerted pressure, demanding that government agencies combat alcoholism.²³⁵ They reported to *Trzeźwość* readers on matters addressed by international anti-alcohol congresses and on methods of combating alcoholism employed abroad.²³⁶

Trzeźwość and *Zdrowie* on many occasions raised the issue of prohibition in the United States.²³⁷ and described systems of limited alcohol sales in the Nordic countries. In the early 1930s, there was a rather controversial proposal for a referendum on imposing local prohibition on the territory of Warsaw.²³⁸

Polish prohibitionists subscribed to the belief that alcohol had a degenerative effect. Hydrocephalus, mental retardation, and epilepsy were alleged to be caused by the mother’s or father’s alcohol poisoning at the time of

²³⁴ In 1932, its membership included Dr Eugeniusz Piestrzyński, director of the Health Service Department, Dr Jan Adamski, deputy director of the Health Service Department, and Dr Witold Chodźko, headmaster of the State School of Hygiene, PES member, Dr Gustaw Szulc, Director-in-Chief of the National Institute of Hygiene, PES member, Dr Henryk Kłuszyński, from the State Union of Health Insurance Funds and Prof. Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska, PES member.

²³⁵ “W sprawie funduszu na walkę z alkoholem”, *Trzeźwość*, 4 (1928): 127–128.

²³⁶ S. Adamowiczowa, “XIX Międzynarodowy Kongres Przeciwalkoholowy w Antwerpii”, *Zdrowie*, 11 (1928): 541. In 1937, an International Congress Against Alcoholism was held in Warsaw, with President Ignacy Mościcki, Prime Minister Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski, Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły, Primate of Poland August Hlond and ministers and heads of institutions of higher education who turned up in great numbers, as guests of honour. The presence of the highest state officials at the congress reflects the high prestige that such meetings enjoyed, as well as the importance that was attached in Poland and in Europe to combating alcoholism.

²³⁷ Cf. ead., “Obecny stan prohibicji w Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki Północnej”, *Zdrowie*, 11–12 (1931): 616; H. Rabinowicz, “Jaki ma wpływ prohibicja amerykańska na spadek śmiertelności na gruźlicę”, *Zdrowie*, 35 (1927): 140.

²³⁸ Cf. M. Kacprzak, *Z doświadczeń i rozważań* (Warszawa, 1934).

conception.²³⁹ They viewed any opinions negating the degenerative character of alcohol with distrust and disbelief. One doctor wrote: “Being of the opinion, however, that there is no definitive evidence as yet of a degenerative effect of alcohol on the embryonic plasma, and therefore on the race as a whole, we cannot deny, on the other hand, that such an effect exists [...] The conclusion, based on empirical evidence, that alcohol is a factor of race degeneration is now admissible and may be a basis for relevant eugenic measures”.²⁴⁰

That is why combating alcoholism was regarded in moral, social, racial, and eugenic terms. “Combating alcoholism is a struggle for the best possible race, it is a eugenic issue”, one commentator declared.²⁴¹ There is no wonder, therefore, that draft eugenic laws providing for the sterilization of alcoholics, among other measures, met with a favourable reception. In his article “Kilka uwag w sprawie projektu ustawy eugenicznej” (A few comments on the draft eugenic law), Jan Szymański spoke favourably of the eugenicists’ campaign,²⁴² albeit suggesting minor revisions. He proposed including a provision stating that alcoholics and drug addicts subject to compulsory treatment are temporarily legally incapacitated. He also wanted drug addicts to be sterilized. The prohibitionists’ proposals were included in the last available version of the sterilization laws.

PSYCHIATRISTS

In the 1930s, “mental hygiene” became a fashionable catchphrase in psychiatric circles, and was the basis of a new current in psychiatry, one known as “reformed psychiatry”. The reformed psychiatry movement promoted outpatient treatment. Its founder, the American Clifford W. Beers, observed the negative effects of long-term institutionalization in mental patients. What a patient needs, in addition to medical care, to make a complete recovery, Beers argued, is a friendly atmosphere and an environment as close to normal life as possible. Beers extended his demand for mental hygiene, i.e., for creating good, human-friendly living conditions, to the family home, workplace, and

²³⁹ Cf. S. Stypułkowski, “Środowisko-dziedziczność i alkoholizm”, *Trzeźwość*, 3–4 (1935): 100–105; S. Władyczko, “O alkoholizmie jako czynniku zwyrodniającym”, *Trzeźwość*, 3–4 (1935): 97–100.

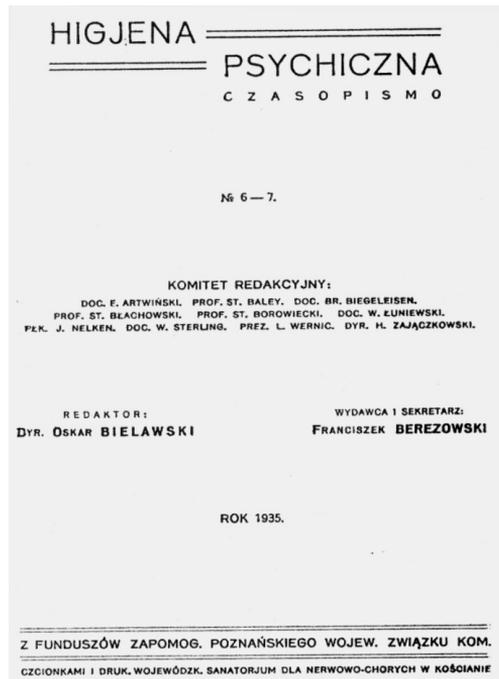
²⁴⁰ W. Sieradzki, “Alkohol a zwyrodnienie rasy”, *Trzeźwość*, 10 (1935): 404.

²⁴¹ W. Stryjeński, “Z przejawów społecznych alkoholizmu”, *Trzeźwość*, 1–3 (1931): 5.

²⁴² He stated: “It is an established fact that most child criminals and abnormal children come from alcoholised backgrounds. Alcoholics are also carriers and propagators of venereal diseases. The above is absolutely sufficient, surely, to come to a conviction about how very dangerous alcoholism in general, and long-time alcoholism in particular, is from the perspective of race. Sooner or later, each family of an alcoholic becomes a burden for society, a liability in the general balance sheet of the society’s capacity for physical and intellectual work”, *ibid.*: p. 193; *Trzeźwość*, 5 (1935): 101.

the environment in which the patient functions on a daily basis. According to new mental hygiene recommendations, treatment became an all-round therapy. It targeted many areas of human life that shape the human psyche. Reformed psychiatry strongly emphasized the examination of the causes of mental disorders, neuroses, mental retardation, social pathologies (alcoholism, drug addiction, crime, prostitution), as well as their prevention.

Institutionally, the mental hygiene movement developed quickly. In 1908, a Mental Hygiene Committee was set up at Beers' initiative. By 1915, it already had more than ten branches. Its main objective was to study mental disorders and the prevention of mental illnesses. Research in the army and in prisons was organized; alcoholics, epileptics, and the mentally retarded were also studied. In addition to mental hygiene societies, hospitals complete with psychological laboratories and clinics had been established. American psychiatrists edited the journal *Mental Hygiene*, through which they were able to quickly propagate the tenets of the new science.



The front page of the *Higiena Psychiczna* magazine
Source: *Higiena Psychiczna*, 6-7 (1935)

In 1922 the British National Council for Mental Hygiene was founded in the UK, as was the Belgian League for Mental Hygiene in Belgium,

along with the League of Mental Prophylaxis and Hygiene (1918) and the Committee for Mental Hygiene (1920) in France. Similar bodies were set up in Germany, Italy, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.

The tenets of reformed psychiatry reached Poland belatedly. The medical press did not show interest in the subject until the 1930s. Kazimierz Dąbrowski²⁴³ pointed out the affinity between mental hygiene and eugenics: “The scopes of eugenics and mental hygiene overlap. Mental hygiene is interested in that part of the hygiene of human reproduction which studies and applies the conditions that are the most favourable to the mental health and culture of the population. In the area of educational and pedagogic psychology, mental hygiene is interested, most importantly, in the relationships between the physical and mental constitution and between physical and mental development, as well as in the connection between the physical and mental constitution and environmental influences”.²⁴⁴ Dąbrowski counted the Polish Eugenics Society and the prohibitionists from the Trzeźwość Society among those who promoted the development of mental hygiene in Poland.

In the early 1930s, the Welfare Ministry, acting together with the Municipal Authority of Warsaw, undertook to meet certain requests concerning mental hygiene, i.e., to establish a network of counselling clinics for neglected children and an Institute for Mental Hygiene (founded 1935).²⁴⁵ In 1932, at the 12th Congress of Polish Psychiatrists, a decision was taken to begin criminal and biological research in Warsaw’s prisons.²⁴⁶ The Ministry of Justice extended its patronage to a committee for criminal and biological research. One of the committee’s members was Witold Łuniewski, director of the Tworki psychiatric hospital.

The most pressing need regarding mental hygiene was to reduce the burden on psychiatric hospitals. At the fifth plenary session of the Chief State Health Council in 1932, Witold Łuniewski called for accelerating the expansion of the outpatient treatment network, given the overcrowding of psychiatric institutions and the high costs of patients’ support.²⁴⁷ He quoted

²⁴³ K. Dąbrowski, “Higiena Psychiczna, za granicą i u nas, jej najbliższe potrzeby i próby ich realizacji”, *Praca i Opieka Społeczna*, 1 (1933): 59–80.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

²⁴⁵ Cf. K. Dąbrowski, “Instytut Higieny Psychicznej w Polsce i jego działalność”, *Praca i Opieka Społeczna*, 1 (1937): 20–24. The IMH was subordinated to the National Institute of Hygiene. As regards clinical work, the Institute operated a closed psychiatric ward and a number of clinics dealing with prevention. In terms of science, it investigated, among other subjects, children’s neuroses and the correlation between nervousness and talents.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Dąbrowski, “Higiena Psychiczna, za granicą”, p. 73.

²⁴⁷ Cf. “Państwowa Naczelna Rada Zdrowia”, *Praca i Opieka Społeczna*, 2 (1933): 179.

WITWAD LEMARSKI
DOTYCZĄCY ENKIECENIA CHOROGE PSYCHICZNE
W ZAKŁADZIE W TWORKACH.

[W formularzu należy stwierdzić nie tylko chorobę umysłową ale i wskazanie do umieszczenia chorego u Zakładzie znakniętym. Twierdzenia rodziny chorego w tym względzie powinny być ocenione krytycznie.
Szczegilne znaczenie w formularzu posiadają punkty: 1, 4, 15, 16, 36, 37, i 40, które należy wypełnić bezwarunkowo].

<p>Imię i nazwisko chorego.</p> <p>Miejsce urodzenia.</p> <p>Zawód.</p> <p>Data urodzenia (względnie wiek).</p> <p>Adres osoby, opiekującej się chorym.</p> <p>Miejsce zamieszkania chorego.</p> <p>Gmina przynależności</p> <p>Wyznanie.</p> <p>A. Etiologia.</p> <p>1. Dziedziczność (Uwzględnić należy: obłąkanie, padaczkę, histerję, śledziennictwo, placemioję, pijalństwo, cierpienia nerwowe, porażenia, nienormalność charakteru, przestępczość nawykową, naturę dziczącą, samobójstwo i t. p.)</p> <p>a) u ojca.</p> <p>b) u matki.</p> <p>c) u dziadków.</p> <p>d) u braci i siostr.</p> <p>e) u rodzeństwa chorego.</p> <p>f) u dzieci chorego.</p> <p>Inne momenty usposabiające.</p> <p>2. Czy rodzice byli spokrewnieni?</p> <p>3. Przebyte choroby cieleśne, uszkodzenia ciała i t. p.?</p>	<p>4. Przebyte choroby nerwowe i umysłowe, nieprawidłowości charakteru albo przestępczość chorego. Liczba, czas trwania i data tych zaburzeń. Upředni pobyt w Zakładzie psychiatrycznym.</p> <p>5. Osobliwości cieleśne chorego: poród—rozwój w okresie dzieciństwa, konstytucja, perjody, ciężce i poronienia.</p> <p>6. Życie umysłowe chorego.</p> <p>Zdolności wrodzone. Postępy szkolne.</p> <p>Uczuciowość, zaszłowania, dążenia, wola.</p> <p>Defekty moralne (brak miłości rodzicielskiej, poczucia słuszności, skłonność do kłamstwa, kradzieży i t. p.).</p> <p>Życie religijne. Zabobony i przesady.</p> <p>7. Nadużywanie napojów wyskokowych (przypuszczalna ilość i jakość używanych napojów.)</p> <p>8. Życie płciowe (samogwałt, homoseksualizm, stosunki ze zwierzętami).</p> <p>9. Wychowanie.</p> <p>10. Stosunki rodzinne i małżeńskie (miłość, nienawiść, kłótnie i t. p.)</p> <p>11. Zatrudnienie.</p> <p>12. Stosunki ekonomiczne.</p> <p>13. Inne osobliwości, zasługujące na zaznaczenie.</p> <p>14. Ostatni powód okazyjny choroby jak sprz. nieszczęśliwa miłość, niepowodzenie majątkowe, wyrzuty sumienia, zazdrość, nieszczęśliwe przygodki i t. p. (nie należy stosować przy tem objawów choroby z jej przyczynami).</p>
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A fragment of a medical history form from the Tworki psychiatric hospital with an extensive section concerning heredity.

Source: The Central Medical Library Special Collection

the example of a treatment and care facility at Erlangen in Bavaria, run by Gustav Kolb, as a model to follow.²⁴⁸

It was for good reason that Łuniewski invoked the German model. German psychiatry was quick to develop outpatient treatment. By 1927, as many as 42 institutions offered outpatient treatment according to Kolb's model. Nevertheless, writes the German historian Walter Schmuhl,²⁴⁹ by the early 1930s, psychiatrists had found themselves in a paradoxical situation: despite their efforts, the number of patients in mental hospitals had been steadily growing, and after the breakdown of the outpatient treatment systems during the economic crisis, some of the patients were deprived of psychiatric care. In that situation, the centre of gravity in psychiatry shifted towards prevention. It was at that time that the eugenic ideas had reached their highest popularity. It is not difficult to notice that there was a contradiction between reformed psychiatry (with its emphasis on the environment in which an individual's mind is shaped) and eugenics, which deemed biological determinism as the source of mental disorders. This is what Walter Schmuhl said on the matter: "The apparent contradiction between reformed psychiatry, underlining the social aspects of treating the mentally ill (family, accommodation, work) and preventive eugenics, resting on the assumption of pure genetic determinism, disappears upon closer examination. Reformed psychiatry has retained the clinical method of perception, assuming that the causes of mental diseases lie in the organic disturbances of functions. It has sought to limit only the disorders resulting from institutionalization; it has not attempted to base the treatment of mental illnesses on their causes. Meanwhile, preventive eugenics has sought to grasp the very essence of mental illness and to eliminate it in a chain of heredity; thus, it could serve as a substitute element in causal treatment. Connecting individual rehabilitation with collective prevention is what, as it has seemed, leads to the shaping of modern psychiatry".²⁵⁰

While Schmuhl's claim concerning the "apparent contradiction" between mental hygiene and eugenics seems correct, the connection between the economic crisis and the growing popularity of eugenics in psychiatry is not completely convincing. The presence of eugenics in the conceptions of mental hygiene advocates is very much evident in the period preceding the Great Crisis. It is not clear whether or not the popularity of thinking in terms of race, the widespread fear of degeneration and, on the other hand,

²⁴⁸ Cf. W. Łuniewski, "Opieka nad psychicznie chorymi w Polsce. Jej stan obecny i zadania na przyszłość", *Praca i Opieka Społeczna*, 4 (1934): 451–462.

