



BRILL

FASCISM 11 (2022) 291–314

F A S C I S M

JOURNAL
OF
COMPARATIVE
FASCIST
STUDIES

brill.com/fasc

Libido, Psychic Eugenics and Abnormality

Patriarchal Biomedical Rule and Metaxas's Fascistoid Regime (1936–1941)

Demetra Tzanaki | ORCID: 0000-0002-6045-6822

Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece

dtzanak@uoa.gr

Abstract

This article attempts to resituate the Greek regime of 4th of August 1936 within the wider context of interwar fascism in Europe and address it as fascist ideology and practice. It does so by pointing to the ways in which the biomedical discourse on gender and sexuality was pivotal in Ioannis Metaxas's project in terms of playing a crucial role in normalising ideas of racial, class, sexual and gender hierarchy. The article has two areas of focus. The first approaches the eugenic discourse developed in Greece and Europe under liberal governments. This relied on the premise that the mental or psychic disorders it accounted for, identified mainly among the lower classes, were diagnosed as diseases of the 'libidinous libido' when it came to criminality, poverty, strikes, psychic diseases and brutal deaths. The second area of focus reveals how, once trained to detect biological and psychical anomalies, Metaxas's regime managed to perform something that now gives the impression of a magic trick: by waving the wand of psychiatric technocracy over a scene of profound economic inequality, it cultivated an authoritarian, patriarchal, biomedical discourse on psychic normality.

Keywords

Greece – fascism – Metaxas regime (1936–1941) – biomedical discourse – gender – sexuality – psychic eugenics

The regime of 4th August 1936, known as the Dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas (1936–1941) had a lot more in common with the authoritarian and conservative rule of Salazar in Portugal or even Franco's regime in Spain than to the Italian Fascism or Nazism in the strict sense of its 'fascist' dynamics.¹ According to theories of generic fascism, or comparative fascism studies, the characteristics of the 4th August regime differ from those of Mussolini's fascism and Hitler's Nazism in three key respects. Firstly, Ioannis Metaxas never succeeded in gaining bottom-up popularity so that he could expand to a movement or to mass political party with appeal to the people. Rather, the regime was imposed from above. Secondly, the regime did not aspire to an imperialist project, in contrast to the expansionist projects of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Finally, Metaxas was not at all interested in imposing an antisemitic policy,² and was not inspired by Nazi anti-Jewish laws.³ On the whole, scholars have suggested the regime of Metaxas was decidedly 'not fascist' and therefore irrelevant to the discussion about interwar fascism.⁴ However, it is important to highlight Aristotle Kallis's position that argues that 'the August 4 regime should be revisited and replaced firmly within the field of fascism studies'.⁵

In this context, the point made by Liam Liburd and Paul Jackson on how to frame future research questions and approach methodological issues in the light of a decolonised outlook is particularly important.⁶ I too consider how fascism studies might develop a more overt and clear stance against certain patriarchal, Western-oriented conceptions of colonialism, race and minorities. The paper therefore is embedded in an anti-patriarchal, anticolonial and decolonised scientific knowledge within which one can view fascism not only

1 Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1993), 153–164.

2 The antisemitic propaganda carried out by the Venizelists, after Eleferios Venizelos, had blamed the Jews for his failure to be elected Premier, ceased completely and Metaxas declared the regime's interest in preserving equal rights for Jews in Greece. See Katerina Lagos, 'Forced Assimilation or Emigration: Sephardic Jewry in Thessaloniki, 1917–1941,' *Journal of Modern Hellenism* 31 (2015): 59–87; George Th. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922–1936* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1983), 253–262.

3 Dimosthenis Dodos, *Οι Εβραίοι της Θεσσαλονίκης στις εκλογές του ελληνικού κράτους* [The Jews of Thessaloniki in the elections of the Greek state] (Athens: Savallas, 2005), 93–96.

4 Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, 122.

5 Aristotle Kallis, 'Neither Fascist nor Authoritarian: The 4th of August Regime in Greece (1936–1941) and the Dynamics of Fascistisation in 1930s Europe,' *East Central Europe* 37, no. 2–3 (2010): 303–330; Aristotle Kallis, 'The Transnational Co-production of Interwar "Fascism": On the Dynamics of Ideational Mobility and Localisation,' *European History Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2021): 189–213, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02656914211006307>.

6 Liam Liburd and Paul Jackson, 'Debate: Decolonising Fascist Studies,' *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 10, no. 2 (2021): 323–345, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-bja10039>.

through the histories of exceptions but also as a racist and sexist biomedical discourse.⁷ This will allow us to bring to the fore a series of questions to help interpret fascism in new ways, where gender and sexuality demand attention as to how fascism acted upon people's lives through many dichotomies, such as: nature/nurture, logic/pathos, *zôé/bios*, masculinity/femininity, sex/gender, nature/science, and so forth, during the interwar period. Moreover, although gender studies have shifted our attention to break free from the confines of Western European dichotomies, I will argue that not enough attention has been paid to how fascism—and in this case Metaxas's regime—engaged with a patriarchal, racial and sexist Western-oriented biomedical discourse. What is strikingly underexamined about Metaxas's regime, in comparison to European fascism of the period, is the fact that it subscribed to the broader biomedical eugenic agenda, one that European regimes of the mid interwar period enthusiastically endorsed. The regime was wholeheartedly supportive towards specific eugenic measures, transposed into a hybrid form of its own character, as well as towards a type of sexual and gender eugenic biopolitics of a clear and distinct fascist origin. Before moving on to the Metaxas regime, it is necessary to elaborate on the ways in which I approach eugenics in the era under examination.

Eugenism, Gender, Sexuality and the Nature-Nurture Debate

In 1883, Sir Francis Galton, statistician, sociologist, psychologist, anthropologist, proto-geneticist and psychometrician, invented the term 'eugenics'.⁸ By this term Galton described, on the one hand, the distinction of life to human and 'non-human' and on the other hand, he used linguistic and conceptual binaries such as nature/culture, physiological/pathological, man/woman, reason/emotion in order to interpret, in a dualistic and hierarchical fashion, any social crisis, such as: human decadence, the conflict between the civilised and

7 Although I argue that racism, sexism and colonialism are inherent features of Nazi and fascist ideology, the empowerment of approaches based on the conceptual categories of gender and race, as well as sexuality, does not reverse the dominant interpretive example. Nevertheless, it significantly expands its range in ways that I argue, have not been exploited sufficiently in the academic literature, and give us a new light on the formation of fascism.

8 Pierre-André Taguieff, 'Au cœur du raisonnement galtonien: Le paradoxe de la politique malthusienne et sa solution eugéniste: "L'intelligence peut être aidée ou exercée, mais aucun apprentissage, aucun enseignement ne peut la créer. Elle doit être transmise héréditairement."' Karl Pearson, *Raisons politiques*, no. 26 (2007): 175–215, <https://doi.org/10.3917/rai.026.0175>; Daniel Becquemont, 'Darwinisme social et eugénisme anglo-saxons,' *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah*, no. 183 (2005): 143–158.

the primitive, and what was deemed effeminate and degenerate life.⁹ Thus, by disregarding all materialist, classist presuppositions, Galton concluded that intelligence and the ‘nature and nurture’ axiom were not only inter-related but exclusively to blame for human dispossession.¹⁰ According to Galton, what nature does blindly, science does with prudence, promptness, and kindness. This concept led to the idea of controlling the reproduction of individuals, groups, and whole populations of those who supposedly lacked intelligence and ‘morality’, and consequently put the evolutionary process of civilisation at serious risk. Within this framework of ‘standardisation of the civilised’, any life, as well as gender and sexuality that did not belong to the ‘average standard’ of what was deemed civilised, was stigmatised as a source of disease, morbidity, poverty, violence, and impoverishment. Against these ‘findings’, the eugenics movement proposed a compensatory mechanism for optimising the coupling of intellectually (and I would add also psychologically¹¹) gifted individuals in terms of heredity. The premise was that the capacity of the ‘life-worth-living’ to determine their destiny lies respectively in their capacity to refer to scientific knowledge, an ability which the ‘life-not-worthy-of living’ does not possess.

