

**“Two Cents for Health”**  
**Health education and Anti-tuberculosis Stamps Campaigns**  
**France – 1920’s-1930’s**

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**Introduction**

Starting in the 1890s in Europe as in the United States, the fight against social disease took place through population education (Barnes, 1995 ; Bryder 2002 ; Teller 1988). During these years in France, to fight against one such social scourge, tuberculosis, associations that were made up mostly of doctors attempted to distribute information on health and hygiene (Guillaume, 1986, 82-88, 294-301). These associations produced *Instructions*, post cards and small brochures where rules of hygiene condoned certain behaviors and forbid others<sup>1</sup>. Due to a shortage of resources, there was little circulation of these documents, however it represented a new idea: spreading information to raise awareness of contagious risks while also providing the means of preventing them. Due to high levels of tuberculosis during this time the disease was particularly worrisome. In 1894, it was estimated that out of 10,000 Parisians, 41.6 were victims of tuberculosis compared to 17.3 in London, 22.1 in Naples and 22.3 in Berlin. In 1913 tuberculosis still represented 12% of overall mortality rates compared to 8.3% in Germany and 7.2% in England (Murard, Zylberman, 1996), 485).

The First World War worsened the health status of the country leading to intervention from the American philanthropic Rockefeller foundation (Viet, 2015). Already established in the prevention of social disease in other national contexts, the Rockefeller foundation imposed an organization model in France. From 1917 to 1922, parallel to the creation of dispensaries and sanatoriums, the foundation put an intense information and educational campaign into place. The inter-war period in France was nourished by this American experience. Even though the foundation left the country in 1923, it was established by this time that :

“we cannot begin an efficient anti-tuberculosis action unless the principles that govern it are understood by all, unless prevention measures are not only established by the law but also incorporated into morals. Only public education can obtain this result”<sup>2</sup>.

The focus of this article is to examine the conditions under which a health education policy was into place and the means of this policy during the inter-war period. Here, health education is considered to be the entirety of agreed efforts that were undertaken in order to instill the population with basic principles of health and good hygiene habits. The anti-tuberculosis movement provides insight as it offers us the possibility to understand how, parallel to institutional innovations, health care, prevention structures and health education were put into place and maintained. Anti-tuberculosis campaigns on postage stamps are, from our point of

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<sup>1</sup> The first *Instructions au public pour qu'il sache et puisse se défendre contre la tuberculose* were edited in Paris in 1888.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Léon Bernard, president of the Comité national de défense contre la tuberculose, in Doctor Jullien. 1923. *La tuberculose envisagée au point de vue social*, Paris, 10-11.

view, particularly interesting because they show us how hygiene principles were spread nationally while also turning a profit.

The first part of our presentation will present the “American way of fighting a social disease” in order to better understand what remained after the Rockefeller foundation left the country. Were the institutions that the foundation helped put into place innovative during the inter-war period? What was the approach of those who were entrusted with anti-tuberculosis education? This will be examined, in particular, through anti-tuberculosis campaigns on postage stamps that, starting in 1925, contributed to the spread of hygiene information all the way to the most isolated regions of France<sup>3</sup>. Our comments are based on an examination of archives from the Pasteur Institute coming from the National Committee of Defense Against Tuberculosis (CNDT in french), and also from regional archives in order to understand the circulation of the health educational model and finally it is based off visual archives, in order to see what was shown to the public.

### American heritage

In early 1916, alarmist diagnoses appeared showing the resurgence of tuberculosis, leading the International Health Division of the Rockefeller philanthropic foundation and the American Red-Cross to send a Committee for the protection against tuberculosis to Paris (Farley, 2004 ; Picard, Schneider, 2003). On July 23, 1917 the committee was set up in Paris in order to work on :

“awakening public opinion to ideas of prevention and organizing defenses, mass spread through an intensive public education campaign and advertisements throughout the country on the causes, means of spreading, the treatment and prophylaxis of tuberculosis”<sup>4</sup>

In order to achieve their goals, the American group organized themselves around several services that they progressively “handed down” to the National Committee of Defense Against Tuberculosis (CNDT in french) who, in 1920, replaced the National Committee of Assistance to Veterans with Tuberculosis created in 1916<sup>5</sup>.

The education that the American group promoted borrowed from propaganda methods. They resorted to a bunch of different medias, who, used simultaneously, contributed to making the disease visible in the country. This education was characterized by the multiplicity of images and mediums and the simultaneity of their circulation. Here, posters were largely used because they gave, through a series of images, a visual consistency to tuberculosis. Some posters turned to symbolism and used a war iconography. Other posters prioritized text over image. Each year some 1500 posters were plastered on city walls throughout France, like for example one entitled *Combating tuberculosis*<sup>6</sup>. These posters could also be reproduced on post cards so as to better circulate around the country. In parallel, short articles written by the Rockefeller Mission began to appear in the Parisian and provincial press, like for example, *How one becomes infected with tuberculosis* or *Tuberculosis at school*. At the end of 1918, 24 different such articles had been published in 33 different newspapers, mostly provincial.