²⁴⁹ "Zreformowana psychiatria a masowa zagłada", in *Nazizm, Trzecia Rzesza*, pp. 381–418.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

the expansion of the state's health care and welfare systems played a greater role in the popularization of eugenics than the economic crisis.

The draft voluntary sterilization laws of 1932 gained the support of psychiatrists from the German Mental Hygiene Union. Bertold Kihn, a psychiatry professor from Jena University, calculated in 1932 that the annual cost of supporting about 30,000 "idiots" in care and treatment facilities was 150 million marks. He consented to the "extermination of worthless lives". In 1935, Hitler announced that in the event of war, he would raise the issue of euthanasia, of killing "beings that are a burden". This in fact occurred on a mass scale four years later in 1939. Professor Kihn was deeply involved in the Nazi euthanasia program. Thus, in German psychiatry the idea of euthanasia was a consequence of thinking in eugenic terms.

Even though there was a markedly growing interest in eugenics among Polish psychiatrists in the 1930s, the Polish case was different from the German model. This was shown by the establishment of the Polish Mental Hygiene League and the setting up in 1935 of the journal *Higiena Psychiczna* (Mental hygiene), with Oskar Bielawski as its editor. Sitting on the editorial board, in addition to psychiatrists, were the eugenicists Leon Wernic and Jan Nelken. In the opening article, Bielawski specified the thrusts of the new social movement: "the task of mental hygiene is to employ the whole array of measures it has at its disposal to complete eugenic tasks through the proper upbringing of the child, the choice of the right occupation, the selection of a life companion, offering advice at times of failures, up to and including the prevention of premature senility".²⁵¹

Psychiatrists were interested in intelligence test results (they closely followed the research carried out at Kraków's Institute for Psychological Measurement Techniques), studies concerning twins, heredity of mental disorders, combating alcoholism (the editors published information concerning congresses and exhibitions against alcoholism, etc.), and the upbringing of children and adolescents (including sex education).²⁵² Occasionally, the editors would publish extensive summaries of articles from *Zagadnienia Rasy*.

A complete 1934 draft of eugenic laws was published as early as in the first issue of *Higiena Psychiczna*.²⁵³ In the following issues, the journal published an extensive paper by Henryk Żółkowski "Obezpłodnienie w świetle nauk społecznych" (On sterilization in the light of social sciences).²⁵⁴ delivered

²⁵¹ O. Bielawski, the opening article, *Higiena Psychiczna*, 1–2 (1935): 7.

²⁵² Cf. T. Bilikiewicz, "O płciowym uświadczeniu dziecka", *Higiena Psychiczna*, 1–2 (1935): 113–133.

²⁵³ *Higiena Psychiczna*, 1–2 (1935): 85–88.

²⁵⁴ *Higiena Psychiczna*, 3–4 (1935): 134–154.

in April 1935 at a session of the Poznań branch of the Polish Psychiatric Society. The author posed two questions in it: "(1) Whether public interest in this case is indeed important enough to legitimize a violation of the physical inviolability of an individual who is legally innocent; (2) Whether, if such a threat to the population indeed exists, sterilization is the right protective measure".²⁵⁵ To the above questions Żółtowski answered in the positive. Both eugenic and social reasons legitimize sterilization: "whoever is unable to support and bring up children, should not have them",²⁵⁶ he concluded.

Subsequently, the journal published an article by Józef Kirschner, a physician committed to the reform of mores and to planned parenthood advocacy. In his article, Kirschner considered the probable results of forced sterilization of the mentally ill.²⁵⁷ In his opinion, the best results could be achieved by sterilizing the mentally retarded, at a much slower pace in the case of schizophrenia, and to an even lesser degree in the case of epilepsy and manic-depressive psychoses. He concluded his considerations by expressing approval for the procedure: "Thus, the procedure of sterilization of individuals afflicted with hereditary diseases would be not only the most radical and daring preventive procedure known to us to date, but also a procedure performed exclusively with a view to ensuring the well-being of the future generations".²⁵⁸

At a session of the Neurological Society in Kraków in October 1935,²⁵⁹ Kirschner refuted the criticisms that coercive sterilization stood in opposition to the autonomy of the individual: "I am of the opinion that the state should be an organization existing for the good of its members and limiting their freedom only inasmuch as this is required by its internal order and the necessity of defense against external enemies. An individual, however, depending on the success and fortunes of the society it lives in, must, if need be, make sacrifices for the well-being of that society".²⁶⁰ On this occasion he admitted that eugenicists were right in saying that sterilization might markedly reduce the number of people burdened with hereditary diseases. Though he advocated coercive sterilization, he allowed for the possibility of applying voluntary sterilization initially. He proposed striking epilepsy and schizophrenia from the list of diseases legitimizing the procedure, on the

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 139.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 141.

²⁵⁷ J. Kirschner, "O przypuszczalnym ilościowym i czasowym wyniku przymusowego wyjąławiania chorych umysłowo", *Higiena Psychiczna*, 4-7 (1936): 199-208.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 208.

²⁵⁹ J. Kirschner, "Uwagi o projekcie ustawy eugenicznej", *Higiena Psychiczna*, 1-3 (1936): 59-74.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 69.

grounds that in the case of these disorders it was impossible to distinguish between their hereditary and post-traumatic varieties. On the other hand, he proposed extending the sterilization program to cover: “repeat offenders, with a reservation, however, that sterilization may apply only to those individuals who have been found to have a propensity for offence and crime determined mostly by their hereditary traits rather than by their social circumstances; the sterilization of such offenders should have a preventive rather than punitive character”.²⁶¹ Kirschner’s position best reflects the attraction of thinking in terms of heredity. Even those who negated the claims concerning the congenital nature of diseases readily quoted heredity to explain the existence of social pathologies. In the following issues, the editors published the German sterilization law in its entirety and the revised Polish draft eugenic law of 1935.²⁶²

The subject of sterilization and eugenics never disappeared from the pages of *Higiena Psychiczna* until the journal closed down in 1938. It systematically published reprints of articles from *Zagadnienia Rasy* justifying the necessity for passing eugenic legislation, along with summaries of eugenic writings in foreign languages and notes on the progress of sterilization programs in neighbouring countries.²⁶³

The subject of the draft eugenic laws was raised in Poland at the 16th Congress of Polish Psychiatrists held in Lublin and Chełm on 6–8 December 1936.²⁶⁴ Kirschner advocated coercive sterilization on eugenic grounds. Łuniewski opposed him, pointing out that social indications were the only possible reason for requesting a sterilization procedure for a patient. In conclusion, Łuniewski proposed including the following in the draft law: “Individuals affected with severe mental retardation, severe forms of psychopathy, epilepsy, or alcohol addiction or with acquired severe feeble-mindedness, in whose case there is justified fear that, while their reproductive capacity is preserved, they are permanently unable, because of their mental deficiency, to understand their parental responsibilities or to exercise these responsibilities [...] may be sterilized without their consent on the basis of decisions of the competent medical authorities and subject to government authorization”.²⁶⁵

One can see from the above excerpt how vague the limits between particular indications were. Depending on the argument, eugenic indications turned into social ones, and social indications into economic ones.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁶² *Higiena Psychiczna*, 6–7 (1935): 221–224, 350–351.

²⁶³ Cf. *Higiena Psychiczna*, 1–2 (1938): 243–252.

²⁶⁴ W. Winiarz, “Higiena Psychiczna w Niemczech”, *Higiena Psychiczna*, 4–7 (1936): 175–188.

²⁶⁵ *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 4 (1936): 385.

PHYSICIANS' STATEMENTS PUBLISHED IN THE PRESS

At a Polish Eugenics Society congress in Kraków in April 1936, Leon Wander, a physician and research worker of the Jagiellonian University, voiced an opinion that, given the numerous ambiguities of the law of heredity and the risk involved in coercive sterilization, one should only allow voluntary sterilization subject to the patient's or his guardian's consent.²⁶⁶

Another physician, a psychiatrist and also a Jagiellonian University research worker, Stefan Pieńkowski,²⁶⁷ denied that it was possible to eliminate mental diseases and mental retardation by means of sterilization. He pointed out that sterilization procedures might contribute to increasing the numbers of psychopaths, growing crime, by destroying gifted, talented individuals and the rise of various post-traumatic neuroses. He pointed out various shortcomings of the draft laws. In the case of assistance to newlyweds, he did not see any possibility of an objective classification of the value of couples, or any institution that would undertake this kind of decision-making. He believed that medical knowledge did not provide a basis for sterilization on genetic grounds. On the other hand, he advocated sterilization of "asocial individuals", e.g., alcoholics, psychopaths, and the mentally ill. In his opinion, the eugenic law should be expanded in two directions: childcare, and combating alcoholism and drug addiction.

Pieńkowski presented an even more critical stance in *Polska Gazeta Lekarska* in 1936.²⁶⁸ He pointed out numerous sources of potential medical errors in diagnosing various disorders: errors resulting from an insufficient knowledge of the law of heredity, from the impossibility of carrying out a long, multi-century observation of the inheritance process throughout the successive generations, errors resulting from an inability to distinguish between environmental and hereditary influences in an individual, and from an insufficient knowledge of mental diseases. Besides, he argued, mental disease was expressed to widely varying degrees, and often, as in the case of manic-depressives, was very close to the condition of good health. The sterilization law would mostly cover extreme cases. Meanwhile, such cases accounted for a very small percentage of the overall number of the mentally ill, and the danger of those patients degenerating the race was also small. "All the more so because", the author concluded, "as we learn from precise analyses of the heredity of nervous and mental diseases, the progeny of

²⁶⁶ L. Wander, "O wskazaniach psychiatrycznych, eugenicznych i społecznych do sterylizacji", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3 (1936): 227.

²⁶⁷ S. K. Pieńkowski, "Stanowisko lekarsko-psychiatryczne w stosunku do nowego projektu ustawy eugenicznej", *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 2 (1936): 76.

²⁶⁸ "Uwagi ogólne biologiczno-lekarskie w sprawie nowego projektu ustawy eugenicznej", *Polska Gazeta Lekarska*, 6 (1936): 98.

those clearly and definitely ill does not always display the disease in a more severe form; occasionally, there are even weaker degrees of the disease in further generations”.²⁶⁹

Henryk Higier warned in *Warszawskie Czasopismo Lekarskie* against any rash decisions concerning sterilization laws.²⁷⁰ Stefan Dąbrowski in his article in *Życie Medyczne*, completely rejected the eugenic idea, and with it any plans for sterilization.²⁷¹ Writing in *Polska Gazeta Lekarska*, Stanisław Chrzęszczewski presented a view from the other extreme.²⁷² He saw the German sterilization law (which he clearly analyzed in the context of the Polish eugenic law) as “a bold attempt to overcome the resistance offered by tradition and superstition”. A draft by Wiktor Grzywo-Dąbrowski, concerning coercive sterilization and castration, was outlined in *Praca i Opieka Społeczna* (the official organ of the Ministry of Welfare) in 1935.²⁷³ It included the same solutions that its author later presented at a Chief State Health Council session in 1936. Coercive sterilization was to apply to individuals committed to hospitals, poorhouses, workhouses, prisons, “afflicted by severe sufferings”.²⁷⁴

RESPONSE FROM MEMBERS OF THE STATE AUTHORITIES

Two responses from the government to the Polish Eugenics Society have been preserved at the New Records Archive.²⁷⁵ In the first response, the possibility of judging the value of human beings was questioned in the very opening section. It reads as follows: “As evident from the contents of the abovementioned articles, the definition of ‘worthy individuals’ is chaotic or, rather, there is no definition at all. Who will be designated to judge the value of people [...]? The concept of a ‘worthy individual’ is so subjective that it should be deleted from the law, and mention some more objective traits qualifying for assistance, e.g., ‘individuals’ coming from families of merit may even be criminals”.²⁷⁶ Elsewhere, an irritated civil servant asks: “What is ‘a newlywed creative at work’ supposed to mean?”²⁷⁷ Almost the entire welfare part of the laws was rejected. Taxing childless married couples and

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ H. Higier, “W sprawie walki eugenicznej z rozrodem osobników małowartościowych”, *Warszawskie Czasopismo Lekarskie*, 27–28 (1936): 445.

²⁷¹ “Sterylizacja w świetle etyki”, *Życie Medyczne*, 18–19 (1938): 1.

²⁷² S. Chrzęszczewski, “Problem sterylizacji w świetle ustawy niemieckiej”, *Polska Gazeta Lekarska*, 46 (1935): 836–837.

²⁷³ Cf. W. Grzywo-Dąbrowski, “Zagadnienie obezplodniania”, *Praca i Opieka Społeczna*, 4 (1935), 556.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ AAN, Akta Ministerstwa Opieki Społecznej, file no. 532.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 22–23.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 23.

bachelors would have entailed social inequity. Nobody can be forced to enter into matrimony or to have a specified number of offspring. Nobody would explain why they had one or more children. In this response, a multitude of legal errors and inaccuracies was pointed out, including the following inconsistency: why should the tax be levied on bachelors only, but not on spinsters. In conclusion we can read: "In addition to the above observations, which incidentally do not cover all those moments that deserve criticism, it should be mentioned that the draft, apart from its purely eugenic aspect, covers also other matters, ones too complicated and dangerous to take an affirmative stance regarding them without a detailed justification, and in particular population policy issues, which, given the lack of opportunities for expansion, emigration, or colonies and the lack of capital in Poland, may lead to an even greater impoverishment of the population".²⁷⁸

The second available opinion extensively elaborated on the reservations presented above. It completely rejected the welfare role of eugenics as a demand contrary to the social spirit, unjust, and infeasible. The author stated that classifying citizens into less and more worthy was completely beyond the state's capacity. An agency charged with this task "would produce a caricature: a pigeonholed society, creating easy ground for immense abuses, nepotism, favouritism, and corruption".²⁷⁹ On premarital counselling: "A state law may impose an obligation for candidates for marriage to check their own health and to learn about the health of the person they are to marry. Subsequently, however, the law should not interfere, and the possibility of contracting marriage should not depend on a eugenics police. To introduce permits of this kind would entail unbearable tyranny, for it would limit people's freedom to decide about the deepest corners of their beings. Eugenicists should use propaganda to raise public awareness about the enormity of the misfortune that eugenically mismatched couples lay in store for their offspring, for themselves, and for society, when they bring progeny into the world, but an etatization of married life would be an excessive simplification of the eugenicists' work, and proposing such draft laws may only detract from the popularity of eugenics".²⁸⁰

Both government opinions denied the legitimacy, advisability, and the very possibility of judging individuals' value in terms of eugenic usefulness. The more lenient measures of eugenic selection, such as compulsory premarital counselling combined with a legal prohibition for sick individuals to marry, or judging individuals' value, provoked a categorical and clear opposition

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

from the civil servants of the *Sanacja* era. The draft laws were rejected already at the level of the faith, widespread among eugenicists, in the omnipotence of the state, which should govern the private lives of people, and of the principle of the eugenic selection of the population.