This approach was echoed in the book *Die Freigabe der Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens* [Permission to destroy life devoid of value] by German psychiatry professor Karl Binding (1841–1920) and criminology expert Alfred Hoche (1865–1943).¹² Following the publication of their work, the state ensured for the first time its jurisdiction to decide upon and proceed to ‘redemption’, meaning, among other things, euthanasia of ‘life devoid of value’. This term comprised those identified in the book as ‘deviants’, which included the mentally and psychically ill, people with disabilities, homosexual people, interracial couples, persons seen as a source of ‘social turmoil’, people of particular ethnic groups, and criminals. In short, this consisted of those individuals who did not meet the criteria of a dignified life, following the scientific verdict of a panel of three experts: a doctor, a psychiatrist and a judge.¹³ What seems to be escaping scholarly attention however, is that, during the same period, bourgeois

9 Francis Galton, ‘Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims,’ *The American Journal of Sociology* 10 (1904): 1–25.

10 Francis Galton, ‘The History of Twins, As a Criterion of the Relative Powers of Nature and Nurture,’ *International Journal of Epidemiology* 41, no. 4 (2012): 905–911.

11 Taguieff, ‘Au cœur du raisonnement galtonien,’ 175–215.

12 Georgios Kokkinos, *Ευγονική δυστοπία: Διαδρομές ιδεών* [Eugenic dystopia: Pathways of ideas] (Athens: Thines, 2018), 141–150.

13 Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 558.

states cooperated closely with psychiatry, psychoanalysis,¹⁴ sexology, and biopsychology with a view to ensure as much control as possible over the process of channelling the population's gender and sexuality towards the normative.¹⁵ Since the biomedical discourse on instinct and chromosomes concluded that the individual is hereditarily determined,¹⁶ eugenics gained more ground in the area of sex and gender.¹⁷

In 1916, Richard Goldschmidt (1878–1958) suggested that homosexuality was a result of genetic intersexuality. He had come to this conclusion by studying different geographical areas in Europe and Japan to interpret this 'dangerous' intersex species.¹⁸ His quest gave impetus to the Weimar Republic, where the geneticist Fritz Lenz (1887–1976) concluded that the Scandinavian race was the most evolved of all. Superiority was the outcome of the apparent distinction between the two sexes. In the same context, Dr Theo Lang, a proponent of National Socialism, used Richard Goldsmith's theory to propose sterilisation as a 'solution' to the 'problem' of male homosexuality. The conclusion was that only through the distinction between the sexes could supreme life be reproduced.

In this context, Metaxas indulged measures of sexual education, criminalising any 'perversion', whether sexual or political, to the benefit of society, while doctors would be called upon to play the role of the moral and social

-
- 14 Laurence Rickels, *Nazi Psychoanalysis* (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 2002), 71–86; Stephen Frosh, 'Psychoanalysis, Nazism and "Jewish science";' *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 5, no. 84 (2003): 1315–1332; Dagmar Herzog, *Cold War Freud: Psychoanalysis in an Age of Catastrophes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 56–87.
- 15 Christos Kouroutzas and Demetra Tzanaki, 'Το έργο του Κωσταντίνου Γαρδικά και οι βιοϊατρικές νοσηματοδοτήσεις του: Τα λαϊκά στρώματα ως άμεση αιτία εγκλημάτων,' [The work of Konstantinos Gardikas and his biomedical conceptualisations: The popular strata as a direct cause of crimes] *Antigone* 1 (2021): 25–40.
- 16 Michael Gianniris, 'Η παραφροσύνη εν Ελλάδι,' [Insanity in Greece] *Psychiatric and Neurological Review* 1, no. 5 (1903): 149–157; Holly Berkley Fletcher, *Gender and the American Temperance Movement of the Nineteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 102–103.
- 17 Demetra Tzanaki, *Η δίωξη του ίντερσεξ ως το τερατώδες φύλο* [The persecution of intersex as monstrous sex] (forthcoming, Thessaloniki: Psifides, 2022), 100–110; Demetra Tzanaki, *Ευγονική και φύλο* [Eugenism, sex and gender] (forthcoming, Athens: Ektos Grammis, 2022), 5–40.
- 18 Helga Satzinger, 'Racial Purity, Stable Genes, and Sex Difference: Gender in the Making of Genetic Concepts by Richard Goldschmidt and Fritz Lenz, 1916 to 1936,' in *The Kaiser Wilhelm Society under National Socialism*, eds. Susanne Heim, Carola Sachse and Mark Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 145–170.

reformer of the libidinous instincts.¹⁹ This meant that any gender or sexuality that could not reproduce 'healthy' offspring would be rendered abnormal and threatening to the continuation of the nation and human life in general. The extermination of intersex gender and homosexuality were a direct extension of this concept. This explains why sex education and gender identity were among the top priorities for the regime of Metaxas, regardless of the fact that theories of eugenics had long treated Greece as a case of failed eugenics at best. So, while Metaxas's regime did not implement forced eugenic sterilisation, it introduced a new concept into politics, one which attributed all social ills to psychic disease as well as to political, sexual and gender identity. Such an approach enables us to understand better the context within which the Metaxas regime was formed, but even more so, the ways in which his fascistoid regime did not constitute a rupture with previous parliamentary governments and bourgeois biomedical discourses that presented mental illness, and by extension gender and sexuality, as the cause of all social ills.²⁰ Taking advantage of crisis of bourgeois parties, after years of nepotism and plundering of public money and with political and parliamentary institutions having systematically functioned as parties' cliques, the regime of Metaxas put up the façade of a state representative of the popular classes' will and morality. In this sense, equally important was the discourse concerning anti-communism as part of the moral purification of the nation. The regime, supposedly, hoped to raise the morally 'healthy masses' to power. Moreover, the state now emerged as a 'new' endeavour, as a network of interrelationships based not on economic interest and family bonds but on individuals' capacities, according to their moral, psychic, sexual, gender and social heredity. As a result, the 'new' state propagated its role as neutral and objective, above and beyond political parties, social classes, and political benefits. This totalitarian discourse draw parallels between the state and the patriarchal family, in which Metaxas would keep for himself the role of the father who gathers all powers, akin to an absolute monarch. Perhaps more tellingly than anything else, eugenics and

19 Georgios Kokkinos, *Άξια και Ανάξια Ζωή, Ευγονική, εκφυλισμός, βιοπολιτική: Ο γιατρός στο ρόλο του κοινωνικού θεραπευτή και του εθνικού αναμορφωτή* ['Worthy' and 'unworthy' life, eugenics, degeneration, biopolitics: The physician in the role of social healer and national reformer] (Athens: Taxideftis, 2021), 91, 258–259; Violetta Hionidou, *Abortion and Contraception in Modern Greece, 1830–1967: Medicine, Sexuality and Popular Culture* (London: Palgrave, 2020).

20 Kouroutzas and Tzanaki, '[The work of Konstantinos Gardikas and his biomedical conceptualizations],' 25–40.

psychic eugenics offered to Metaxas a vision of gender, sex and human taxonomy working in perfect accord with a scientifically, supposedly knowable, nature.

Within this theoretical context this article is divided into two parts. The first part argues that it is crucial to address the ways in which, during the interwar years, eugenics discourse established a patriarchal, biomedical, liberal eugenic order, and examined the complex engagement between international eugenics and capitalism with regards to the Greek case. The second part seeks to understand how Metaxas's regime managed to perform what gives the impression of a kind of magic trick: by using psychiatric technocracy on profound economic inequality, it elaborated an authoritarian, patriarchal, biomedical discourse on psychic normality. Therefore, injustice, poverty, and even industrial labour accidents, emerged in the dominant discourse as the result of a person's mental illness. Moreover, parallel to the leading biomedical discourse, the political rhetoric of the time sought to stigmatise communist men and women, accusing them of perversity and abnormality. Finally, the conclusion seeks to understand the interconnection between the interwar period of the 4th of August regime in the light of the mental disease discourse and its presence today.