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<sup>3</sup> It wasn't edited from 1944 to 1944.

<sup>4</sup> Bruno A. 1925. *Contre la tuberculose*. Paris, 20.

<sup>5</sup> Archives de l'Institut Pasteur (hereafter Archives Pasteur), CNDT 14, Letters related to the transfer of services.

<sup>6</sup> Archives Pasteur, CNDT 14, Letters between Dr. Williams and Léon Bourgeois, May 3, 1920.

The Rockefeller Mission's dedication to circulating anti-tuberculosis information was considerable. They put into place a traveling exhibit that was publicized widely by articles in the local press. From 1919 to July of 1921, the exhibit came to more than 1000 cities and towns from 53 different counties. The public seemed to be partial to it. One million adults and one million children attended the conferences associated with the exhibit and some 6 million brochures and leaflets were distributed for free<sup>7</sup>. The health propaganda targeted children as a prioritized group. A health puppet theatre was created in 1919 and presented by a small mobile theatre. The play attracted children's attention to the dangers of tuberculosis contagion but also to the devastating effects of alcohol, the other great social scourge<sup>8</sup>. In 30 counties, 67000 children attended these plays.

It is especially the "health caravans" that are emblematic of this health education that targeted the most isolated regions of the country. Starting in March 1918, motorized teams composed of a lecturer and a driver traveled through cities and villages to project and comment on films and hand out leaflets<sup>9</sup>. The arrival of "health trolleys" or "doctor tanks" as journalists nick-named them, was prepared by delegates of the Rockefeller Mission in France that met with municipal, prefectural and religious authorities. Cooperation among local authorities was an essential element of the circulation of health education. Local populations welcomed these shows and demonstrations with enthusiasm (Lefebvre, 1991). The mission also projected films produced in France like those from Mazo, *We must not spit on the ground* or those from Pathé & Gaumont (Delmeulle, 2003), *Wash your hands; don't wet your finger to turn the page*, produced in 1918-1919. Animated films were particularly popular, especially those from the artist O'Galop: *Tuberculosis threatens everyone, Tuberculosis is caught on the zinc*. These short films were centered on a single idea, as expressed by the title of the film.

In counties, the arrival of health caravans was conducted quickly with the structuring of anti-tuberculosis spaces. In Hérault, a region largely rural in the southwest of France, the arrival of the caravans coincided with the creation of a county committee on social health in 1921. This committee was in charge of combatting tuberculosis by creating dispensaries, sanatoria and open-air schools<sup>10</sup>, but also to accompany health education as the article in *Le Méridional* testified to while announcing the arrival of the American foundation: "The representatives of the Rockefeller mission have just arrived in Cette to accompany the work of propaganda for local committee for social hygiene's health education program. They are beginning to practice this education in public and private schools, they have access to the most modern and efficient resources: posters, leaflets, film and conferences. During this first propaganda, which will be conducted with children aged 13-20, they are also looking to reach people of all social backgrounds in interesting public conferences that explain to the audience everything they need to know about important questions"<sup>11</sup>.

The Rockefeller Mission therefore was a driving force in the organization of health education and its implementation at a local level. The innovative nature of their actions explained for the fact that they were so carefully listened to. Almost every day in *L'Eclair* or *Le Méridional*, articles mentioned their visits to different cities with great importance. For

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<sup>7</sup> Williams, L. 1922, « La fondation Rockefeller pour la lutte contre la tuberculose en France », *Revue du Musée Social* 2, 45.

<sup>8</sup> Bruno, A. 1925. *Contre la tuberculose*. Paris, 148-149.

<sup>9</sup> Archives Pasteur, CNDT 14, Letter from Gunn to L. Bernard, October 20, 1917.

<sup>10</sup> Archives départementales de l'Hérault (hereafter AD Hérault), 5 M 157, Letter from the prefet to the director of the Assistance and Public Hygiène, November 23, 1920.

<sup>11</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 157, *Le Méridional*, March 9, 1921. We find the both spelling in the archives: Sète and Cette.

example, on March 15, 1921, *Le Méridional* referenced a conference that the Rockefeller Mission gave to 60 children in Sète:

“During an hour, the oratory talent knew how to constantly captivate the attention of the children to this serious subject. Advice was given successively: “don’t spit on the ground”, “the war of microbes”, “learn to be clean”. To finish, two or three informative and entertaining films were shown. These conversations continued all week, repeated three or four times a day so that all the children in the schools could benefit from them<sup>12</sup>. The children sang, “I have sunshine in my bedroom” (to the tune of *I Have Good Tabaco*). It is a pretty song that is already in our streets and that fixes better principles of a healthy and hygienic life in the minds of young people”<sup>13</sup>.