The eugenic idea as propagated in interwar Poland was similar to Nordic visions. Entrusting the function of controlling the quality of the population to the state meant that the “misfits” – the sick, the feeble, as well as those regarded as “asocial” individuals – could be deprived of their capacity for procreation even against their will. The state’s welfare function was to consist in distributing public funds for financial assistance to “eugenically worthy individuals” in order to make it easier for them to start a family.

Underlying these plans was a utopian vision of a perfect society, made up of healthy, happy citizens. In the 1930s, this utopia was dangerously close to totalitarian visions.

Arguments invoking the principles of Christian ethics and morality, including the inalienable and universal value of human life stressed by the Catholic Church, were those that turned out to be the most resistant to the eugenic vision of society.

11. IN THE SHADOW OF LOOMING WAR

Immediately before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Polish Eugenics Society had a membership of about 10,000.²⁸¹ There were plans to set up a Eugenics Institute. Two laboratories established in 1938 were to provide its starting point. The first one was a Genealogical Research Laboratory (head: Jan Gnoiński) and the other one was a Gemelliology Laboratory (concerned with the study of twins and headed by Jerzy Szpakowski). Planned within the institute were departments of genetics and cytogenetics with sections for physical constitution and race and anthropological research, the study of characteristics of normal and pathological heredity, the study of twins, and endocrinological and serological research.²⁸² Keeping genealogical registers that were to be a basis for research was to be an important aspect of the institute’s work.

In the late 1930s, Wernic increasingly used synonyms for eugenics: “anthropogenetics”, “cytogenetics” and “eugenetics” in his writings. This

²⁸¹ Statistics concerning PES membership in the 1930s are given in “Ankieta w sprawie towarzystw naukowych” of 1948. Cf. AAN, Ministerstwo Oświaty (Education Ministry), file no. 3223, p. 215.

²⁸² Cf. L. Wernic, “Instytut Eugeniczny i program jego działalności”, *Eugenika Polska*, 4 (1938): 253.

shows that genetic knowledge, which had been developing in parallel to eugenics, had been adopted by scientists from Wernic's circle. The history of a eugenics textbook is telling evidence of its acceptance. Immediately before the war, Wernic entrusted the task of writing the textbook to Maria Skalińska, a medicine professor at the Jagiellonian University. It was agreed that the first volume would be entitled "Genetics" and the second one "Practical Eugenics". Only the first volume was published, the editing of the second one was interrupted by the outbreak of the war.

Published from 1937, *Biuletyn Eugeniczny* (Eugenic bulletin, 1937–1939, edited by M. Lucius) was reporting on the PES' work in addition to *Eugenika Polska*. In the late 1930s, psychiatric research that was of interest to eugenicists was developing independently of the PES. Thanks to Prof. Marcin Zieliński, a ward of the Poznań university clinic was established in the Owińska mental hospital. In agreement with the Ministry of Justice, the ward pursued diagnostic work on prisoners, aimed at discovering hereditary psychopathic tendencies. Prof. Zieliński also made preparations for organizing, with the assistance of national and district authorities, a national Polish Institute for Heredity Research.²⁸³

Janiszewski persisted in promoting eugenics. In 1935, he went to Berlin for a population congress, after which he praised the Nazi German regime for properly appreciating the problem of public health.²⁸⁴ He also called on the state authorities to reactivate the Ministry of Public Health, justifying his request with eugenic indications: "the point is not only about issuing and supervising sanitary and policing regulations, for the present organization is absolutely sufficient for that purpose, so there would be no need to reactivate the Ministry of Health. Here the point is completely different, however. For the point is to embark on planned work in a field completely neglected thus far, work on improving our quality, so as to prevent it from deteriorating even further [...] The point is to develop and implement a rational government population policy adjusted to our needs and possibilities".²⁸⁵

In the late 1930s, the German racist-eugenic policy model provoked both admiration and fears in the Polish press.²⁸⁶ On the one hand, Janiszewski

²⁸³ Cf. *Rocznik Psychiatryczny*, 1 (1949): 117.

²⁸⁴ Cf. T. Janiszewski, "Sprawozdanie z międzynarodowego zjazdu dla naukowego badania zagadnień ludnościowych, odbytego w Berlinie w czasie od 26 VIII do 1 XI 1935 r.", *Lekarz Polski*, 12 (1936): 266.

²⁸⁵ Id., "O potrzebie reaktywowania Ministerstwa Zdrowia Publicznego ze względu na konieczną oszczędność i na obronę Państwa", *Lekarz Polski*, 5 (1937): 82.

²⁸⁶ In 1937, Jan Szumski delivered a paper: "Polityka zdrowotna i populacyjna oraz organizacja służby zdrowia w Trzeciej Rzeszy" (The health and population policy and the organization of the health service in the Third Reich) at the Society of Military Knowl-

called for imitating Germany (fascinated, he described counselling for pregnant women and mothers, tax relief for worthy families, a legal prohibition for the sick to marry, sterilization of “elements of little value”, as well as the development of heredity research centres), while on the other hand he called for “alertness” and “waking from sleep” in the name of the protection of “national existence”.²⁸⁷ He used similar arguments when he called for the establishment of an Institute for Social Hygiene and a corresponding university chair in 1937.²⁸⁸

Sporadically, voices demanding an unburdening of the welfare system through eugenic regulations, including coercive sterilization, a marriage prohibition, and internment of the sick appeared in the non-professional press as well.²⁸⁹ One should note here Karol Stojanowski’s contributions. In the 1930s, the question of the artificial selection of the population appears in his articles in a triad of problems: racism – eugenics – anti-Semitism. He pointed out that in all Slavic countries (including Poland), eugenics had features of a scientific movement, while in Germany it had turned into “a chauvinist social movement with a shade of religious mysticism”.²⁹⁰

He further argued that the anti-Slavic character of German racism and eugenics was a prelude to the “planned robbery of Slavic lands”.²⁹¹ As an antidote to the aggressive German policy he proposed the building of a strong nation-state by denying national minority status to the Jews, whom he described as “guests” who should immediately leave Poland, as well as to the Ukrainians and Belarusians, whom he believed belonged organically to the Polish nation.²⁹² He accorded national minority status,

edge and the Polish Eugenics Society, which was later reprinted in *Lekarz Polski*, 6 (1937): 127–135.

²⁸⁷ Cf. T. Janiszewski, “Idea państwowa a zdrowie”, *Lekarz Polski*, 9 (1937): 177.

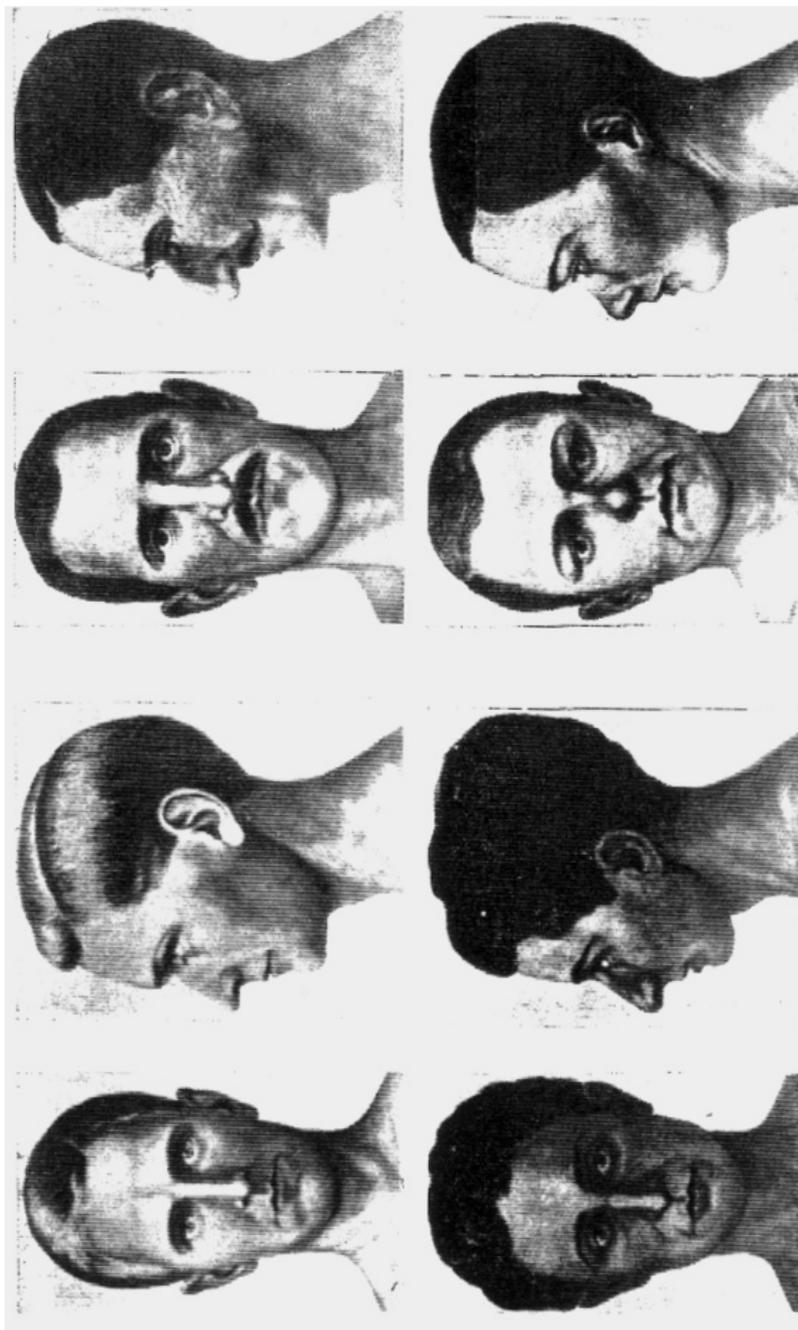
²⁸⁸ Id., “O potrzebie stworzenia Instytutu i osobnej Katedry Higieny Społecznej ze względu na interes nauki i obronę Państwa”, *Lekarz Polski*, 6 (1937): 123–125.

²⁸⁹ An article by Ludwik Witowiecki, in which the author writes as follows, is a bizarre example of such appeals: “Thus, we need to check this disproportionately big, unrestrained in any way, unregulated, downright wild [natural – M. G.] growth. The growth of a retarded, often degenerate population, being a permanent burden on the state and the people, whether in the form of the criminal element, filling prisons, or in the form of unfit types, degenerate, retarded and sickly, making up a majority of hospital patients, poorhouse and care facility inmates.; meanwhile, in the present situation, most welfare funding gets wasted unproductively on supporting these worthless or downright harm-inflicting individuals in hospitals, poorhouses, workhouses (not to mention prisons)”, id., “Zagadnienie populacyjne z punktu widzenia eugeniki praktycznej”, *Życie Młodych*, 2 (1939): 40.

²⁹⁰ K. Stojanowski, *Rasizm przeciw Słowiańszczyźnie* (Poznań, 1934), p. 40.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

²⁹² *Ibid.*



Racial types according to J. Czekanowski in German interpretation. Polish eugenicists pointed to the characteristic facial deformities (sharp noses with an excessive indentation at the root of the nose, strong chins) of the Mediterranean, Dinaric, and Lapponoid types, in contrast to the idyllic image of the Nordic.

Source: *Zagadnienia Rasy*, 3-4 (1935): 161.

and thus the maintenance of political rights, to the Germans, Lithuanians, and Czechs only.

Stojanowski spoke even more aggressively on the national minorities immediately before the outbreak of the Second World War.²⁹³ He believed that Germany's anti-Semitic legislation was a model to follow for the entirety of Central and Eastern Europe: "This solution [of the Jewish question] may not be less radical than the German solution, or else it will not satisfy the indigenous population".²⁹⁴ He predicted a future German-Jewish alliance, to be based on the following compromise: the Germans would allow the Jews to leave the countries of Central Europe and settle in Russia and Ukraine: "they will throw them into the Slavic East as material that would grow and exceed Russia".²⁹⁵

Wernic did not allow anti-Semitic declarations of this kind in the eugenicists' most important journal, *Zagadnienia Rasy*. This shows a conscious effort on the part of the PES chairman to prevent Polish eugenics from following in the footsteps of Nazi German eugenics. In the late 1930s, *Zagadnienia Rasy* demystified the tenets of German racism. In 1938, the journal changed its title to *Eugenika Polska* (Polish eugenics). The last meeting of the Polish Eugenics Society was held in July 1939.

What is most disturbing is the fact that not only the Polish Eugenics Society, but also government agencies such as the Ministry of Public Health (existing between 1918-1923) and the eugenics section of the Chief State Health Council (probably 1935-1939) were interested in a eugenic correction of the population. One should also remember circumstantial evidence pointing to the Health Service Department of the Welfare Ministry as the government agency initiating draft sterilization laws. Perhaps researching the Central Medical Library's archival holdings that have yet to be described and made available will make it possible to clarify the role of government agencies in promoting the eugenic vision of society.

The information collected thus far allows ruling out the possibility that the draft sterilization laws first appeared in late 1934 or early 1935. The first petition of the Society for Combating Race Degeneration demanding the forced sterilization of those with hereditary disorders addressed to the government authorities dates back to 1918 (the Congress on the Depopulation of the Country). This fact undermines the thesis concerning totalitarian inspirations as the main motive behind the sterilization laws. The second stage in the development of the sterilization idea falls in the mid-1930s,

²⁹³ K. Stojanowski, *Polsko-niemieckie zagadnienie rasy* (Poznań, 1939).

²⁹⁴ Stojanowski, *Rasizm*, p. 43.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

with the reservation that debates and new draft coercive sterilization laws keep appearing at least until 1938, and most probably until the outbreak of the Second World War.

The scale of the popularity of eugenics in the medical and political circles differed diametrically. Politicians representing various options, from socialists to nationalists, showed no interest in draft eugenic laws – and for very different reasons. Socialists viewed the neo-Malthusian doctrine suspiciously. Only a small group of socialists (including Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, Dorota Kłuszyńska, and Henryk Kłuszyński) initiated and pursued a campaign for birth control, while the other Polish Socialist Party members looked on with reserve. This reserve probably deepened when an open dispute broke out between *Wiadomości Literackie* and *Robotnik* in the early 1930s. Socialists treated eugenics equally coldly, regarding it as yet another theory drawing the masses away from social questions, the issue of redistribution of goods, etc.