The Eugenic Biomedical Patriarchal Discourse with Regards to the Greek Case

Ever since Cesare Lombroso's (1835–1909) book from 1876 *L'uomo delinquente* [The criminal man] atavism,²¹ once considered a hereditary trait in degenerates and their 'offspring' that was detected almost exclusively in the lower social classes—such as prostitutes and anarchists—came to be treated as the origins of crime. Based on the various interpretations of the 'born criminal', psychiatrists in the following years frequently resorted to the theory of the non-evolutionary, primitive sexual drive, which was supposedly the cause of criminality and which led to poverty, misery, disease and death. In 1882, for example, Valentin Magnan (1835–1916) and Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893)

21 According to Cesare Lombroso, atavism theory meant that criminals were primitive savages who were evolutionarily backward compared to normal citizens. For this reason, offenders have certain physical and psychical stigmas, characteristics or abnormalities by birth that make them different and a hereditary sub-human species. Richard Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880–1945* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

published *Inversions du sens génital et autres perversions sexuelles* [Inversion of the genital sense and other sexual perversions],²² placing the concepts of perversion and abnormality at the centre of scientific discourse. In 1886, the German psychiatrist Krafft Ebing (1840–1902) published *Psychopathia Sexualis* [Sexual psychopathy]. In 1897, Albert Moll (1862–1939) wrote *Libido Sexualis* [Sexual libido], but it was mainly Havelock Ellis (1859–1939), whose *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1901) drew explicit comparisons between primitive tribes and the popular classes with regards to their expression of sex drive, and the sexological pathology of the ‘invert’ of which Ellis wrote.²³ During the same time, in 1891, the Italian criminologist Scipio Sighele (1868–1913) wrote two important articles on the subject of ‘criminal masses’, at the *Archivio de psichiatria*, a scientific journal edited by Cesare Lombroso later published in the book *La folla delinquente* [The delinquent crowd]. In 1893, Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero (1871–1942) conducted case studies on more than 112 prostitutes and emphasised that sapphism, tribadism, sodomy,²⁴ and a general ‘inversion’ of sexuality, were found mainly among a certain female ‘species’ that resembled that of common criminals.²⁵ In 1894, the term ‘new woman’ appeared in an article by Sarah Grand, ‘The new aspect of the woman question’, published in the *North American Review*. She outlined the model of the new woman who lives and works in a self-determined manner, defying the parochial regime of truth, the classification of life and ‘natural’ gender roles. In the same year, on 11 April, A.J. Block, a New Orleans psychiatrist, published an article proclaiming that he had succeeded in curing a 14-year-old girl of masturbation and hysteria through a clitoridectomy.²⁶ In 1895, Gustave Le Bon (1841–1931) published his study on *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*,²⁷ while in Greece, any woman who

22 Jean Martin Charcot and Valentin Magnan, *Inversion du sens génital et autres perversions sexuelles* (Paris: Frénésie, 1987), xxv–38.

23 Claude-Olivier Doron, ‘Félix Voisin and the genesis of abnormals,’ *History of Psychiatry* 26, no. 4 (2015): 387–403; Claude-Olivier Doron, ‘Perversion or Perversity? Genealogy of a Medical-Legal Debate,’ *Saúde E Sociedade* 27, no. 2 (2018): 311–325; Claude-Olivier Doron, ‘La formation du concept psychiatrique de perversion au XIXe siècle en France,’ *L’information psychiatrique* 1, no. 88 (2012): 39–49; Claude-Olivier Doron, ‘La formation du concept psychiatrique de “perversion” au XIXe siècle en France,’ *L’information psychiatrique* 88, no. 1 (2012): 39–49, <https://doi.org/10.3917/inpsy.8801.0039>.

24 Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, *La femme criminelle et la prostituée* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1896), 9, 188.

25 Lombroso and Ferrero, *La femme criminelle*, 26, 251, 14, 26, 251, 285, 352.

26 Sarah Rodriguez, ‘Rethinking the History of Female Circumcision and Clitoridectomy: American Medicine and Female Sexuality in the Late Nineteenth Century,’ *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 63, no. 3 (2008): 323–347.

27 Robert A. Nye, *The Origins of Crowd Psychology: Gustave Le Bon and the Crisis of Mass*

happens to be seen in a public place, such as a hotel, found herself immediately stigmatised as a 'prostitute'.²⁸ In 1898, Scipio Sighele (1868–1913), in his work *La donna nova* [The new woman], confirmed through anthropometric measurements that women from the lower classes who lived independently showed unmistakable traces of degeneration, alcoholism, epilepsy and criminality.²⁹ The same argument was made by criminological studies carried out on a number of families, such as the Jukes (1874) and the Kallikaks (1912), focusing on the sexuality of the mother as a determinant of criminality, disease and poverty.³⁰ Around the same time, Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1895), in a preface dedicated to Cesare Lombroso, as a mark of respect underlined the masculinisation of women and the feminisation of men, primarily among lower classes, as the new enemy of the European civilisation.

Nordau had a great impact upon the Greek ideological platform. For example, the Greek psychiatrist Simonides Vlavianos took Nordau's contribution into account and proposed that he be granted honorary membership in the Parnassus Society and be awarded the *Ανωτέρων Ταξιαρχών* [Supreme Taxiarach] on behalf of the Greek state for his unique contribution to the social sciences.³¹ Such developments provided the idea of a psychic 'normality' while specifying the moral rules that ought to be implemented by the state, setting additional limits to a sense of gender identity; structuring relations of power; and determining gender boundaries in ways that could put the notion of class solidarity into question. As gender concerns the socially expected roles that

Democracy in the Third Republic (London and Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1975), 59–123.

- 28 Demetra Tzanaki, 'Δίωξη του τριβαδισμού/σοδομισμού/ομοφυλοφιλίας/λεσβιανισμού,' [The persecution of tribadism/sodomy/homosexuality/lesbianism/different versions of psychic persecution against human disobedience (1834–1951)] *Koinonikes Epistimes* 11 (2020): 168–185.
- 29 Angélique Richardson and Chris Willis, eds., *The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: Fin-de-Siècle Feminisms* (London: Palgrave, 2000), xii.
- 30 Georgios Sakellariou, *Η Μέτρηση της ευφυΐας* [The measurement of intelligence] (Athens: self-publishing, 1928), 9–10; Georgios Sakellariou, *Έρευνα του Συναιθηματικού βίου ψυχοπαθών: Πρακτικά Ιατρικής Εταιρείας Αθηνών* [Experimental research of the emotional life of psychopaths: Announcement to the Athens Medical Society] (Athens: 'Hellas' Printing House, 1934), 3–23.
- 31 Simonides Vlavianos, 'Psychology of Groups,' *Psychiatric and Neurological Review* 1, no. 1 (1902): 337–342; Simonides Vlavianos, 'Questionnaire (General Cooperation, Education and Criminality),' *Psychiatric and Neurological Review* 2, no. 1 (1903): 94; Demetra Tzanaki, *Ιστορία της (Μη) Κανονικότητας: Η Σφίγγα πρέπει να πεθάνει. Ο Οιδίποδας επικρατεί* [History of abnormality: The sphinx must die. Oedipus prevails] (Athens: Asini, 2016), 40–90.

come with being assigned male or a female, it should come as no surprise that individuals were often treated in remarkably different ways depending on their gender. Women and intersex people had more possibilities than men to be persecuted for indecent behaviour that was deemed to have violated society's dominant moral order. In this sense, gender operated as a eugenic boundary marker and defined life.

Moreover, Wendy Kline demonstrates how the American eugenics movement used two very different models of femininity.³² One was the 'Mother of Tomorrow', a model woman who embodied the eugenic vision of the bourgeois ethic, i.e., by prioritising her domestic duties and role as a mother. The other was the 'Moron Girl', the woman who, because of her genetic hereditary defects, lacked the mental capacity necessary to control her primitive impulses.³³ In the Greek case, the 'Moron Girl' was a female whose defects were expressed in her sexual desire to change gender roles and demand privileges normally granted only to 'normal' men and women. This type of person was seen as the main cause of society's downfall unless eugenicists stepped in to solve the moral, sexual, and gender 'problems' by preventing these beings from reproducing, thereby preventing a lack of moral control, gradual degeneration, and death in the next generation. In short, the eugenic movement was about more than physical health, it enforced the prevalence of bourgeois psychic morality as normative. In this context, Greek experts faced a new scientific challenge: to suggest ways in which people from lower classes could be cured of their 'animal' instincts, to 'develop into civilised beings'.³⁴ That was a woman who embodied the psychic eugenic vision of moral progress. Such a woman would help restore society's moral order and reinforce patriarchal ethical dominance in the public sphere.

Against this background, the Patriotic Association of Greek Women broke apart in 1917 and was transformed into the 'Patriotic Foundation'.³⁵ This was

32 Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 32–61.

33 Kline, *Building a Better Race*, 32–61.

34 Georgios Vafas, *Μαθήματα Ιατροδικαστικής*, τομ. 2, *Ζητήματα Αναφερόμενα εις την Λειτουργίαν της Γενέσεως* [Courses in forensic science, vol. 2, Issues related to the concerning the liturgy of the Genesis] (Athens: Sakellariou Printing House, 1903), 54.

35 Demetra Tzanaki, *Women and Nationalism in the Making of Modern Greece: The Founding of the Kingdom to the Greco-Turkish War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 160–165; Demetra Tzanaki, 'Ο αυνανισμός και το κομμουνιστικό ψυχικό νόσημα: Μια ανάλυση της Άννας Κατσίγρα περί της γενετήσιας αγωγής για τ' αγόρι' [Onanism and the communist 'psychic trauma': An analysis of Anna Katsigra's, *With an emphasis on boy's sexuality education* (1935)], *Krisi*, no. 5 (2019):7–33; Demetra Tzanaki, 'Δίωξη του τριβαδισμού, σοδομοισμού, ομοφυ-

introduced as a new state apparatus, with the duty to emphasise the importance of the family by rendering it responsible for the integration of *scientia sexualis*, or sexual science, into society.

Eugenics and the New Woman

In 1921, the Patriotic League of Greek Women was re-established. In 1922, the League was broken apart again and became Patriotic Revival Foundation, which in turn was replaced by the Patriotic Foundation for the Protection of the Child. In 1929, the Patriotic Foundation for the Protection of the Child broke down, and finally, in 1936, the League became the Patriotic Foundation for Social Protection and Perception and was placed under the full state control.³⁶ Moreover, in 1922 the state introduced Law 3032 'on measures against venereal diseases and women's debauchery', followed by the Royal Decree of April 1923 allowing 'committees and local authorities to enforce the law'. The 1922 decree used for the first time the term 'immoral' (ανήθικες) to describe women who regularly lived off prostitution, and the prefix -ελεύθ, meaning 'free', to refer to those (ελευθέρεις) who engaged in prostitution occasionally.³⁷ At the same time, 'kynaidi', or men who 'masquerade as women and engage in prostitution', faced unprecedented persecution in the application of the law against begging and vagrancy.³⁸ From this perspective, the free woman and the effeminate man were constructed as the epitome of 'androgynous' mental illness. The underlying concern was that psychological castration could pose a serious risk to masculinity if its defining values were subjugated to the sex drive.³⁹ However, after the end of the First World War, the prospect of introducing moral

λοφιλίας, λεσβιανισμού: Διαφορετικές εκδοχές της ψυχικής δίωξης ενάντια της ανθρώπινης ανυπακοής (1834–1951),' [Prohibition of tri-badism, sodomy, homosexuality, lesbianism: Different versions of mental persecution against human disobedience (1834–1951)] *Koinonikes Epistimes* 11 (2020): 168–185; Vasiliki Theodorou, 'Από τον Πατριωτικό Σύνδεσμο των Ελληνίδων στο Πατριωτικό Ίδρυμα Περιθάλψεως: θελοντικά δίκτυα, πολιτική αλλαγή και κράτος πρόνοιας,' [From the Patriotic Association of Hellenic Women to the Patriotic Peripatetic Foundation: Voluntary networks, political change and the welfare state], paper at 'Rethymnon: Thales: Forms of Public Normativity in 20th Century Urban Greece: Associations, Networks of Social Intervention and Collective Subjectivities' Seminar, 6–7 June 2014, 1–19.

36 Tzanaki, *Women and Nationalism in the Making of Modern Greece*, 160–165.

37 Demetra Tzanaki, 'Πορνεία και 'ανελευθερία' στον Μεσοπόλεμο,' [Prostitution and 'unfreedom' in the interwar era] *National Centre for Social Research* 150 (2018): 111–149.

38 Demetra Tzanaki, 'Εγκλημα, Κοινωνία, Αστυνομία: "Βλέπε, Άκουε, Σιώπα",' [Crime, society, police: 'See, hear, be silent'] in *Υγεία, Καύλα και Επανάσταση* [Health, lust and revolt], ed. Demetra Tzanaki (Athens: Asini, 2021), 141–229.

39 Tzanaki, '[Crime, society, police],' 141–229.

eugenic measures in Europe and America gained popularity and acceptance among medical scientists, practitioners and policy makers.⁴⁰

Eugenic science attracted major attention from both the medical profession and social reformers in Greece,⁴¹ who were interested in ‘protecting’ the nation from moral degeneration—the sort of sexual liberation that communists allegedly promoted. Similarly, Sakellariou concluded in 1923 that the goal of the educational system should not have been the production of knowledge per se, but the moral reformation of the instincts through ‘the measurement of the will and moral development’.⁴² Many of their justifications were then adopted by intellectuals and government officials and were used in order to support the pedagogical and sexuality projects put forward during the 1920s.

Eugenics, Anti-Communism and the Defence of Liberal Libido

Anti-communism emerged as part of this cause, while eugenicists proclaimed that they were doing their utmost service to society: they sought to defend future generations from social, moral and political degradation.⁴³ Whether their premise was the urgency of purifying the nation from those deemed ‘defective’, or protecting it from mixing with ‘inferior’ characteristics of the lower strata of the society, one fact remained: there was widespread agreement that anti-communism was necessary for the moral purification of the immoral elements of the lower strata as both political discourse and praxis. Indeed, communists—men and women alike—were systematically confronted with accusations of moral and mental libidinous degeneracy. Elaborately deployed in the bourgeois medical discourse, especially from 1924 on, after the Socialist Labour Party (ΣΕΚΕ) became the Greek Communist Party (ΚΚΕ), these accusa-

40 Demetra Tzanaki, ‘Κουτσαβάκηδες, Τεντιμπόυδες, Κίναϊδοι, Πουτάνες και Μπαίρακτάρηδες. Η αστυνόμευση της ανθρώπινης λιβιδώσ (1948–1974),’ [Tough guys, teddyboys, kinaids, whores and policemen: The policing of human libido (1948–1974)] in *Υγεία, Καύλα και Επανάσταση* [Health, lust and revolt], ed. Demetra Tzanaki (Athens: Asini, 2021), 317–343; Jana Grekul, ‘Sterilisation in Alberta, 1928 to 1972: Gender Matters,’ *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie* 45, no. 3 (2008): 247–266.

41 Kokkinos, [‘Worthy’ and ‘unworthy’ life], 229–249.

42 Demetra Tzanaki, ‘Ψυχοπάθειαι εν τω Σχολείω 1903–1934,’ [Psychopathies in the school 1903–1934] *ΕΛ.Ε.Ι.Ε* 19–20 (2019–2020): 68–107.