Polish nationalists rejected eugenics because of the position of the Catholic Church on the matter and because of the anti-Polish face of racial hygiene in Germany. One may observe certain exceptions to these general patterns. Daszyńska-Golińska, for example, advocated eugenics even though she was a socialist (and later a member of the Non-Partisan Bloc for the Cooperation with the Government). Right-wing commentators from the milieu of daily *ABC* looked at eugenics with a degree of sympathy, even though they declared themselves to be Catholic.

Eugenics was mainly supported by the medical circles made up of individuals with liberal and left-wing views. It was not until the 1930s that eugenics assumed the characteristics of a broader social movement, as it attracted the interest of scientists and anthropologists sympathizing with the National Democratic party (Jan Mydlarski, Stanisław Żejmo-Żejmis, Karol Stojanowski), and contributors to *Wiadomości Literackie*, who were identified with the liberal worldview.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE STALINIST ERA

1. EUGENIC CRIMES IN OCCUPIED POLAND (EUTHANASIA, STERILIZATION, AND THE HUMAN EXPERIMENTS CONDUCTED AT AUSCHWITZ)

Unlike Western European countries and, incidentally, unlike other countries situated in the same part of the Continent (such as Czechoslovakia), Poland fell victim to the German extermination policy underpinned by Nazi eugenics. The thesis that dominates in the literature: “Hadamar precedes Auschwitz”, was articulated by D. Peukert. This thesis suggests that before the Nazis carried out exterminations against members of the “inferior races” – the Jews, the Gypsies, and the Slavs – they had first murdered German nationals, patients of psychiatric hospitals, having framed the rationale for this in the very same eugenic terms as at the death camps. This is to say that Nazi eugenics first manifested its cruelty towards Germany’s own citizens, and only later towards “aliens”. This thesis needs rectifying in one key matter – namely, that the German euthanasia program under the cryptonym “Aktion T4” was carried out simultaneously in the Third Reich and in occupied Poland. The liquidation of German psychiatric hospitals began in the autumn of 1939, while executions of psychiatric patients from the Owińska mental hospital in Fort VII in Poznań occurred in October that same year.¹ It was probably there at Owińska that a poisonous gas was first used for the mass-scale killing of people. Thus, we are justified in claiming that the mass exterminations at Auschwitz had been preceded not only by Hadamar, but also by Owińska and a whole series of other Polish hospitals. This new perspective shows that the Aktion T4 euthanasia program had a broader scope than hitherto noted.

¹ Z. Jaroszewski, “Los szpitala psychiatrycznego w Owińskach w czasie wojny”, *Rocznik Psychiatryczny*, 37 (1949), no. 1: 117. We do not know the remaining execution sites of the patients of that hospital. Circumstantial evidence indicates forests in the Murowana Goślina–Oborniki–Rogoźno triangle.

Beginning from 1940, the euthanasia program was extended beyond Owińska to other psychiatric hospitals in Poland: Choroszcz, Kochanówka, Dziekanka, Gostynin, Kulparków, and Chełm Lubelski. The patients were poisoned with exhaust fumes and gas, injected with poisons, starved to death, or shot.²

There were 700 patients in the Kochanówka hospital in 1939.³ Late in March 1940 the hospital was taken over by the German administration of the city of Łódź (Lotz). It was forbidden to discharge patients, but they continued to be admitted. A commission arrived at the hospital, headed by an SS doctor, and including a specialist on race issues in order to qualify the patients for evacuation. After this visit, the first stage of the hospital's liquidation began. SS officers ordered the patients to take their possessions with them and to deposit valuables with the commander of the detachment. They were loaded into a windowless metal wagon with the inscription "Kaiserkafe" and into tarpaulin-covered lorries with piping leading inside. The vehicles departed in the direction of the road to Zgierz. Each time, 140 patients were taken. Exterminations were carried out in stages. The first one was carried out on 13–15 May 1940, the second one on 27–28 May 1940. The third one was the longest: July–August 1941. Two days before the end of the last phase, sick and blind children were brought from the city and were also executed. 1,201 patients of the Dziekanka hospital in the Wielkopolska district were murdered in the same manner.⁴ SS officers typically return from successive "actions" with scratch marks, with their uniform buttons torn off, and with fresh bloodstains – evidence that the patients had undertaken hopeless efforts to fight or escape in the face of death.

In the euthanasia campaign, methods other than gassing were also used. In Chełm Lubelski, 440 patients were shot.⁵ The mass execution took place on 12 January 1940 close to the hospital building. It was the children who gave the executioners the most trouble. They scattered all over the hospital's storeys and corridors. The hospital staff hid them in closets and under the beds. Even so, all the children were eventually caught and subsequently shot. Those who offered resistance, adults and children alike, were thrown out the windows.

² Cf. *Rocznik Psychiatryczny*, 37 (1949), no. 1.

³ Cf. E. Herman, "O okrucieństwach niemieckich w stosunku do umysłowo chorych w szpitalu Kochanówka", *Rocznik Psychiatryczny*, 37 (1949), no. 1: 92.

⁴ J. Gallus, "Dziekanka w latach 1939–1945 oraz jej rola w wyniszczeniu umysłowo chorych Polaków", *Rocznik Psychiatryczny*, 37 (1949), no. 1: 75.

⁵ A. Ossendowski, "Zbrodnie niemieckie w stosunku do umysłowo chorych w szpitalu psychiatrycznym w Chełmie Lubelskim", *Rocznik Psychiatryczny*, 37 (1949), no. 1: 122.

In 1941, patients from the Choroszcz hospital were murdered in the same manner.⁶ Later, the German authorities issued an order for caretakers to bring to Choroszcz all those sick who were being looked after outside the hospital. As there was no hospital to pay the caretakers for the patients' support and board any more, the peasants obeyed the order. They only kept those fit for work. Macabre scenes took place on the way to the execution site. Prayers, cries, weeping, and implorations, all drowned out by the crackling of rifles, were heard from the forest. Overall, 464 people were shot.

About 1,000 mental patients from Kobierzyn were transported by rail to Auschwitz.⁷ Some of them were shot on the spot, while the remaining ones were gassed. The patients from Kulparków were starved to death.⁸

The witnesses of these crimes have stressed the methodical manner and precision with which the sick and the crippled were murdered. Historians, on the other hand, emphasize the fact that Aktion T4 was the first occasion when the most effective murder method, gassing, was used. An impression of similarity, no longer at the ideological level, but in terms of murder techniques, is all the stronger when we realize that the medical personnel involved in the killing of the sick and retarded was subsequently delegated to the extermination camps in 1941 and 1942. In 1941, Horst Schumann, who was the head of another euthanasia institution, Grafenck in Wurtemberg (1939–1940), and later of the Sonnenstein euthanasia institution in Saxony (1940–1941),⁹ arrived at Auschwitz. After him, other doctors arrived at the camps, notably Christian Wirth's medical team, sent to the Bełżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka extermination camps.

In line with the dictates of German racial hygiene, eugenicist physicians were looking for a cheap and quick sterilization method, one that would allow them to purge Europe of the members of the lower races: Jews, Gypsies, and Slavs. The surgical procedure used so far, and applied on a mass scale from 1933, had been declared too inefficient. The war situation exerted additional pressure on eugenicist physicians who associated the mastering of fertility control techniques with great economic benefits. In a 1941 letter to Himmler, one of the Nazi doctors wrote: "If [...] it were possible to produce a drug which after a relatively short time effects an imperceptible

⁶ R. Markuszewicz, "Barbarzyńska likwidacja przez Niemców szpitala psychiatrycznego w Choroszczy", *Rocznik Psychiatryczny*, 37 (1949), no. 1: 63.

⁷ W. Issajewicz, "Losy państwowego zakładu dla umysłowo chorych w Kobierzynie z czasów okupacji i za ostatnie miesiące", *Rocznik Psychiatryczny*, 37 (1949), no. 1: 128.

⁸ H. Łatyński, "Zbrodnie niemieckie w szpitalu psychiatrycznym w Kulparkowie", *Rocznik Psychiatryczny*, 37 (1949), no. 1: 132.

⁹ Cf. the biographical entry for Schumann in: A. Lasik, "Obsada obozowa służby zdrowia SS", *Zeszyty Oświęcimskie*, 20 (1993): 320–321.

sterilization on human beings, then we would have a new, powerful weapon at our disposal. The very thought that the three million Bolsheviks, at present German prisoners, could be sterilized so that they could be used as labourers but be prevented from reproduction, opens the most far reaching prospects".¹⁰ Besides Ravensbrück, Auschwitz played a central role in the Nazi sterilization experiments.

In March 1941, Doctor Victor Brack submitted a report to Hitler in which he suggested that people should be made infertile by means of irradiation with x-rays.¹¹ The dose for men was to be 300–350 roentgens, and for women 500–600 roentgens. He calculated that in optimum conditions the time of the "procedure" would be 2 minutes for men and 3 minutes for women. Sterilization could occur unbeknownst to the parties concerned, and 150–200 such irradiations could be performed in a single day. As a result of Brack's efforts, Horst Schumann, an expert on euthanasia, was put in charge of sterilization experiments, and Auschwitz was designated as the place in which to carry out experimentation. In order to fulfill his "mission", Schumann arrived at Auschwitz for the second time in November 1942 and stayed there until mid-1944. Young, healthy men – Poles, Russians, and Frenchmen – were used in the experiments. After exposure, the inmates were castrated in order to investigate in detail the effects of strong radiation.

The method of irradiation with x-rays did not win the full approval of the SS medical service. In the spring of 1944, based on the results of Schumann's experiments, one of the Nazi doctors recommended a resumption of castration as a more reliable and cheap method in a letter to Himmler.¹² The castration procedure was supposed to take merely 6–7 minutes. It was expected it could be applied on a mass scale.

Parallel to x-ray irradiation, other sterilization experiments continued. In May 1942, Carl Clauberg, a well-known gynaecology professor from Königsberg, requested Himmler's support for his sterilization experiments, proposing Auschwitz as the place in which to carry them out. Himmler agreed

¹⁰ Quoted after: V. Spitz, *Doctors from Hell: The Horrific Account of Nazi Experiments on Humans* (Boulder, Col., 2005), pp. 192–193 (Polish version: J. Schn, "Zbrodnicze eksperymenty sterylizacyjne C. Clauberga", *Zeszyty Oświęcimskie*, 2 (1958): 15).

¹¹ In his text "KL Auschwitz w procesach norymberskich" (KL Auschwitz in the Nuremberg trials), *Zeszyty Oświęcimskie*, 18 (1983): 277, Andrzej Pankowicz suggests that the x-ray sterilization method was derived from Brack. In reality, this method had been in use in Europe for a long time and was deemed safe for the exposed person's health. It was not until the 1930s that doctors began to warn against the negative consequences of this method for human health.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 277.

to Clauberg's proposal, and the latter immediately began his experiments on Auschwitz inmates. His sterilization method consisted of injecting a toxic substance mixed with contrast liquid into the uterus. As a result of these painful injections, an infection set in, causing tubal obliteration and permanent sterility. In a letter to Himmler of 7 June 1943, Clauberg boasted that soon one skilled doctor with the assistance of ten support staff would be able to carry out up to 1,000 sterilizations within a single day.¹³ As a result of Clauberg's experimentation, thousands of Gypsy and Jewish women from Ravensbrück and Auschwitz were sterilized.

Auschwitz became a testing ground for another fanatical advocate of eugenics, a graduate of the philosophy department of Munich University and of the philosophy department of Frankfurt am Mein University, doctor of philosophy and medical sciences, Joseph Mengele.¹⁴ He came into contact with eugenic principles as early as his university studies. His M Sc thesis was entitled "The Racial and Morphological Examination of the Mandible in Four Racial Groups". His interests attracted the attention of Professor von Verschuer from the Institute for Genetic Biology and Racial Hygiene in Frankfurt am Mein, who appointed him his assistant. Like many eugenicists at that time, Verschuer studied the issue of twins, deepening his knowledge of heredity. In 1937, Mengele joined the NSDAP. A year later, he became an SS officer.

Mengele did not arrive at Auschwitz until May 1943; he owed his appointment to the protection of the supervisor of his doctoral thesis, who at that time held the post of the head of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics. Mengele was given the post of the head doctor at the Gypsy camp established at Birkenau in February 1943. Mengele embarked on research in several directions, but his main research interest was the phenomenon of twins. He studied *heterochromia iridis*, i.e., the different iris colours in identical twins, the physiology and pathology of dwarfism, and the origins of various congenital anomalies.¹⁵ When another family camp for Jews was set up at Birkenau in September 1943, Mengele became interested in Jewish children as well. He set up separate barracks for twins, along with gardens having playgrounds for children covered by

¹³ Cf. W. Fejkiel, "O tzw. demografii negatywnej, czyli o doświadczeniach prof. Clauberga", *Polski Tygodnik Lekarski*, 8 (1957): 305; and id., *Medycyna za drutami. Pamiętnik lekarzy* (Warszawa, 1964), pp. 405–546.

¹⁴ On the subject cf. H. Kubica, "Dr Mengele i jego zbrodnie w obozie koncentracyjnym Oświęcim-Brzezinka", *Zeszyty Oświęcimskie*, 20 (1993).

¹⁵ Mengele conducted also other research, unrelated to heredity, including on the methods of treating gangrenous stomatitis (water cancer), a disease frequently afflicting Auschwitz inmates.

his experiments. They were subject to anthropometrical, morphological, and psychiatric examinations, as well as x-rays. Mengele's experiments were described in detail in a number of studies.¹⁶ What is certain is that he wanted to discover the mechanism of generating multiple pregnancy with a view to increasing German women's fertility. He is known to have been searching for scientific proof for the inferiority of races other than the Aryan race. To this end, he prepared the skeletons of inmates killed at his command, mainly Jews and Gypsies. Another criminal, Professor Johann Kremer, an endocrinologist, ordered the killings with phenol of inmates he himself picked out, in order to examine the behaviour of secretory glands immediately after their deaths, on "fresh corpses".

Mengele recruited a number of famous scientists to his research project. Dr Berthold Epstein, a world-famous pediatrician, Professor of Prague University, was in charge of laboratory work at the Gypsy camp at Auschwitz. Dr Rudolf Vitek, a dermatologist, and Dr Bendel, a reader at the medical department in Paris, were his assistants. Mengele also selected a Polish inmate, Martyna Gryglaszewska-Puzynina, a doctor of anthropology and a prewar co-worker of Jan Mydlarski, to assist him with anthropological research.