43 Georgios Kokkinos, ‘Άγγελος Δόξας/Νικόλαος Δρακουλίδης: Από την πρόκληση ηθικού πανικού για την κοινωνική παθογένεια του Μεσοπολέμου στην ψυχαναλυτική και βιολογίζουσα ερμηνεία της ‘ερωτογραφίας’ (ερωτικής ποίησης και επιστολογραφίας) του Κωστή Παλαμά’ [Angelos Doxas/Nicolaos Drakulidis: From the challenge of moral panic about the social pathogenesis of the interwar period to the psychoanalytic and biologicistic interpretation of ‘erotography’ (erotic poetry and epistolary writing) by Costis Palamas], in *Υγεία, Καύλα και Επανάσταση* [Health, lust and revolt], ed. Demetra Tzanaki (Athens: Asini, 2021), 229–285.

tions constructed the social imaginary of the communists as effeminate, degenerate, and libidinous psychic beings. According to the ideological arsenal of this discourse, any ‘excessive’ attachment to the communist party was bound to lead inevitably to its members abandoning their relatives, children, and work. The transfer of loyalty from family and nation to communist ideology was presented as indisputable evidence of this moral degeneration. Within this framework, communist theories advocating sexual liberation were held responsible for the rapid spread of fatal venereal diseases (αφροδίσια νοσήματα).⁴⁴ Their case was strengthened by the premise that communists as degenerates were responsible for serious crimes against morality.

Relationships out of wedlock were systematically stigmatised by experts as psychologically, morally and socially unacceptable, paving the way for the decree-law for ‘illegitimate’ children that passed was in July 1926.⁴⁵ In addition, the Venizelos government introduced laws for the protection of family, marriage, and divorce (1340/1916, 3237/1924, and 4755/1920), which reaffirmed patriarchal domination and a bourgeois ethic in the family, as well as allowed absolute state control over private life, to counter communist impunity.⁴⁶ At the same time, several measures including censorship were adopted from July 1925. In this spirit, in 1925, the gynaecologist M. Moseidis—whose work *Ευγονική και Παιδοκομία* [Eugenics and Paedocomics] was celebrated by the University of Athens and was presented in its banquet hall in 1924—declared that ‘children conceived on a Saturday workers’ payday . . . are often mentally degenerate.’⁴⁷ In this context, the rationale for the creation of the Scientific Police,⁴⁸ under the government of Eleftherios Venizelos and which was gradually estab-

44 These positions were mainly developed by the Greek doctor Anna Katsigra, who, developing the theory of psychoanalysis and biology’s law of evolution, tried to highlight the psychoneuroses from which the communists supposedly suffered. At the same time, for her, only bourgeois morality could survive, along with male–female sex and strict sexual abstinence. Tzanaki, ‘[Onanism and the communist ‘psychic trauma’],’ 7–33.

45 Tryfonas Lemontzoglou, ‘Οι γεννήσεις των παιδιών εκτός γάμου ως δείκτης της σεξουαλικότητας της “νέας γυναίκας”: Μια εμπειρική μελέτη για την περίπτωση της Ελλάδας κατά τον Μεσοπόλεμο, 1921–1938,’ [Births of children out of wedlock as an indicator of the sexuality of the ‘new woman’: An empirical study of the case of Greece during the interwar period, 1921–1938] *Theseis* 151 (2020): 75–105.

46 Eleftherios Venizelos (1864–1933), was elected eight times as Prime Minister of Greece, serving from 1910 to 1920 and from 1928 to 1933.

47 M. Moseidis, *Ευγονική και Παιδοκομία παρά τοις αρχαίοις Έλλησιν: Συμβολή εις την ιστορίαν της παιδοκομίας* [Eugenics and callipedia in ancient Greece: A contribution to the history of callipedia] (Athens: From the Printing House of K.G. Makridou and I.A. Makridou, 1925).

48 Kouroutzas and Tzanaki, ‘[The work of Konstantinos Gardikas and his biomedical conceptualisations],’ 25–40.

lished in Patras, Piraeus and finally in Athens by 1926, is clear.⁴⁹ In short, it was followed by the establishment of the vice squad,⁵⁰ a police department responsible for law enforcement against supposedly immoral acts and conduct of the lower classes,⁵¹ which included gambling, pornography, prostitution (female and male), illegal alcohol consumption, as well as the spread of communist ideas. At this point, it is worth noting that the first Police Academy in Corfu, founded in 1919, included special training for the surveillance and hunting of communists.⁵² The police were given with the task of carrying out a series of controls. For example, in 1925, during the dictatorship of Pangalos, the police took to the streets measuring the length of women's skirts, as law allowed these to be no more than a foot above the ground. Similarly, when Eleftherios Venizelos took charge of the Ministry of Health, from 1928 to 1932, he also introduced Law 4229/24 in July 1929, notoriously known as the 'idionymon'. The law allowed for imprisonment for six months anyone who 'would attempt to propagate ideas whose obvious aim is the violent overthrow of the social system'. What idionymon enshrined, however, was the moral order of the ruling class as the law of the state. At the core of idionymon was the vision of a well-disciplined society that would arm itself against a 'moral menace'. These were the, supposedly, morally degenerate communists,⁵³ and the 'immoral' beings, which positioned the lower classes as arbiters of morality as well as social, or sexual, independence.

In the same year, the vice squad, which until then had been an independent reference service against prostitution, was placed under the authority of the Sub-directorate of General Security (Υποδιεύθυνση Γενικής Ασφαλείας). It is no coincidence that 'offences against morality' seemed to be among the most common crime cases, according to the Greek crime statistics of 1922–1935—a fact which offered further evidence of mental degeneration, especially among the working class. At the same time, the newspaper *Empros* recorded cases of moral decay with reports on erotic debauchery in red-light districts.⁵⁴ Similarly, this interpretation led the Greek psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Aggelos Doxas

49 Ibid.

50 Dimitris Bacharas, 'L'institution de la police des villes en Grèce: Un voyage européen,' in *Être policier: Les métiers de police en Europe (xviii–xxe siècle)*, eds. Jean-Marc Berlière, Catherine Denys, Dominique Kalifa, Vincent Milliot (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes (2008), 111–121; Achilles Fotakis, 'The Creation of the Police and the British Mission (1918–1932)' (PhD diss., National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, 2015), 201.

51 Tzanaki, '[Crime, society, police],' 141–229.

52 Bacharas, 'L'institution de la police des villes en Grèce,' 185.

53 Tzanaki, '[Crime, society, police],' 141–229.

54 Ibid., 190.

(pseudonym of Nikolaos Drakoulides, 1900–1985) to a new argument, drawing on the theories of prostitution by Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero (1896), Havelock Ellis (1929), Pauline Tarnowski (1892) and Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet (1857).⁵⁵ According to Doxas, ‘immoral women’ resort to prostitution out of idleness, ‘degeneracy and perversion by nature’.⁵⁶ It is significant to note that one of the leading educators of the time, Nikolaos Exarchopoulos (1874–1960), a member of the Academy of Athens, insisted on the need to tame the instincts of the lower social classes, postulating that the sexual life of the latter could easily transform their population into a plebeian population.⁵⁷ However, the sanitary scientist and advisor to Eleftherios Venizelos, Apostolos Doxiadis (1874–1942), provided a different interpretation of what lay behind these measures. As director of the Patriotic Foundation, from 1924 to 1932,⁵⁸ Doxiadis expanded on the need to incorporate measures aimed at internalising hygiene towards the popular strata in order to address the ‘qualitative’ shrinkage of the Greek population.⁵⁹ According to Doxiadis, the ‘excessive fertility’ of workers and peasants, compared to ‘the upper classes’, resulted in the development of a negative selection, as ‘the ablest individuals are stunted’ and ‘those organisms which are physically and mentally lagging are multiplied’.⁶⁰ In sum, psychic eugenics advocated radical measures that argued criminals, so-called idiots, imbeciles, epileptics, communists, prostitutes, kinadoi, and intersex people, all of whom pertained to the inferior sub-human race of *libido sexualis*, should be eliminated. In doing so, the connection between heredity, inequality, poverty, and psychic degeneration was firmly established. The same year saw the publication of Chr. Vasilakakis’s *Πληγές και Φραγγέλιον* [Plagues and fraggellion], in which a newspaper columnist described in detail the immoral-

55 Ibid, 141–229; Kokkinos, ‘[Angelos Doxas/Nicolaos Drakoulidis],’ 229–285.

56 Demetra Tzanaki, ‘Η ‘ψυχική ασθένεια’ της ‘κοινής γυναίκας/ζωής’: Ο αστικός βιοϊατρικός λόγος στην υπεράσπιση του καπιταλισμού,’ [The ‘psychic disease’ of the ‘common woman/life’: A bourgeois biomedical discourse in defence of capitalism] *Feministika* 3 (2020), <https://feministika.net/psychiki-astheneia-tis-koinis-gynaikas/>.

57 Tzanaki, ‘[Crime, society, police],’ 181.

58 Vasiliki Theodorou, ‘Μεταβαλλόμενα πλαίσια συνάφειας μεταξύ εθελοντών, ειδικών και κράτους: το παράδειγμα του Πατριωτικού Ιδρύματος Προστασίας του Παιδιού,’ [Changing contexts of relevance between voluntary and non-voluntary: The example of the Patriotic Foundation] in *Μορφές δημόσιας κοινωνικότητας στην Ελλάδα του εικοστού αιώνα* [Forms of public sociality in twentieth century Greece], eds. Effie Avdela, Haris Exertzoglou and Christos Lyrintzis (Rethymno: University of Crete, 2015), 82–101.

59 Tasos Kostopoulos, ‘Αριστεία και Υπογεννητικότητα,’ [Excellence and infertility] *Efsyn*, December 12, 2018, https://www.efsyn.gr/themata/fantasma-tis-istorias/175841_aristeia-kai-y-pogenitikitota.

60 Kostopoulos, ‘[Excellence and infertility].’

ity of society.⁶¹ The columnist's argument explained that only the dictatorship of a superior man could save Greeks, who were mired in corruption.⁶²

What was a novelty in the 1930s, however, was that Marxist discourses, at least in the Soviet Union which until then had posed a serious leftist counter dialog, gradually incorporated bourgeois biomedical discourse and accepted mental illness as the cause of all social ills.⁶³ This was precisely what Metaxas would exploit. Given the crisis of parliamentary democracy, and the misuse of constitutional liberties, Metaxas insisted that 'technological progress, democratisation and especially the emancipation of women, the breakdown of the institution of marriage, the degeneration of morality, sexual liberation, the general social pathogenicity—immorality—abortions, have led to crime and to a sharp increase in suicides'.⁶⁴ It therefore became mandatory that the state intervened in sexual conduct in order to create a new social being. This meant that any 'life-unworthy-of-living' that dared to resist the progress and development of the Third Greek Civilisation had to be sent to exile or be 'executed socially' after having been stigmatised as mentally ill and bestial. According to Metaxas, prostitutes, communists, and abnormal children were distinguished from so-called 'normal' people by their ability to control morality through abstinence. Thus, their unworthiness was not about medical problems but was instead about social values and assumptions about politics, class, gender and sexuality. After 1930, when the labour movement was strengthened and empowered by the presence of Asia Minor refugees and a series of strikes, Metaxas refrained from responding with police violence, but rather embraced a biomedical discourse that affirmed the threat of the mentally and psychologically effeminate, abnormal Other in the lower social strata. According to Metaxas,⁶⁵ the anti-communist struggle had to be primarily a psychological one: 'The criminal trials of the arrested communists not only do not serve the anti-communist struggle of the state, but on the contrary provide an essential platform for public propaganda [therefore] . . . the anti-communist struggle of the state directed against rebellious and mentally ill people should be based on a psychological foundation'.⁶⁶

61 Tzanaki, '[Crime, society, police]'; 189.

62 Ibid.

63 Demetra Tzanaki and Efi Tsea, 'Psychiatrie, criminologie et communisme: La persecution de la 'libido dégénérée' en Grèce de 1917 à 1940,' *Cahiers d'histoire: Revue d'histoire critique* 150 (2021): 79–95, <https://doi.org/10.4000/chrhc.16899>.

64 Tzanaki, '[Crime, society, police]'; 214.

65 Spyros Linardatos, *4η Αυγούστου* [4th of August] (Athens: Themelio, 1966), 34, 41, 57–62, 67–79, 83.

66 Ioannis Metaxas, *Η κυβέρνησής της 4ης Αυγούστου κατοχύρωσε την εθνικήν ασφάλειαν και εξυ-*

Libido, Psychic Eugenism and Metaxas's Fascistoid Regime

On September 18, 1936, the 4th of August regime introduced Coercive Law 117. This law superseded the 'Idionymon' (ιδιώνυμο) of 1929, ratified the abolition of 'popular liberties' and provided for imprisonment of not less than three months plus up to six months in exile. Additional control was maintained through the enactment of the 'Health Centres', which replaced the 'Committee for the Control of Venereal Diseases' (CCVD)⁶⁷ under the Metaxas regime. This discourse obviously recodified Greek civic-bourgeois ethics. In the same year, the Greek criminologist Konstantinos Gardikas (1896–1984) published a three-volume work, *Criminology* (1936), in which he interpreted crime as a consequence of the psychological vulnerability of the lower social classes.⁶⁸ In contrast to Marxist interpretations, which typically focus on the role of economic conditions in the emergence of crime, Gardikas assumed the abnormal nature of the lower classes was the fundamental cause of degeneration.⁶⁹ Moreover, in Gardikas's view, strikes were merely crimes committed by the mob. By instrumentalising biological and medical discourses, the ruling class claimed a monopoly on the 'sexual' instincts of the lower classes. However, this was not a new state of affairs.

Ideas of mental health prevailed under Metaxas's regime due to the threat of the fulminant of radical Marxist thought. A class war was raging in the nation. To control working-class militancy, industrialists resorted to armed strike breakers and police violence to break labour in bloody clashes, like the

γίανε την ελληνικήν κοινωνίαν [The government of August 4 ensured national security and improved Greek society] (Athens, 1936), 205–215; Ioannis Metaxas, *Αι Μεγάλαι Κοινωνικαί Κατακτήσεις: Η κοινωνική πολιτική του κράτους της 4ης Αυγούστου ως αιτία και αποτέλεσμα της μεταβολής* [The great social conquests: The social policy of the state of August 4 as cause and effect of the change] (Athens, 1936), 132–240; 'Το Διάγγελμα του αρχηγού,' [The Chief's Proclamation] *Ι Νεολαία* [The Youth], no. 44 (12 August 1939): 1419; Konstantinos Maniadakis, *Ο Κομμουνισμός στην Ελλάδα* [Communism in Greece] (Athens: Ed. Ethinikis Etaireias, 1937), 3; Despina Papadimitriou, 'Το ακροδεξιό κίνημα στην Ελλάδα, 1936–1949: Καταβολές, συνέχειες και ασυνέχειες,' [The far-right movement in Greece, 1936–1949: Origins, continuities and discontinuities] in *Η Ελλάδα '36-'49: Από τη Δικτατορία στον Εμφύλιο: Τομές και συνέχειες* [Greece '36-'49: From dictatorship to civil war: Ruptures and continuities], ed. Hagen Fleischer (Athens: Kastaniotis Publications, 2003), 141.

67 Kostas Katsapis, ed., *Οι Απείθαργοι: Κείμενα για την ιστορία της νεανικής αναίδειας τη μεταπολεμική Περίοδο* [Persons as sources of 'social turmoil': Essays on the history of youthful impudence in the postwar period] (Athens: Ohto, 2018), 154.

68 Kouroutzas and Tzanaki, '[The work of Konstantinos Gardikas and his biomedical conceptualisations],' 25–40.

69 Ibid.

one in 1936 that left behind twelve dead and more than 280 injured. In short, by the 1930s it was clear that the nation was in crisis. Metaxas presented himself as an 'anti-establishment figure who could truly reunite a deeply divided nation beyond class struggles'. The regime's propaganda network orchestrated a pervasive 'cult of leadership' centred on the image of Metaxas as a gate-keeper, 'great governor' and a 'fatherly figure for the nation'.⁷⁰ Faced with this reality, the newly emergent discipline of psychic eugenics allied itself with the elites of the era and Metaxas's regime to argue that this turmoil could be resolved through a new understanding of social ills; not as a class-related problem, since Metaxas's image presented itself as above class and politics.⁷¹ Instead, all social ills now appeared as the problems of communists, and of vulgar women and men's immoral libidos. In other words, the mental health of these morally degenerate people was the cause of all social ills. The state's responsibility was to surgically remove 'sick' communists from the 'healthy' part of the nation until they were 'cured' completely. However, Metaxas's case demonstrates the increasingly intertwined relationship between eugenics as psychic praxis and eugenics as political, discourse geared towards the political engineering of a morally obedient to bourgeois ethos defined community.