Blood and other secretions were sent to the SS Hygiene Institute and other scientific establishments. Anthropometrical, morphological, and psychiatric testing as well as x-ray examinations were carried out on twins, dwarfs, and cripples. Martyna Gryglaszewska-Puzynina testified after the war that she had made measurements of over 250 pairs of twins. After the tests were completed, the inmates were killed with a phenol injection in the heart, while some of them died as a result of the experiments. It was thus that Mengele got the opportunity to carry out postmortems on twins killed at the same time.¹⁷

Before the Sonderkommando doctors, who could get the closest to the crime, who could see it not as a single act, but in a series of ordered activities, a reality inaccessible to other inmates unfolded. This was the reality of a bureaucratic order, of stacks of evenly arranged folders, forms, letters, and expert opinions. Dr Miklós Nyiszli, an inmate and Dr Mengele's assistant, recalled: "As the doctor of the crematoriums of Auschwitz, I wrote innumerable autopsy and medical reports and signed them with my tattoo number. These were [...] mailed to one of the world's most distinguished medical forums, the Berlin-Dahlem Institut für Rassenbiologische und

¹⁶ Cf. Kubica, "Dr Mengele".

¹⁷ Nyiszli observed that nowhere in the world was there a similar case, verging on a miracle, of twins dying at the same time, with an opportunity to immediately perform an autopsy. Cf. *I Was Doctor Mengele's Assistant* (Oświęcim, 2010).

Anthropologische Forschungen”.¹⁸ Nyszli often received thanks from the institute by return post for particularly interesting items – namely, human skeletons and embalmed body parts of the murdered victims.

A long time after the war, the thesis persisted that the scrupulously recorded results of the experiments carried out at the camp had no scientific value whatsoever. This is dubious, to say the least, considering that scientific institutes as well as a multitude of outstanding scientists from among the inmates were involved in them. It is also enough to read a list of pharmaceutical companies¹⁹ that were vying with one another for influence in the SS apparatus to be granted the right to carry out experiments on inmates, in order to reject the version of camp medicine as a form of pure charlatanry. That is why instead of challenging their scientific value, it is worth considering the ethical side of the enterprise.

Normally, advances in medicine are slowed down by a variety of barriers of an ethical, moral, and legal nature. Nazi German medicine was striving towards maximum efficiency and rejected all kinds of ethical and legal standards. Władysław Fejkiel, a physician and ex-inmate, who understood that perfectly, noted: “A much more important conclusion to be drawn from these criminal experiments, however, is that imperialism subordinates to itself, in addition to other areas, also scholarship, harnessing it completely in the service of its genocidal objectives. Nazi German medicine aimed at ‘scientifically’ developing ever more effective mass extermination methods”.²⁰

The Military Tribunal in Nuremberg grappled with interpretation difficulties concerning the experiments.²¹ In the justification of the verdict of 20 August 1947, in the case against Karl Brandt and other doctors, the judges laid down, for the first time in history, the rules for conducting medical experiments on humans. The consent of the prospective subject was declared to be an unconditional requirement. In order for the expected results to justify the experiment, it should be based on previous knowledge of the nature of the disease (such as an expectation derived from animal experiments); and it should be conducted in such a manner as to avoid any unnecessary physical and mental suffering and injuries. If there is any reason to assume beforehand that the experiment will result in permanent bodily injury, it is prohibited to carry it out. An experiment may not be performed

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Cf. S. Kłodziński, “Zbrodnicze doświadczenia farmakologiczne na więźniach obozu koncentracyjnego w Oświęcimiu”, *Przegląd Lekarski*, 1 (1965); J. Mikulski, “Eksperymenty farmakologiczne w obozie koncentracyjnym Oświęcim-Brzezinka”, *Zeszyty Oświęcimskie*, 10 (1967): 1.

²⁰ W. Fejkiel, “Sztuczne zakażenie ludzi”, *Przegląd Lekarski*, 4 (1955): 102.

²¹ Cf. T. Cyprian, J. Sawicki, *Sprawy polskie w procesie norymberskim* (Poznań, 1956).

by someone without the relevant scientific qualifications. One of the points was read out in the following wording: “The experiment should aim at positive results for society”.²²

Władysław Fejkiel pointed to the inopportune wording of this justification: “The problem is”, he wrote, “that almost all experiments carried out by Nazi doctors at camps and in prisons [...] were aimed towards achieving ‘positive results for society’, as peculiarly interpreted by the Nazi dictatorship”.²³ During the trial the Nazi doctors admitted that the prime purpose of the main group of experiments was the biological annihilation of entire peoples. The defendant Rudolf Brandt testified: “Himmler was extremely interested in the development of a cheap, rapid sterilization method which could be used against enemies of Germany, such as the Russians, Poles, and the Jews [...] The capacity for work of the sterilized persons could be exploited by Germany, while the danger of propagation would be eliminated. As this mass sterilization was part of Himmler’s racial theory, particular time and care were devoted to these sterilization experiments”.²⁴ The population policy guidelines laid down in Nazi documents expressly spoke about the necessity “to ensure the reproduction of people in the Eastern territories that would be bearable for the Third Reich”.²⁵

In connection with the presented material, we may ask about a connection between wartime experiences and the future fate of Polish eugenics. Did coming into direct contact with Nazi eugenics, which implemented the dictates of eugenics in an extreme form, change the way of thinking and influence the values of those Polish Eugenics Society members who had survived the ravages of war? How did they perceive Nazi eugenics, in what kind of context did they attempt to put it? May we speak of a fundamental change in the scientific paradigm, or rather of its continuation in the case of Polish eugenicists?

²² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuremberg_Code (Polish version: Sehn, “Zbrodnicze eksperymenty”, p. 6.)

²³ W. Fejkiel, “Eksperyment lekarski, jego pojęcie i granice etyczno-prawne”, *Przegląd Lekarski*, 3 (1959): 70.

²⁴ Quoted after: Spitz, *Doctors from Hell*, pp. 191–192.

²⁵ Quoted after: Sehn, “Zbrodnicze eksperymenty”. Germanization campaigns were another form of Nazi population policy. The most spectacular operation of this kind was conducted in Zamojszczyzna (the Zamość region) in 1942. Most of the 150,000 displaced children were taken to Germany as forced labourers, and the children “suitable” for Germanization were sent to orphanages in the Third Reich; some of the children were transported to concentration camps. Children from the Wielkopolska region were subject to similar Germanization attempts. Selected children were subject to precise anthropological and racial tests, and, if they were found to meet all the required criteria, they were then sent to Lebensborn centres, to be ultimately adopted by German families.

An indirect answer to these questions may be found by analysing the postwar legacy of Leon Wernic.

2. EUGENICS IN THE POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

Under Nazi occupation Wernic concealed his eugenic work for fear of repression on the part of the occupying forces. After the fall of the Warsaw Uprising he found himself at Grójec along with other physicians. In 1945, he resumed his eugenic work. Initially, he delivered lectures on venereal diseases, marital counselling, and general eugenic recommendations in the towns of Grójec, Błędów, Warka, and Tarczyn. Later he established relations with medical circles elsewhere. Late in 1945, he received a letter from the Gdańsk Medical Academy²⁶ with the information that the medical studies syllabus included lectures in eugenics “connected with genetics, biology, and anthropology on the one hand, and with demography, population policy, and social hygiene on the other hand”.²⁷ The author of the letter notified Wernic that the academy had taken steps to establish a separate chair of eugenics and was awaiting a reply from the Ministry of Health. He offered Wernic assurances that “already now”, the first-year medical students were being given “a very clear view of the importance of eugenics”. Accordingly, he asked Wernic to send him books on eugenics. He expressed his support for the eugenic idea: “The formation of this belief”, he added, “had been undoubtedly influenced by the work of the Eugenics Society pursued by you, Mr. Chairman”.²⁸ Perhaps it was that letter that encouraged Wernic to take further steps. While still at Grójec in 1945, he undertook efforts to secure an academic position at the University of Wrocław and the Technical University of Wrocław.

It was not only the Gdańsk Medical Academy that was interested in lectures and classes on eugenics. From my research carried out at the New Records Archive, it is evident that eugenics was reborn at institutions of higher education with a medical and hygienic profile. For example, in the 1947 State Social Hygiene School syllabus, eugenics (taught in the third year, for two hours a week) found itself side by side with subjects such as social medicine, anthropology from a mental hygiene perspective, vocational

²⁶ The Medical Academy in Gdańsk was established on 8 October 1945 as a Ministry of Health higher education institution. Cf. *Pierwszy rok działalności Ministerstwa Zdrowia. 1945 kwiecień 1946* (Warszawa, 1946), p. 124.

²⁷ Warsaw, Central Medical Library Special Collection (*Zbiory Specjalne Głównej Biblioteki Lekarskiej*, hereinafter: ZS GBL), *Spuścizna po L. Wernicu*, file no. 1/648, p. 77.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

counselling and selection, the biological foundations of human types, etc.²⁹ All the above-mentioned subjects were part of prewar eugenics. That is why, from the point of view of a historian, one should point not only to the restoration of eugenics as a teaching subject, but also to the reproduction of the eugenic paradigm among other scientific and research disciplines taught at institutions of higher education.

The most is known about lectures in eugenics delivered by Wernic at the University of Warsaw.³⁰ His lectures covered, among other subjects, the history of eugenics and of eugenic principles, the problems of heredity, transmission of venereal diseases, hygiene, premarital counselling, and sex education. As had been the case before the war, the central issue discussed in the course of lectures on eugenics was sterilization. One of the lectures was devoted in whole to the problems of segregation and sterilization.³¹

In his lectures Wernic also predicted a future development of eugenics in the following directions: gerontology (the problem of life extension), gemellology (the study of twins), and genetics. He concluded that there was no major tension between genetics and eugenics. The two combined made up eugenetics, concerned solely with the problems of heredity. “Eugenetics [...]”, Wernic wrote, “is a theoretical and practical scientific discipline, aimed at liberating living individuals, and thus man as well, from hidden negative traits”.³² In Wernic’s interpretation, eugenetics was to investigate man’s biological determinants, and eugenics was to correlate them with external influences: “Eugenics is a bridge between biological sciences and sociology”,³³ he concluded.

In addition to his university work Wernic also delivered lectures on eugenic issues at secondary schools. In 1946, the commentator and well-known physician, Julia Świtalska, asked him to address pupils of a nursing school.³⁴ Wernic’s return to active professional life was crowned with his joining the Polish Teachers’ Trade Union (ZNP) in 1948.³⁵

²⁹ Cf. Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (*Archiwum Akt Nowych*, hereinafter: AAN), Ministry of Education Files, file no. 3193, “Projekt rozkładu przedmiotów na poszczególne roczniki oraz ujęcia w godziny wykładów i ćwiczeń w Państwowej Szkole Higieny Społecznej”, p. 409.

³⁰ Cf. ZS GBL, *Spuścizna po L. Wernicu*, file no. I/647, “Program wykładów eugeniki w semestrze wiosennym roku 1946 na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim”, p. 2. Wernic was not a University of Warsaw faculty member. His name is not mentioned on very detailed lists of university employees. Cf. *Dzieje uczelni medycznych w Warszawie w latach 1944–1960*, ed. J. Manicki (Warszawa, 1968).

³¹ ZS GBL, *Spuścizna po L. Wernicu*, file no. I/646, p. 125.

³² *Ibid.*, file no. I/646, p. 1.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, file no. I/648, p. 60.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, file no. I/647, p. 182.

The language of eugenics also resurfaced in problems concerning psychiatry. In a Health Ministry circular letter of July 1945, minister Franciszek Litwin addressed the establishments subordinate to him on the subject of organizing non-institutional care of the mentally ill, which was “a necessary condition in broader eugenic work”.³⁶ Every psychiatric hospital in a province was to serve as a non-institutional care centre. Its responsibilities included registering the mentally ill (the actual term used in the circular letter was “abnormal individuals”, covering psychopaths and epileptics alike), followed by administering treatment and keeping in touch with the patients all of the time. The responsibilities of hospitals in an open care system included eugenic counselling, care of alcoholics, and premarital counselling designed to “prevent offspring with *undesirable hereditary traits [...] limiting undesirable types and the passing on of degenerative traits*”.³⁷

Eugenic arguments were used in the situation of career choice and employment problems. An article by Jan Szumski, published in 1948 in the magazine *W służbie zdrowia* (In the health service) and entitled “The policy of employing the physically less worthy individuals from a doctor’s perspective”³⁸ must be considered a curiosity. The old, cripples, and women (*sic!*) were counted amongst the less worthy. In 1946, a circular letter of the Ministry of Health on medical certificates on the physical and intellectual fitness of candidates for the civil service was published.³⁹ The sample medical certificate incorporated in it dated back to 1922. The data to be provided included, among other things: the official position that the candidate was to be accepted for, as well as his or her diseases, infirmities and disabilities, both those of the kind preventing and not preventing the candidate from employment in the civil service.

Beginning from 1946, immediately after he returned to Warsaw, Wernic began to seek a restitution of the Eugenics Society. The Ministry of Health and the Social Insurance Fund gave him minor financial support that allowed him to organize a leaflet campaign. And thus he drew up brochures on marital counselling, protection against venereal diseases, and eugenic principles.

The friendly relations between Wernic and the deputy health minister Tadeusz Michejda ensured official consent for PES’ reactivation. Following

³⁶ “Pismo okólne Ministerstwa Zdrowia z 25 VII 1945 w sprawie opieki nad psychicznie chorymi”, *Dziennik Zdrowia. Organ Urzędowy Ministerstwa Zdrowia*, 2 (1945): 55.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *W Służbie Zdrowia*, 7 (1948): 1; *ibid.*, 8 (1948): 1.

³⁹ Cf. “Okólnik Ministerstwa Zdrowia z 27 VI 1946 r. w sprawie świadectw lekarskich o uzdolnieniu fizycznym i umysłowym kandydatów do służby państwowej”, *Dziennik Zdrowia. Organ Urzędowy Ministerstwa Zdrowia*, 13 (1946): 139.

introductory talks, the first PES meeting was held in the aula of the Ministry of Health on 27 June 1947. The PES membership included the minister of health himself, several high government officials, and doctors connected as early as the prewar years with the eugenics movement. The founding members of the postwar PES were the deputy minister of health Dr Tadeusz Michejda, General Bolesław Szarecki, director for health matters at the Ministry of National Defense, director of department at the Ministry of Health Dr Jan Adamski, director in charge of the Ministry of Health Dr Wiktor Borkowski, director in charge of the Ministry of Health Dr Ludwik Rostkowski, Prof. Marcin Kacprzak, Dr Henryk Szczodrowski, Maria Szczodrowska, Teodora Męczkowska, Prof. M. Michałowicz, Prof. Władysław Szenajch, Dr Ryszard Dreszer, and Stanisława Adamowicz.⁴⁰

The news of the reactivation of the Polish Eugenics Society and its plans was published in the weekly *W służbie zdrowia* (In the service of health).⁴¹ Until 1949, information on the PES regularly appears in the archival records of the Science Department of the Ministry of Education and of the Ministry of Health. In 1947, Wernic obtained 45,000 zlotys from the Ministry of Health, and 15,000 from the public Insurance Fund, a total of 60,000 zlotys.⁴² It was a modest amount. By way of comparison, the Polish Anti-Venereal Union obtained 530,000 zlotys in support⁴³ and the Warsaw Anti-Tuberculosis Society 148,000 zlotys.⁴⁴ Wernic complained that his society was not getting enough money, while others were getting more for “less important purposes”, while actually the societies for combating tuberculosis and venereal diseases, which were rampant after the war, received more money because their work had a priority status.