Gender, Psychic Purification and the National Youth Organisation

The symbolic and political importance that the dictator attached to this psychic purification was evident in the emphatically affective language he used to describe gender roles and the way he viewed them as a means of fighting communism and parliamentary liberalism. Against the evils the nation faced brought about by parliamentary liberalism and the communist danger, that is the class struggle among politicians, Metaxas offered a recipe for harmonious social integration across social classes by abolishing political parties. This vision of society as an integral organism was to be achieved through the emotional, psychological, sexual, and gender adjustment of the individual. Its success was to be ensured by the benevolent rule of technocratic experts trained and housed in the leading bourgeois biomedical institutions and universities. The fundamental issue for Metaxas was the psyche, gender, and sexuality of the lower strata to the patriarchal norm because their behaviour could easily be misused by communist propaganda, making them vulnerable to commu-

70 Kallis, 'Neither Fascist nor Authoritarian,' 323; Marina Petrakis, *The Metaxas Myth: Dictatorship and Propaganda in Greece* (London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006), 32–64.

71 Linardatos, [4th of August], 99, 105, 11, 117.

nist abuse.⁷² Thus, Metaxas ‘performed a kind of magic trick: by waving the wand of psychiatric technocracy over a scene of profound economic inequality, he transformed the subject of politics from the owning citizen into a freshly politicised psyche’.⁷³

Thus, the dominant biomedical discourse considered all social ills to be caused by the individual’s psyche, which emerged as a leading reason explaining their inability to equally participate in society, while the expectations to which individuals were subjected depended on their gender, sexuality, political beliefs, and ethics.

The founding of the National Youth Organisation (EON), in 1936, contrasted with the School for Abnormal and Retarded Children established in 1937, as it was not class but characteristics that enforced the division of the population into ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’. In doing so, Metaxas evoked the ‘Third Hellenic Civilisation’: a vision committed to preserving a morally purified Hellenic nation through the foundation of EON, the only mass organisation of the regime and, even more so, through the ‘treatment’ of communism as a psychic disease. This proposition served only as the starting point of a series of measures involving, among other things, ‘efforts’ to protect the superior subjects-citizens of the nation and pursue inferior subjects without mercy. An entire discourse arose to legitimise these ‘efforts’, which gained ground by emphasising the significance of psychic and sexual disease as the sole explanation and root of social decadence at large. Within this framework of exegesis, Metaxas endorsed the idea of creating a ‘new woman’ and a ‘new man’; intelligence and abilities were now the new terms underscored as the qualities *par excellence* of an individual, responsible for his or her evolution, according (of course) to each and everyone’s ‘correct’ gender and sexuality, in other words, their ‘normal’ identity.

Metaxas believed that proper skills and abilities could be acquired by developing true manliness and femaleness among the lower strata of the society, while the sovereign biomedical discourse rejected the intersex gender and sexuality as abnormality. In other words, Metaxas and the experts of the era followed the dominant biomedical discourse of their time. Leading figures of the era proposed a series of measures for the control of the instincts of the lower strata, at the same time and for the first time, as highlighted by George Souvlis and Rosa Vasilaki, EON men and women were meeting together.⁷⁴ Moreover,

72 Tzanaki, ‘[Onanism and the communist ‘psychic trauma’]’, 7–33.

73 Zola Carr, ‘Medicalizing Society’, *Jacobin*, August 28, 2018, <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/08/mental-health-psychiatry-class-struggle>.

74 Giorgos Souvlis and Roza Vasilaki, ‘Αντιφασιστικές αναπαράστασεις ή συστατικές όψεις: Μια

by creating a cult of Mother Worship, Metaxas brought women into the centre-stage of political life and national discourse, in which ‘all’ women, as potential mothers, were integral to the nation’s prosperity, which combined to reinforce ‘traditional’ gender and sexuality values. This discourse established a new patriarchal order. It established unprecedented levels of control of the lower strata of society. As the Greek historian Georgios Kokkinos noted, in 1938, before George II, the dictator Ioannis Metaxas, the Archbishop of Athens, the professor of Dermatology George Foteinos (1878–1958), the rector of the University of Athens, and the director of the Andreas Syngros Hospital called on the state to become the regulator of the instincts of its citizens for the sake of the common good.

The State Becomes the Regulator of the Libido

This threat meant that the state had to set ‘limits and barriers’ with regard to ‘the individual’s natural freedom’, restricting his ‘animal’ sexual instincts to ‘combat the causes of the immorality’ and confront criminality in the name of the safety of the common good.⁷⁵ That is why, moreover, in 1938 Foteinos proposed the necessity of introducing sex education courses in the National Youth Organisation (EON).⁷⁶ Foteinos’s statement was no accident.

In 1938, this was preceded by the Athens Hygiene Exhibition, attended by 6,000 citizens and aimed at popularising the fight against venereal disease. It is significant that the organisers of the stand for the ‘fight against venereal diseases’ placed the photo of a syphilitic patient next to the photo of a patient of the public psychiatric hospital. Here they reproduced the sovereign Westernised European biomedical discourse which propagated that the real cause of venereal diseases was not, for example, the transmission by army troops, but rather was the mentally ill degenerate, effeminate, libidinous being who could not control his or her urges. In 1938, the law ‘on illegal cohabitation’ was introduced because, as the publication in *I Neolaia* [The Youth] (a fortnightly

αποτίμηση του μεταξικού καθεστώτος μέσω της προπαγάνδας για τον ρόλο των γυναικών,’ [Contrasting representations or constitutive aspects: An assessment of the Metaxas regime through propaganda on the role of women] in *Υγεία, Καύλα και Επανάσταση* [Health, lust and revolt], ed. Demetra Tzanaki (Athens: Asini, 2021), 257–281.

75 Souvlis and Vasilaki, ‘[Contrasting representations or constitutive aspects],’ 257–281; Georgios Kokkinos, ‘Κρίση, εκσυγχρονισμός, αφροδισιοφοβία, ηθικός πανικός: η περίπτωση του καθηγητή της Ιατρικής σχολής Γεωργίου Θ: Φωτεινού, των θεσμών που δημιούργησε και των πολιτικών που υπηρέτησε (1910–1940),’ [Crisis, modernisation, aphrodisiophobia, moral panic: The case of Professor George T. Foteinos: The institutions he created and the policies he served (1910–1940)] *Τα Ιστορικά* 70 (2019):141–164.

76 Kokkinos, ‘[Crisis, modernisation, aphrodisiophobia, moral panic],’ 141–164.

magazine published by EON) revealed, the 4th of August regime had inherited a large number of such cohabitations. In this context, the Greek psychiatrist Konstantinos Katsaras, professor at the Police Academy and columnist for the magazine of the police (1953–1983), also concluded, after the war and during the Metaxas regime, that the introduction of psychiatrists in the Greek society was deemed necessary for the sake of its mental rehabilitation. In 1939, the Chair of Social and Public Hygiene (έδρα της κοινωνικής και δημόσιας υγιεινής) was established as a branch of the University of Athens, its subject being ‘the hygiene of maternity, of the infant and childhood, eugenics and racial hygiene’. Katsaras, also deputy director of the municipal Athens Psychiatric Hospital, concluded that a world with different spiritual, mental and social perceptions would emerge.⁷⁷ The ‘race’ would have to be educated by scientists to control the libido and not develop psychological and mental problems. Education would therefore have to be based on the principles of ‘religion’, ‘fatherhood’, ‘family’, ‘duty’, ‘moral conscience’, ‘love’ and ‘solidarity’.⁷⁸ For Katsaras, the New Greek in particular had a hereditary predisposition to nervousness, having suffered many ‘shocks’ (persecutions, slavery, revolutions, distress, moral and economic catastrophes) since antiquity that created the ‘neuropsychic tone’ of the race and thus, trauma. Therefore, according to Katsaras, it was the duty of the ruling class to work towards the moral purification of the masses by any means necessary. In this context, the role of Metaxas would primarily be to create moral panic and the need for the psychological masculinisation of the people as part of adulthood. Thus, as noted, the regime involved the female population in EON because the goal was precisely to ‘cure’ the masses. At the same time, the state presented itself to be above parties and classes. This meant that it projected itself as the source of objective truth. Metaxas appeared as the omnipotent father for all, the first peasant, the first worker, the first young man who sought to cure his children from the mental, physical and psychological illness.⁷⁹ The means to this end was abstinence, work, obedience and a patriarchal regime that recognised people through the binary classification of male-female. Moreover, it is worth noting that under the Metaxas regime, the first surgical sex intervention was performed on a twelve-year-old intersex person because the father did not want to raise another daughter.⁸⁰

77 Konstantinos Katsaras, *Ψυχική και κοινωνική υγιεινή* [Mental and social hygiene] (Athens: Ed. Pan. Druka, 1940), 152.

78 Katsaras, [Mental and social hygiene], 152.

79 Petrakis, *The Metaxas Myth*, 32–64.

80 Tzanaki, [The persecution of intersex as monstrous sex], 100–110; Tzanaki, [Eugenism, sex and gender], 5–40.

On the other hand, it is precisely this perception of the Greek nation as coming-of-age that forms the framework in which the *Ellinikós Síndesmos Psychikís Ygieinís* [Hellenic Association of Mental Health] was founded in 1940. The Association was founded by Georgios Vlavianos, professor of neurology and psychiatry at the National University, and Nikolaos Exarchopoulos. Within the framework of the Association, Vlavianos published his work *Ψυχική Υγιεινή και Ψυχική Ευγονική* [Mental health and mental eugenics] in 1940. At this point Vlavianos was the first leader of the Εθνικής Σοσιαλιστικής Πατριωτικής Οργάνωσης [NSPO: National Socialist Patriotic Organisation].⁸¹ This was a Nazi and fascist organisation of collaborators during the Nazi Occupation. However, Vlavianos himself was acquitted of the accusation of collaborating with the Germans during the occupation by verdict of the Συμβουλίου του Ειδικού Δικαστηρίου Δωσιλόγων [Special Court for Collaborators] in January 1947. After 1953 he was working as a columnist in the police newspaper as well as in the Police Academy. In 1940, however, he stated that the association was founded to expand mental eugenic treatment in society, 'to apply the latest findings of eugenics, of psychiatry and neurology, of remedial education, to apply school health and general hygiene and other related sciences for the prevention of mental illness, for the preservation and promotion of the mental and physical health of the Greek people'. In this publication, Vlavianos also proposed methods aimed at the mental eugenics of the population: 1) the prohibition of marriage for the mentally ill; 2) their confinement in asylums, and finally 3) sterilisation treatments.⁸²

In the same period, a series of publications appeared by the deputy director of the Athens Public Psychiatric Hospital, Konstantinos Kostantinidis, on the need for state intervention in the correction of the libido. He criticised above all the anti-social character of the popular classes. He thus referred to Hitler in an attempt to return European societies to their moral normality.⁸³ Moreover, Metaxas himself took upon him the Portfolio of Education (1938), another indication of the importance of youth in the long-term plans to transform Greek society. Similarly, the abnormal, disobedient children had to be placed in special educational institutions, providing a solid basis for the taxonomy of life as a necessity. At the same time, an authoritarian programme of control over education aimed at 'normalising' people in such a way as to become psychologically, 'ethically civilised' human beings became a necessity. Within this discourse, gendered mainstream performativity was seen at EON and in the public sphere

81 Tzanaki, '[Crime, society, police]'; 221–226.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

as an indicator of mental health. Men were expected to be protectors, progenitors, anti-communists and masculine. Women were expected to follow their prescribed gender and the sexual behaviour according to their female gender. Finally, any other form of gender or sexual identity pertained to the sphere of abnormality.⁸⁴ The best tactic for social control was not coercion and exportation but changing individual sex education to inculcate bourgeois ethics. As a result, under Metaxas, as well as after the Second World War, the goal was to ensure continuous control over the individual's psyche, through gender and sexuality 'performativity bonds'.⁸⁵

Conclusion

Metaxas died suddenly in January 1941, some months before the triple occupation of Greece by the Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Bulgaria) was coming to its end. Shortly afterwards, Greece descended into a civil war between the communist-dominated forces and the US- and UK-aligned forces of the political right. After the civil war ended, postwar governments and the dominant urban biomedical discourse that had emerged during the Metaxas period took all necessary measures to develop the mental 'sanitation' of the popular strata, using sexist, patriarchal psychiatric stereotypes in order to realise this type of oppression.⁸⁶ Accordingly, the Eugenics Society was founded in Greece in 1953. At the same time, 'psychic disease', as a result of the abnormal libidinal instinct primarily among the lower strata, became the main explanation of all social ills.

This paper attempted to understand how this fascistoid regime came to embody not only the strategies but also, more profoundly, the meanings of patriarchal eugenic discourse over the populace. With this in mind, while delving into the general meaning of fascism after the Second World War, I have tried to show in this article that the Metaxas regime was indeed part of the fascist repertoire.⁸⁷ Furthermore, the history of the Metaxas regime, I argue, offers supporting material for understanding that eugenics—and fascism—was more than merely about producing 'healthy populations', based on a single

84 Linardatos, *4th of August*, 144, 145–150, 153.

85 Tzanaki, [The persecution of intersex as monstrous sex], 100–110; Tzanaki, [Eugenism, sex and gender], 5–40.

86 Katherine Stefatos, 'Engendering the Nation: Women, State Oppression and Political Violence in Post-War Greece (1946–1974)' (Doctoral thesis, University of London, 2012).

87 Papadimitriou, '[The far-right movement in Greece, 1936–1949]', 142.

and powerful authoritarian party and a mass movement.⁸⁸ Eugenics, as re-interpreted by the fascist experiment, was about promoting a variant of the bourgeois patriarchal ethical-psychic discourse of taxonomy over the lower strata as a sovereign normality, something that presented an ideological continuity between the preceding liberal regime, the Second Hellenic Republic, and the 4th of August regime. This discourse propagated ‘a universal science that could guarantee the psychic adaptation of each person to his/her role in the social capitalist order.’⁸⁹ In this sense, Metaxas was correct when he claimed that the values of August 4, i.e. psychic eugenics in organisational, political, or even gender and sexual identity, were a successful long-term goal.⁹⁰ Like reproductive politics, psychic normativity, gender identity and sexual education were governed by the biomedical, Westernised patriarchal norm that also shaped the Cold War era in a hegemonic way that continues to this day.⁹¹ In a (neo) liberal patriarchy, applicable knowledge, policy and rhetoric allow inequality to be firmly established as the core exegesis related to a supposedly personal engendered psychic germplasm.⁹²

88 Ibid.

89 Carr, ‘Medicalizing Society,’ op.cit.

90 Metaxas, [The government of August 4 ensured national security and improved Greek society], 205–215. See further for biopolitics and fascism: Nathan Van Camp, *Redesigning Life: Eugenics, Biopolitics and the Challenge of the Techno-Human Condition* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2015), 55–62; Sheldon H. White, ‘Developmental Psychopathology: From Attribution toward Information,’ in *Psychopathology: The Evolving Science of Mental Disorder*, eds. Steven Matthysse, Deborah L. Levy, Jerome Kagan and Francine M. Benes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 161–198.

91 Michel Foucault, *Subjectivité et vérité: Cours au Collège de France (1980–1981)* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2014).

92 Demetra Tzanaki and Christos Kouroutzas, *Φύλο, σεξουαλικότητα, φυλή, τάξη, βιοιατρικός λόγος, υποτέλεια και εξουσία* [Gender, sexuality, race, class, biomedical discourse, subordination and power] (forthcoming, Athens: Kallipos, 2022), 91–105, 203–218.