Another cause for the eugenicists to complain about was the fact that they did not have an office. Their prewar office in Nowy Świat 1 had been occupied by another institution. PES Board members, headed by Teodora Męczkowska, described by Maria Dąbrowska as “a perky crone”,⁴⁵ requested the authorities to have the premises restored to them.⁴⁶ Their request was

⁴⁰ Cf. ZS GBL, *Spuścizna po L. Wernicu*, file no. I/648, a complete list of PES members on p. 48.

⁴¹ Cf. *W Służbie Zdrowia*, 2 (1948): 67.

⁴² Cf. AAN, Ministry of Education Files, file no. 3223, “Ankieta w sprawie towarzystw naukowych”, p. 215.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁴⁵ M. Dąbrowska, *Dzienniki powojenne 1950–1954* (Warszawa, 1997), p. 60. Męczkowska was over 80 and was still professionally active, working as a biology teacher at Narcyza Żmichowska School and at the Ministry of Education. Dąbrowska expressed her admiration for Męczkowska’s energy with characteristic spite.

⁴⁶ AAN, Ministry of Education Files, file no. 3193, p. 398.

turned down. The PES had to continue to be headquartered, for some time at least, at Wernic's private flat on Wiśniowa Street.

One of the prime objectives of Wernic's work in reborn Poland was to ensure the introduction of obligatory premarital certificates. The marriage law provided for civil weddings and divorces. Chapter 2 Article 7 of the marriage law contained a reservation that individuals at least one of whom suffered from a mental disease, mental retardation, open tuberculosis, or a venereal disease at an infectious stage were not allowed to enter into matrimony.⁴⁷ One of the doctors proposed an amendment to a draft decree, suggesting that the prohibition to marry should apply to "sick persons burdened with a hereditary disease that may be passed on to the offspring",⁴⁸ which was not adopted. The new marriage legislation provided for obligatory premarital certificates,⁴⁹ but there was no implementing regulation to carry it into effect.⁵⁰

Wernic found two powerful allies in the persons of the head of the Health Service Department at the Ministry of National Defense, Prof. Gen. Szarecki, and the head of the Health Service of the Ministry of Public Security, Col. K. Warman. In November 1946, Warman addressed a letter to Wernic, in which he wrote: "This is to notify that we have learnt of the resumption of the activities of the Polish Eugenics Society and that we wholeheartedly welcome your reactivation. We are hereby asking whether we could delegate 10–15 candidate doctors for lectures on premarital counselling scheduled for 7–9 December 1946. For we intend to train one doctor at each of our provincial clinics in matters of eugenics, to be charged with organizing a eugenic clinic for Public Security employees in the future".⁵¹

General Szarecki, too, planned to set up a network of eugenic clinics, one in each military district. To this end, he sent to various military units (including the heads of Health Service Departments, the Main Navy Port, the Air Force, the commander of the Ministry of National Defense hospital) a letter, in which he asked them to send him the names of physicians who would undertake, after suitable training, to run eugenics clinics.⁵² In his letter he encouraged the Health Service managers to promote the

⁴⁷ AAN, Ministry of Health Files, file no. 365/3, *Dekret z 25 IX 1945 Prawo małżeńskie*, p. 60.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁴⁹ "A Minister of Justice regulation issued in consultation with the Ministry of Health will set the dates at which the obligation to submit health certificates to registry office clerks is introduced in particular regions of the country", Art. 10, para 1, item 3, cf. AAN, Ministry of Health Files, file no. 365/3, *Dekret z 25 IX 1945 Prawo małżeńskie*, p. 78.

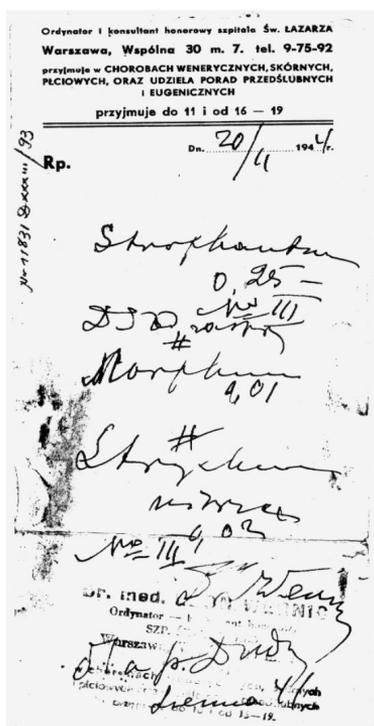
⁵⁰ Cf. *Pierwszy rok działalności Ministerstwa Zdrowia*, p. 67.

⁵¹ ZS GBL, *Spuścizna po L. Wernicu*, file no. I/648, p. 64.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

principles of eugenic selection of spouses, notably in the case of officers and non-commissioned officers.

As a result of the activities of the security service, premarital clinics for Public Security Ministry functionaries were opened in 15 provinces. The eugenic clinic for the army was located at the Ministry of National Defense hospital polyclinic in Koszykowa Street in Warsaw. However, the authorities of communist Poland clearly delayed introducing obligatory premarital counselling. The Minister of Health, Tadeusz Michejda, a PES member, tried to speed things up by issuing an instruction concerning the issuing of premarital medical certificates as an annex to the decree on marriage law. The instruction specified the diseases that constituted an obstacle to contracting matrimony.⁵³ Nonetheless, the deadlock continued because of the lack of implementing legislation.



A postwar prescription made out by Leon Wernic.
 Source: The Central Medical Library Special Collection.

⁵³ These included various psychoses, states of epileptic dementia, chronic alcoholism in the form of psychoses and drug addiction “in a degree precluding the possibility of abandoning the habit”, *ibid.*, file no. I/647, pp. 238–239.

Wernic complained that the lack of implementing legislation concerning premarital counselling had caused conflicts between eugenicists and officials from Warsaw's Registry Office. The officials ignored the eugenicists' pressures to refer candidates for marriage to premarital clinics. In 1948, the PES chairman addressed a letter to the National Council of the capital city of Warsaw in which he notified it that both the National Defense Ministry and the Public Security Ministry supported the campaign for premarital counselling, in which registry office officials should get immediately involved.⁵⁴

A session of one of the sections of the National Health Council⁵⁵ devoted to the issuance of doctors' opinions on the contracting of marriage was held on 23 April 1947. Sitting on the commission were, among others, Wiktor Grzywo-Dąbrowski and Wiktor Borkowski.⁵⁶ The physicians were to express their opinions whether obligatory premarital certificates should be introduced and which diseases should be considered an obstacle to entering into matrimony. After opening remarks, Wiktor Grzywo-Dąbrowski took the floor. He spoke in favour of obligatory premarital certificates, and pointed out that factors of both a medical and social nature that may constitute obstacles to marriage. Among the medical obstacles he enumerated mental diseases, congenital deafness and blindness, and epilepsy, and among the social ones chronic alcoholism, drug addiction, and vagrancy. He proposed that, following the model of Nordic countries, obligatory premarital certificates should be connected with sterilization. "If a given individual wants to enter into marriage, he should undergo sterilization, which is no obstacle to contracting matrimony",⁵⁷ he argued. Grzywo-Dąbrowski's proposal failed to gain approval among the doctors gathered at the session. The moderator, Professor Marian Grzybowski, asked the participants to focus, in the first place, on the issue of diseases. "As far as sterilization is concerned", he added, "the matter calls for further discussion".⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Ibid., file no. I/648, pp. 83–84.

⁵⁵ The State Health Council was set up in September 1945. Like its prewar predecessor (Chief State Health Council), it was an advisory and opinion-giving body attached to the Ministry of Health. The Council proceeded in sections, of which there were originally five: the Economic, Anti-Tuberculosis, Anti-Venereal, Electro-Medical and Spa Sections. Professor Marcin Kacprzak was appointed chairman of the State Health Council, and 47 members were appointed to it in its first year.

⁵⁶ Those present in the room included: Dr Falkowski (no first name), Professor Marian Grzybowski, Dr Stanisław Hornung, Lucjan Korzeniewski, Dr Tadeusz Stepniowski, Dr Jan Stepczyk, Dr Józef Towpik, Dr Michał Telatycki, Dr Leon Uszkiewicz, Dr Eueniusz Wilczkowski, and Dr Marian Zierski. Cf. ZS GBL, *Spuścizna po L. Wernicu*, file no. I/647, "Sprawozdania Komisji Państwowej Rady Zdrowia dla spraw orzecznictwa lekarskiego przy zawieraniu małżeństw", p. 229.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 230.

Subsequently, a long debate ensued as to who should qualify which disorders as obstacles to marriage – and how such qualification was to be carried out. Some of the doctors expressed numerous doubts whether low-qualified district-level doctors would be able to issue opinions in difficult and complex cases. At the end of the meeting, the participants of the debate agreed that “the matter had yet to mature” before a final decision could be reached. “Such a certificate is a court sentence for the candidate”,⁵⁹ Professor Eugeniusz Wilczkowski observed. The deliberations ended with a very cautious conclusion that mental diseases “eliminating or limiting the capacity for legal action, even if there have been no judicial proceedings” were considered an obstacle to marriage.⁶⁰

In the Ministry of Health’s report on the first year of its work, the Polish Eugenics Society was declared, along with the *Trzeźwość* (Sobriety) Abstinence Society, an institution propagating the principles of mental hygiene.⁶¹ In the draft decree “On the organization of a public health service” of 1946, Article 1 in the General Principles section provided that “The public health service provides health care for the population and its natural increase, which is a fundamental factor of the state’s power”.⁶² In Section 2 Article 3 Item 2, there is an entry providing that the matters of health, population policy, and eugenics are the competence of the Minister of Health. Between May 22 and 24, 1948, a eugenics and premarital counselling course for doctors run by the PES was held in the Ministry of Health building.⁶³

Thus, immediately after the war, the eugenicists began to act in the same way as they had prior to its outbreak; what they failed to notice, however, was the changing social and political context, in which there was no place for eugenics any more. Firstly, the communist system had become established; secondly, the truth about the nature of Nazi German crimes began to register in people’s awareness. Admittedly, in the Polish Eugenics Society work plan of March 1949, Wernic encourages PES members “to approach” the problem of restrictive eugenics “with caution, because it is misunderstood even by the decision-makers”,⁶⁴ but immediately afterwards he reiterates the old demand to limit the number of children of prostitutes and “[female] idiots producing the highest numbers of illegitimate children”.⁶⁵ He presents

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Cf. *Pierwszy rok działalności Ministerstwa Zdrowia*, p. 74.

⁶² “Projekt dekretu o organizacji publicznej służby zdrowia”, in: *ibid.*, p. 136.

⁶³ ZS GBL, *Spuścizna po L. Wernicu*, file no. I/645, p. 92.

⁶⁴ ZS GBL, *Spuścizna po L. Wernicu*, file no. I/646, “Plan działalności Polskiego Towarzystwa Eugenicznego”, p. 317.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

extensive publishing plans and wants to cooperate with many voluntary associations and scientific establishments. In his lectures and speeches one literally cannot find a trace of reflection on the hazards of the eugenic idea that one might expect after the wartime atrocities. All Wernic brought himself to do was reject the Nazi model of eugenics, dismissing it as “Nazi barbarism”. In the case of Wernic by no means do we have any kind of breakthrough in thinking about society and the individual. Quite the contrary, Wernic makes attempts to include various restrictions in the marriage law, hoping for understanding on the part of the communist authorities.

Meanwhile, two events occurred in 1949 that put the further pursuit of eugenic work into question. Firstly, the postwar issue of *Rocznik Psychiatryczny* (Psychiatric yearbook) was published, containing an account of the mass extermination of the patients of psychiatric hospitals in 1939–1941. Accounts of Auschwitz survivors concerning Clauberg’s sterilization experiments and eugenic experiments on twins and dwarfs also appeared.

Independently of the above, an ideological offensive against Western genetics is launched in Poland and across the communist bloc. The point was to promote the Soviet biology model, one that completely challenged the scientific traditions of both genetics and eugenics. The underlying assumptions of genetics were presented as fundamentally false, deterministic, intended to justify the unfair distribution of goods, and social differences. In 1949–1950, a dozen or so books and brochures propagating Trofim Lysenko’s pseudo-scientific theories were published in Polish. His name was associated with that of the breeder Ivan Michurin. Thus the Michurin-Lysenko theory was created.⁶⁶ The crackdown on genetics was part of the process of Stalinization in Poland. In 1949, the journal *W służbie zdrowia*, hitherto having enjoyed a degree of political independence, was closed down, and the *Śłużba Zdrowia* (The health service) weekly was set up in its place. Articles on anniversary celebrations of Soviet institutes, the Soviet Ministry of Health, Soviet scientists, Stalin’s birthdays etc. were published on the front pages of the new journal.

The non-professional press also reported on the Michurin-Lysenko theory. In 1949, *Trybuna Ludu* (*The people’s tribune*, the Polish communist party’s leading organ) published a panegyric article “The creators of new species”, which questioned the laws of genetics. The new definition was

⁶⁶ Cf. P.N. Jakowlew, *Iwan Włodzimierzowicz Miczurin, wielki przeobraźiciel przyrody* (Warszawa, 1949); I. Waruncjan, *Postępowy charakter nauki Miczurina* (Warszawa, 1949); K. Zawadzki, *Iwan Władimirowicz Miczurin, wybitny reformator przyrody* (Warszawa, 1950); J. Głuszczenko, *Teoria Miczurina w walce z idealizmem w biologii* (Warszawa, 1950). Furthermore: T.D. Łysenko, *O sytuacji w biologii* (Warszawa, 1949); and later F. Dworiakin, *Trofim Łysenko* (Warszawa, 1950).

given thus: “By modifying the external conditions, the environment, i.e., by changing the living conditions, one can modify living organisms in a particular direction, one may produce varieties with desirable hereditary traits. Thus, heredity is the result of a concentration of external influences, assimilated by the organism in the succession of preceding generations”.⁶⁷ The same article indicated that Mendelian inheritance, on which genetics was based, had been the foundation of German racism. The figure of August Weissmann, whose theses, in the author’s opinion, had inspired Hitler himself, was recalled.

However, a true attack on genetics and eugenics was launched by the medical press. In 1952, *Slużba Zdrowia* published an accusatory article entitled: “Sterylicacja na usługach imperializmu” (Sterilization in the service of imperialism).⁶⁸ It opened with a statement that Polish public opinion had been shocked by the Nazi extermination policy in Polish territories both during the German occupation and in its immediate wake, and that “it was unthinkable that there could be anyone who would hesitate to categorically reject any kind of debate on the eugenic practices applied by the occupying forces”.⁶⁹ The author pointed out that there had also been “dangerous eugenic tendencies” in Poland before the outbreak of the Second World War (failing to mention the rebirth of eugenics in postwar communist Poland) that were not overcome after the war in capitalist countries. “Legal as well as medical and administrative regulations of this type [the author refers to sterilization regulations] now exist in America and in many countries subject to US influences, outdistancing even Nazi methods in some US states, in Sweden, and especially in Japan”.⁷⁰ The author described sterilization experiments in concentration camps, citing even Himmler’s statements on the benefits resulting from rendering the conquered peoples infertile, to juxtapose those with the sterilization laws in force in the Scandinavian countries and the USA. The conclusion of the article was that sterilization procedures always had a class and racist background. At the same time, the author attacked in her article the neo-Malthusian doctrine, which seeks to limit the fertility of the lower strata rather than reform the existing economic and social relations. “An ideology hostile to true progress”, she argued, “must lead to the sterilization of madmen, cripples, and the poor, to their extermination [...] [Meanwhile] in the USSR and in people’s democracies not only is any limitation of fertility and sterilization not applied; not only is

⁶⁷ *Trybuna Ludu*, 31 (1949).

⁶⁸ K. Kancewiczowa, “Sterylicacja na usługach imperializmu”, *Slużba Zdrowia*, 15–16 (1952): 4.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

a limitation of fertility not encouraged, but indeed mothers of large families are rewarded".⁷¹

The author passed in silence over the fact that eugenics had been developing in the USSR in the interwar years. Similarly, birth control clinics had not been closed until the 1930s.

Another article: "Święta misja cywilizacyjna" (A sacred civilization mission)⁷² brought even more aggressive attacks. Neo-Malthusians were called "the pioneers of the elimination of surplus populations", whose main measures for action were sterilization and abortion: "a means of eliminating human lives, infanticide, and mass crippling of millions of people in the interest of the parasitic 'competent circles' of monopolist interests".⁷³ An essay: "Od pseudonauki do ludożerstwa. Odrodzenie maltuzjanizmu w USA i Europie Zachodniej" (From pseudo-science to cannibalism. A renaissance of Malthusianism in the USA and in Western Europe), reprinted from the Soviet magazine *Komunist*, was written in a similar vein.⁷⁴ It reads as follows: "The proponents of the fascist and cannibalistic ideology of neo-Malthusianism are fierce enemies of the cause of peace and the security of nations [...]. Neo-Malthusianism is one of the most aggressive doctrines and the most important ideological weapons of the proponents of a new war. The danger of neo-Malthusianism is augmented by the fact that a scientific form is given to its mendacious theories, its announcements of the annihilation of entire peoples, and the Malthusians themselves assume scholars' gowns, gowns of benefactors of humanity, allegedly concerned about the problems of humanity. Exposing reactionary, bourgeois ideologies, including the unceasing and uncompromising exposing of neo-Malthusianism, an ideology of present-day reactionaries and cannibals, is a necessary element of the struggle for the peace, freedom, and security of nations".⁷⁵

There is much to indicate that the groundwork for the ideological attacks on eugenics had been laid down around 1948–1949, at the time when the guidelines for the six-year-plan (1950–1955) were developed. In 1949, strict controls were imposed on scholarly societies. Under the pretext of changing the organization of a scientific information centre, the authorities demanded that the chairpersons of learned societies provide detailed scholarly information for each quarter of their work.⁷⁶ In the Education Ministry's

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² *Śłużba Zdrowia*, 48 (1952): 5.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ *Śłużba Zdrowia*, 44 (1953): 6.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ For example, it was required that reports from academic sessions and public meetings, titles of delivered lectures, complete with the speaker's given name and family name, as

records, we do not find the Polish Eugenics Society any more on a list of societies that had been granted publishing subsidies by the state.⁷⁷ Nor is it mentioned on a list of associations in the Ministry of Institutions of Higher Education and Science archives.⁷⁸ In 1951, Tadeusz Michejda, favourably disposed towards eugenicists, left the post of the Minister of Health.⁷⁹ He was replaced by Jerzy Sztachelski, who had served as secretary-general of the Union of Polish Patriots in 1944 and as undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Health from 1947. In his speech of 1951, he announced that what was needed at a time of “the exacerbating class struggle” was “an ideological offensive from materialistic positions”. In that situation, genetics and eugenics along with it, were doomed.

In mid-1952, the Polish Academy of Sciences was founded, which took over from the Ministry of Higher Education the administration of the affairs of learned societies (including the granting of state subsidies), as well as the supervision and protection of these organizations. Six general societies and 36 specialized societies were subordinated to the Polish Academy of Sciences.⁸⁰ Thus, Poland’s learned societies were subjected to the scientific supervision of a central body and deprived of their academic independence. The reform largely made impossible any further activity by the Polish Eugenics Society.

The six-year-plan questioned the idea of obligatory premarital certificates: “It is not the certificate that is the most important thing, but premarital counselling that should be applied as broadly as possible at all health centres and specialist clinics”.⁸¹ A reservation was made that while the registry office had the right to demand certificates concerning the prospective spouses’ health, it should not refuse to marry them on that basis, as this would lead to an increased number of informal relationships and, consequently, the lack of legal protection for the offspring. Attacks against neo-Malthusianism resulted, among other things, in a complete ban on abortion.

well as information on the number of members, possessions, collections, work plans and international cooperation be submitted to the authorities. Cf. AAN, Ministry of Education Files, file no. 3197, pp. 196–197.

⁷⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, file no. 3196, pp. 109–111.

⁷⁸ In 1950, the Ministry of Institutions of Higher Education and Science requested all the existing learned societies to send in their charters “irrespective of when and by whom they were approved”. A list of societies includes 103 entries and we do not find the Polish Eugenics Society among them. Cf. AAN, Ministry of Higher Education Files, file no. 1414, pp. 1–2.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Służba Zdrowia*, 3 (1951): 1.

⁸⁰ Cf. *Życie naukowe w Polsce w drugiej połowie XIX i w XX wieku. Organizacje i instytucje*, ed. B. Jaczewski (Wrocław, 1987), p. 375.

⁸¹ Cf. AAN, Ministry of Health Files, file no. 5/1, *Ochrona zdrowia Matki i Dziecka w planie 6-letnim*, p. 102.

Whereas the health care model adopted under the six-year plan apparently departed from eugenic principles, it retained a wide range of terms taken from its vocabulary. It included such matter as “increasing the value of the human material quantitatively and qualitatively”,⁸² and “producing biologically worthy individuals characterized by high productivity and permanent ability to work”.⁸³

The eugenic ideas definitely survived longer than the Polish Eugenics Society. Still in 1955, at an anti-alcohol conference organized under the aegis of the Ministry of Health, one of the doctors participating in the debate called for birth control and for a restitution of legal abortion in the name of eugenic principles: “Let only and exclusively a healthy woman give birth [...] We have had enough of propagating the imbeciles, epileptics, idiots, and morons populating our health care and educational institutions. We have had enough of the burdens of many millions on our state budget to support this undesirable, harmful increase in the number of worthless individuals that there are already thousands of.”⁸⁴ That doctor believed that a pregnancy should be terminated if either parent was diagnosed with a venereal disease or alcoholism. The participants of the debate included physicians associated with the prewar *Trzeźwość* Abstinence Association, which had given its support to sterilization laws before the war, and psychiatrists who, like Oskar Bielawski (the editor-in-chief of the journal *Higiena Psychiczna* [Mental hygiene] and an advocate of eugenics before the war), were ardent supporters of sterilization on eugenic grounds.

The demand for eugenic control of population growth was consistent with the paradigm of medical knowledge still in force at that time, according to which alcohol at conception poisons the embryo, causing irreversible changes in its development.⁸⁵ On the other hand, at the very same anti-alcohol conference opinions were voiced that clearly overcame the thinking in eugenic terms. Firstly, the principle of application of “the broadly defined

⁸² Ibid., pp. 112–113.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ AAN, Ministry of Health Files, file no. 5/16, *Konferencja przeciwalkoholowa, sprawozdania, załączniki*, p. 54.

⁸⁵ In order to investigate the problem of the impact of alcohol on the offspring that had long been bothering the medical community, extensive research was planned in 1955. The General Pathology Section (the sources do not give the name of the research centre) was to carry out experiments on animals that were administered alcohol at various stages: prior to conception, at the time of conception, during pregnancy and while nursing. The Obstetrics Clinic and the Children's Disease Clinic were to conduct clinical observations of newborns with alcoholic parents, and the Psychiatric Clinic was to carry out comparative studies on the development of school-age children of alcoholic parents. Cf. AAN, Ministry of Health Files, file no. 5/6, *Plan prac naukowych w zakresie alkoholologii*, pp. 120–129.

compulsory treatment” was called into question. Consent to the use of compulsion with respect to the “worthless” members of society, including alcoholics, and involuntary institutionalization, effected in the name of collective well-being, constituted the basis of eugenic thinking before the war. At the conference, after long tirades calling for compulsory treatment for alcoholics, Dr Jan Jaroszyński took the floor and spoke out resolutely against compulsory treatment: “Despite the fact that very many alcoholics do not want to undergo treatment, which is obviously wrong, extension of compulsory treatment to all [...]”, he argued, [would make] “an alcoholism treatment system of this kind look like an overall system of compulsory treatment in the eyes of society”.⁸⁶ Even several years earlier, the issue of compulsory treatment seemed obvious at similar conferences and was not questioned by anyone. At the same conference, one could feel aversion to extreme, radical solutions. When proponents of complete abstinence, condemning even sporadic, moderate alcohol consumption, took the floor, they were interrupted sharply by one of the participants of the debate, saying that the demand for absolute abstinence was absurd.⁸⁷

Extensive research in the archives of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education failed to produce an unequivocal answer to the question about the moment when the Polish Eugenics Society was dissolved. All the traces concerning PES’ work disappear after 1949. The Society might have been dissolved in 1949 or 1950, or it might have survived until the reform of 1952. What sealed its fate was the compromising of eugenics during the war as well as the ideological war against genetics and eugenics declared by the communist state. Leon Wernic died in 1953. His obituary said that he had been the creator of Polish eugenics. Younger PES members led active professional lives, teaching at institutions of higher education and participating in various learned societies. In their memoirs, they never returned to eugenics.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

CONCLUSION

The Polish eugenics movement was akin to the Nordic model in that, like in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, those who supported eugenics were welfare state advocates with liberal and left-wing views. However, the non-racist faction of German eugenics, which lost after 1933 in confrontation with the proponents of racism supported by the national socialist regime, had the relatively greatest impact on the Polish eugenics community. The influences of German eugenics manifested themselves as early as the formative stage of the Polish eugenics community. This was attributable to the close proximity to Germany, easy access to German-language literature, and a sizeable group of Polish eugenicists having command of the German language. The journal *Zagadnienia Rasy*, but also more ephemeral publications such as *Walka o zdrowie* (Struggle for health), are filled with references to and summaries of German-language brochures. Alfred Grotjahn's *Higiena praktyczna* (Practical hygiene), the only eugenics textbook, was translated from German. The title of the journal *Zagadnienia Rasy* also points to the impact of the German model. In my opinion, the ambivalent attitude of Polish eugenicists towards the racist excesses in Germany, and yet their support of the German sterilization law of 1933, bears testimony not so much to inspirations from the totalitarian version of eugenics as to the durability of the German model.

Within the scope of eugenics' influence we note many scientific disciplines: anthropology, reformed psychiatry, sociology, and various branches of medicine (genetics, venereology, serology, pediatrics). About the realm of politics, in the early 1920s Polish eugenicists endeavored to influence government institutions. As a result of those efforts, they gained major influence in the Ministry of Public Health. Tomasz Janiszewski, first deputy minister and later minister of public health, was a fanatical advocate of eugenics. Witold Chodźko, who held the post of minister of health several times, also supported eugenics, though to a lesser degree than did Janiszewski. One may say that throughout the existence of the Ministry of Public Health eugenicists could count on the friendliness of persons sitting on its board.

After the dissolution of the ministry in 1924, the position of eugenicists weakened. Political milieux, except for a handful of members of parliament, were no longer interested in eugenic plans for social reform. Their attention was turned again towards government administration. All the more so, then must the setting up of a eugenics section at the Chief Health Council attached to the Health Department of the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1935 be considered their success. In that institution, draft sterilization laws were made, irrespective of the Polish Eugenics Society (PES), which were vigorously debated right up to the beginning of the Second World War. In this sense, Polish eugenicists managed to achieve more in the 1930s than their British counterparts.

How, from this perspective, should we therefore regard the rejection by the authorities of sterilization laws and compulsory premarital certificates in 1934 and 1935 as proposed by the PES? In my opinion, this is a sign of the wholesale rejection not only of specific draft legislation, but also of the entire eugenic idea derived from the evolutionary paradigm. In the governmental responses, not only was the advisability of sterilization questioned, for so was viewing the human condition through the prism of physical health that was characteristic of eugenicists. On the basis of the research to date I have not been able to ascertain whether or not any groups or individuals appeared in the government circles at a later date, i.e., after 1935, who were in favour of solving social problems with eugenic measures. This would explain, in my opinion, the rise and activities of the eugenics section of the Polish Chief Health Council (PNRZ).

Historiography to date has viewed the rejection of eugenic bills through the prism of the dispute between the advocates and opponents of the proposed legislation.¹ A suggestion implicit in this viewpoint – that it had been a public dispute, involving a confrontation of the stances of enthusiasts and opponents of eugenics that had contributed to the rejection of the proposed legislation – is mistaken, I am convinced. As compared to other countries, the dispute on eugenics in Poland was very weak and did not focus on the proposed eugenic legislation, but rather on the activities of the birth control advocates' movement, with which eugenics was long identified. It is worth stressing that the Poland's Catholic clergy took an official stance on eugenics about 1932, during the press campaigns advocating birth control and the depenalization of abortion procedures (led by *Wiadomości Literackie*, *Robotnik* and women's magazines), and before proposals for sterilization laws had been put forward.

¹ K. Kawalec, "Spór o eugenikę w latach 1918–1939", *Medycyna Nowożytna. Studia nad Kulturą Medyczną*, 7 (2000), no. 2: 87–102.

The lack of popularity of eugenics in broad opinion-making circles in interwar Poland was due to a number of factors. The weakness of the eugenics community, in the sense of its limited ability to influence public opinion and political circles, related to the strong position of the Roman Catholic Church, the deterring example of Nazi Germany (which cooled the zeal of the British eugenicists, too), and the unfriendly attitudes of both the left and the right (even that flirting with fascist tendencies) towards racial theories. While there indeed was anti-Semitism in interwar Poland, and it gradually intensified in the 1930s, German eugenics grew on the soil not so much of anti-Semitism as, rather, on the soil of Aryan myths and theories, popular also in Scandinavian countries. Scandinavian historians point out that the popularity of the slogans concerning the superiority and uniqueness of the Aryan race made it easier to accept all, even the most brutal forms of eugenics. In Aryan theories, Slavic races were presented as biologically inferior, less worthy, and thus unable to build a highly developed civilization. Hence these theories, with rare exceptions, could not find many followers in Poland.

After the Second World War, even though the Polish Eugenics Society was reactivated in 1947, eugenics was no longer an idea enjoying state support. The accounts of Nazi crimes, compromising the basic assumptions of eugenics, and the crackdown on the neo-Malthusian doctrine contributed to the dissolution of the Eugenics Society in Poland within a short time. Western states, too, gradually began to turn away from eugenics. In 1950, UNESCO issued a resolution in which biological race was rejected as a category for lacking any scientific basis. The development of genetics and behavioural psychology contributed to challenging many of the eugenic hypotheses. What was rejected was above all the view of various diseases (mental retardation) and pathologies (e.g., alcoholism) in the context of social degeneration. What was rejected (though not completely) was the theory of the inheritance of forms of social behaviour, abilities, and “innate” propensity for law-breaking. Of the greatest importance to contemporary biological sciences was the discovery by James Watson and Francis Crick in 1953 of DNA’s structure, which is responsible for the transmission of genetic information from one generation to another.² From that time on, we have witnessed the rise of a new science: molecular biology.³

² More precisely: nucleotides known by the letters A, T, C, and G record the amino acid sequence in proteins, and the latter are responsible for the structure of the organism and for the processes occurring within it.

³ The deciphering of the DNA particle in 1953 revealed the spatial DNA structure to be crucial to the biological functions of the organism. The nucleotide threads constituting it are intertwined, forming a double helix. They are complementary, but not identical, match-

After the Second World War, we observe the development of other branches of biology, medicine, as well as of physics and chemistry. In popular awareness, the present-day development of science in bringing unquestioned benefits and facilities to individuals and societies alike, has been completely liberated from the eugenic heritage. Actually, a certain role in the development of biological science was played after the war by the results of the criminal experiments conducted by Nazi medical personnel on concentration camp inmates. Dachau camp experiments, Neuengamme, Ravensbrück, Auschwitz – the depositaries of which were the liberating armies of the Soviet and the American, provided the results of many unique observations concerning e.g., the impact of violent decompression on the human body, the physiological reaction to exposure to the cold, the usefulness of electroshocks in the treatment of depression, the efficiency of treating shot wounds with sulphonamides, and the influence of chemical agents on ovulation and menstruation. In this connection, a moral dilemma appeared, the essence of which was rendered by Marcin Biedrzycki: “in order to honor the memory of the camp inmates, who frequently paid with their lives for the advances in the knowledge of human physiology, should we stay silent and refrain from publishing and citing information collected during the Nazi experiments? Or quite the contrary, should we pay tribute to those murdered by using to the fullest their forced contribution to the development of the medical science?”⁴ Those scientists and politicians who decided to carry out the camp experiments first for military and then for medical purposes, endocrinology, and genetics, made it impossible, because of their attitude, to subject this issue to public judgment. In reality, citizens were deprived of the right to voice their opinions, to quote arguments in favour and against, and to join in public debate in which the various standpoints of advocates and opponents of using the results of Nazi research would be expressed.

Not that much is written about the breakthrough that the Second World War brought in genetics (though this is not true about the direct impact of medical experiments). Walter A. Gratzer, one of the most famous professors of physical chemistry at the University of London, admitted that “since 1944 there had been compelling evidence that DNA was the genetic material that carried the blueprint of the organism”.⁵ But when the science of genetics

ing each other like a positive and a negative in a photograph. That led to the conclusion that the nucleotide sequence in one DNA thread determines the complementarity of nucleotides in the other.

⁴ M. Biedrzycki, “Eksperymenty medyczne na ludziach”, *Znak*, 12 (1996): 64.

⁵ W.A. Gratzer, introduction to: *A Passion for DNA: Genes, Genomes and Society. With an Introduction, Afterword, and Annotations by Walter Gratzer*, ed. J.D. Watson (New York, 2000), p. xiv.

finally did begin to develop, it swiftly absorbed the old eugenic institutions. This was the case with the Cold Spring Harbor Eugenics Record Station, founded in 1910 by a fanatical advocate of eugenics, Charles Davenport. It was renamed Cold Spring Harbor, a research centre specializing in genetics, towards the end of the war. In 1968 James Watson became its director. When in 1988 he was placed in charge of the research project there that was aimed at deciphering the human genome, he admitted that he had felt certain concerns that critics of the Genome Project would point out that he was “a closet eugenicist”.⁶ Out of similar concerns, it may well be added, the journal *Annales of Eugenics* was renamed *Annales of Human Genetics*.

In the 1990s, the main forces in the human genome sequencing project were Britain, France, and the United States.⁷ In 2001, at a congress of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in San Francisco, the geneticist Francis Collins (head of the government Human Genome Project) and Craig Venter (head of the private firm Celera Genomics) announced that human genome sequencing was almost complete.⁸ Genome sequencing gives enormous opportunities in establishing facts, i.e., in determining which genes are connected with the incidence of certain diseases or the propensity toward them, and which are responsible for longevity or the lack an organism's of immunological resistance. Scientists claim that in the future the genes responsible for sexual preferences, personality defects causing anti-social behaviour, and other behavioural disorders will be localized and isolated.⁹ Already today it is the aim of prenatal diagnostics to prevent

⁶ Ibid., p. 202.

⁷ Among the most technologically advanced states, it was only Germany that did not play any major role in the work on the genome. James D. Watson, conversant with the state of genetic research, said: “Germany’s absence from the genome table thus never reflected financial considerations. Instead, politics were involved. Germany’s past involvement with eugenics [...] was a moral disaster in which all to many of their leading human genetics practitioners eugenically preached racial Nordic superiority and willingly participated in the 1933–1945 Nazi era elimination by scientific selection of Germany’s mentally ill, Jews, and Gypsies”, *ibid.*, p. 210.

⁸ Cf. “Trzy księgi życia”, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 20 Feb. 2001.

⁹ A statement by Watson himself is characteristic in this respect: “Given that over half the human genes are thought to be involved in human brain development and functioning, we must expect that many other behavioural differences between individuals will also have genetic origin. Recently, there have been claims that both ‘reckless personalities’ and ‘unipolar depression’ associate with specific polymorphic forms of genes coding for the membrane receptors involved in the transmission of signals between nerve cells. We must expect someday, however, to find that other mutant genes that lead to altered brain chemistry also lead to asocial activities. Their existence, however, in no way should be taken to mean that gene variants are the major cause of violence. Nonetheless, continued denials by the scientific left that genes have a role in how people interact with each other will inevitably

the birth of children burdened with serious genetic disorders such as cystic fibrosis, Tay-Sachs disease, Huntington disease, fragile X syndrome, or Down syndrome. “For the time being, however, we should place most of our hopes for genetics on the use of antenatal diagnostic procedures”, Watson claims, “which increasingly will let us know whether a foetus is carrying a mutant gene that will seriously proscribe its eventual development into a functional human being. By terminating such pregnancies, the threat of horrific disease genes continuing to blight many families’ prospects for future success can be erased”.¹⁰ Advocates of antenatal diagnostic procedures and of abortion related to the former do not conceal that one of the pro-abortion arguments is the economic calculation, i.e., a reduction of the social and financial burdens connected with treating the sick.¹¹ Even among the latter a fear is growing over the social consequences of practicing abortion on eugenic grounds. For if we agree that we should prevent the birth of babies with physical or mental defects, by the same token we consolidate in society the status of the retarded as second-class citizens.¹² Another question arises in this connection concerning the costs to the citizen whose insurer is notified of his genetic predisposition to cancer, cystic fibrosis, or another incurable disease. Will not making information of this kind available undermine the constitutional equality of citizens, on which the democratic order of the civilized world has been built? Will not advanced prenatal diagnostics lead to the emergence of a new social hierarchy, founded on biological factors, those least dependent on human will?

Contemporary genetic research also concentrates on the betterment of new reproduction methods: *in vitro* fertilization and cloning. The production by a donor cell (cloning) of a whole organism (apart from, as has been said, reproductive cells) had been a purely theoretical possibility until the 1990s: it became a fact in 1997 with the cloning of the first mammal, the sheep Dolly. Genetics is now headed towards the designing of human organisms: not only the sex, but the external and intellectual traits of a child, as well. Genetic manipulations at this level correspond to the version of positive eugenics. Philip Kitcher calls such action *laissez-faire* eugenics: “Everyone is now to be her (or his) own eugenicist, taking advantage of the available genetic tests to make the reproductive decisions she (he) thinks

further diminish their already tainted credibility”, *A Passion for DNA*, pp. 205–206.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 206–207.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 169–170.

¹² Ibid., p. 207. Matt Ridley does not reject that argument but adds that a complete ban on genetic testing would be equally cruel, id. *Genome: The Autobiography of a Species in 23 Chapters* (New York, etc., 2006).

correct”.¹³ A representative of conservative feminism, Jean Elshtain, has taken a different stance on this matter.¹⁴ Despite the social and moral changes brought about by the feminist movement in the twentieth century, the sense of desperation, misfortune, and failure in the case of childlessness, Elshtain argues, has only grown; that is why advanced reproductive technology “has been surrounded by the halo of ‘rights’”. Contrary to free-market trends, Elshtain calls for accepting the limitations imposed upon us by our own bodies. Because biological parenthood, she says, is not the only way to pursue a productive, creative existence.¹⁵

The medical practices listed above and the direction of eugenics’ development have prompted, as I have pointed out, diverse responses from the public. Questions about the kind and scale of control of research have appeared. Erwin Bischofberger points to at least three groups representing different stances on this issue: enthusiasts, ecologists, and bioethicists.¹⁶

The first group is against legal regulation, arguing that it is contrary to the principle of the freedom of citizens, hinders the progress of science, and is detrimental to industry. In their opinion, genetic technology creates better living conditions both for humans and for nature.

Ecologists (Bischofberger includes some feminist circles in this group) argue that the genetic technology is wrong, or downright evil, because by resorting to it humans violate the given natural order and interfere with processes that are inviolable. In the ecological worldview there is a belief that pain and damage are part of all creation. All living organisms have damaged genes. In order to change the course of nature, ecologists claim, we have to transform the entire course of nature, and this is unrealistic and dangerous. Genetic technology is also contrary to the principle of justice. It increases the distance between the privileged world of knowledge (in fact a minority using genetic techniques in reproduction) and the world denied access to information (i.e., the majority reproducing in the traditional way). Thus, the imbalance between the rich and the poor countries is increased.

¹³ P. Kitcher, *The Lives to Come. The Genetic Revolution and Human Possibilities* (London, 1996). Żekanowski also uses that concept, writing about “free market eugenics”, id., “Nowa genetyka i stare marzenia”, *Znak*, 9 (2001): 93.

¹⁴ J.B. Elshtain, “Klonować czy nie klonować?”, in: *Czy powstanie klon człowieka? Fakty i fantazje*, ed. M.C. Nussbaum, C.R. Sunstein (Warszawa, 2000), p. 194.

¹⁵ Elshtain writes that she does not want to diminish the agony and suffering of numerous couples that want children and cannot have them. She reiterates, however, that there are many ways to realize parental needs and many children in desperate need of parental love, *ibid.*, p. 202.

¹⁶ E. Bischofberger, “Biologia jako pogląd na życie”, *Znak*, 12 (1996): 4.

The third group represents, according to Bischofberger, the worldview of ethics, of responsibility. Humanity's unique position is defined by the fact that humans are the only being which may not do everything they can do. Thus the bioethicists reject the technological imperative. From this perspective, it is one of humanity's responsibilities to weigh values against one another and act in accordance with the responsibility that humans bear for all that exists. It is the human, as a moral agent, who sets the limits between what is right and what is harmful or wrong. The proponents of this view do not want to bar the development of genetic technology (which they do not evaluate in terms of good and evil), but neither do they want to give scientists a free hand. They try to enter into dialogue with proponents of other opinions in order to define the terms and ethical limits for further research. Bioethicists, such as Barbara Chyrowicz,¹⁷ warn against "a slippery slope", i.e., against entering a road on which, having set off from something that is morally acceptable, one may start slipping towards reprehensible actions.

Bioethicists regard abortion as a result of prenatal diagnostics as particularly dangerous. They feel it represents an exercise of negative eugenics, based on sorting life according to biological value criteria. Bioethicists warn that a free choice: whether to continue a pregnancy or to terminate it, which abortion advocates invoke, is in fact seriously limited by economic calculation, the pressure exerted by insurance institutions and, last but not least, by opinions prevalent in scientific and medical circles. Bioethicists dispel the illusions that genetic manipulations will eventually lead to eliminating damages to the genome. "It is changeability and diversity and its underlying errors in DNA replication", says Żekanowski, "that is the material of evolution. Biological evolution is not headed towards any definite, final state of perfection, as no such thing exists".¹⁸ Bioethicists point out the contradiction between the efforts to integrate disabled individuals into the rest of society, undertaken by government institutions and associations, and attempts to prevent the births of disabled children. They see the danger of the "McDonaldization" of society in designing the biological traits of offspring, manifested in striving towards maximizing the predictability of actions undertaken in the area of reproduction. They warn against inevitable changes in relations between parents and children, in which the latter "would no longer be a gift, a surprise, would not be inimitable and unique; they would merely be a more successful completion of a project, the result of a selection of possible traits".¹⁹

¹⁷ B. Chyrowicz, *Bioetyka i ryzyko. Argument „równi pochyłej” w dyskusji wokół osiągnięć współczesnej genetyki* (Lublin, 2000); L. Kordylewski, *Problemy bioetyki* (Kraków, 1996).

¹⁸ C. Żekanowski, "Genetyka medyczna: problemy i zagrożenia", in: *Granice ingerencji w naturę*, ed. B. Chyrowicz (Lublin, 2001), p. 125.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

A mere cursory glance at the debates connected with the rapid development of genetics calls into question the widespread belief that the bleak legacy of eugenics has been rejected once and for all. On the contrary: are we not dealing with a situation where certain forms of eugenics, or forms of thinking in terms of eugenics, have survived in today's world? How, therefore, should we look at the varieties of eugenics evolving over history? The history of eugenics leads us to the clear conclusion that just as it was wrong in the past, so is it wrong today to manipulate and reduce human existence to a purely biological dimension. Similarly, state compulsion and efforts to limit individual rights in favour of collective well-being are assessed negatively in the history of eugenics. The Polish eugenicists' designs for the internment, and later the forced sterilization of the sick resulted from the belief that they weakened the nation's strength and will. The fact that Polish eugenics did not get entwined with venomous nationalism, unlike in Germany, does not change its ethical and moral appraisal. While refraining from passing judgment on the measures it proposes, I would see in present-day forms of eugenics a danger of returning to biological determinism and the lack of understanding and respect for all that is imperfect in society. The history of prewar eugenics may therefore serve as a warning to present-day societies, often too optimistically and carelessly embracing the promises geneticists make of a new, glorious future. The lessons we may learn from history are worth remembering. Today, too, we should be aware, as Erwin Bischofberger claims, that pure biology "has no answer to [...] existential questions. Pure biology cannot grasp this question at all, because it has an *a priori* response: the one who is stronger and more agile will survive. This answer remains outside the sphere of human freedom and responsibility".²⁰

²⁰ Bischofberger, "Biologia jako pogład", p. 7.