On May 24, 1921 in Béziers, following a first conference for local nobilities and a large audience, two films were shown: “one scientific and strongly memorable film on tuberculosis and its causes and its damages, the other enjoyable and even funny symbolic film”. After, a conference dedicated to women on “childhood health and health of the household” was given. The festivities continued with a party and a Health Ball. Finally the evening ended with a play called *The strength of life*. “A worker from Paris contracted the disease by lack of exercise and fresh air. He returns to his home country, Corsica, where he regained his health thanks to a life in fresh air. He returned to Paris, got married and lived a healthy life”<sup>14</sup>. The audience, under a spell it seemed, left with brochures and post cards that were being distributed for free.<sup>15</sup>

Beyond the large-scale performances that were intended to attract the public’s audience and to interest them, health education that the Rockefeller Mission put into place distilled new knowledge among the population. In the conferences for which there were excerpts published in newspapers, audiences were given information that aimed to transmit medical knowledge on the means of transmission and progression of tuberculosis. Anti-tuberculosis education sought to make hygienic behavior routine and to condemn unhealthy or dangerous practices. The prevention of tuberculosis took place through the *adoption of new gestures*. *Methods that were put forward were based on the assumption* of a population deprived of knowledge to whom information could be spread, assimilated, interpreted and applied. It was not meant to correct or encourage profane knowledge but rather to instill gestures and habits based on an understanding of bodily cleanliness as rooted in social rules (Csergo, 1988, 31). New prescriptions condemned and disqualified certain practices that were from then on discredited due to the collective risks that they could lead to: no spitting, putting a hand in front of one’s mouth while coughing or sneezing, and hand-washing became signs of collective preoccupation<sup>16</sup>. Fingers were pointed at offenders to these new prescriptions and deviant behaviors were accused of causing harm (Bourdelaïs, 2003, 24). By doing so, health education confused personal hygiene with social behaviors. Here, the Rockefeller mission did not create health propaganda, which existed before their arrival in France, but they gave it an organization, technique and content.

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<sup>12</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 157, *Le Méridional*, Mars 15, 1921

<sup>13</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 157, *L’Eclair*, February, 15, 1921.

<sup>14</sup> Bruno A. 1925. *Contre la tuberculose*. Paris, 159.

<sup>15</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 157, *L’Eclair*, May 25, 1921.

<sup>16</sup> In foreign countries too. See (Blom, 2007)

## Lucien Viborel, the conductor

In April of 1922, while the American group prepared to leave France, they were transferring their propaganda and advertisement services to the CNDT<sup>17</sup>. This job was given to Dr. Alexandre Bruno, who after studying in France, worked at the Roosevelt hospital in New York: he was assisted by Lucien Viborel, who would quickly become the project manager of health campaigns.

Born in 1891, Lucien Viborel was put in charge of the mission by the American commission in 1917 before being named by the CNDT as the assistant director to the service of propaganda and advertisement. “It is the beginning of his career as health educator”<sup>18</sup>. In January of 1924, the International Health Board (IHB) offered him a grant to study in the United States “with the goal of studying the methods used in this country relative to social hygiene and the steps to take in order to acquire funds<sup>19</sup>”. The director of the CNDT, Dr. Arnaud, confirmed to the general director of the IHB, Dr. Russel, that :

“The innumerable information that (Viborel) has collected on your diverse educative and financial propaganda organizations and on your advertising procedures are extremely interesting for us, they can help us to a large extent to orient our efforts on a more and more fertile path”<sup>20</sup>.

This experience was decisive. Returning from his mission in 1924, Viborel became the director of the propaganda committee of the CNDT. The following year, Jules Brisac, the director of the National Office of Social Hygiene that had just been created, entrusted in Viborel “the implementation of an educative program from the National Office”<sup>21</sup>. “From 1925 to 1935, the year the National Office disappeared, I organized a campaign in favor of hygiene and combatting social epidemics”, Viborel wrote. While budgetary cuts lead to the dissolution of the National Office, Viborel was assigned the mission of “continuing to lead and to coordinate health education propaganda efforts”. His expertise went beyond French borders when he was named expert of the League of Nations (Société des Nations in french) by the International Institute of Educational Cinema and in 1930 as a member of the international party of schooling and social education by the SDN<sup>22</sup>.

In a few years, Lucien Viborel became the number one in health propaganda in France. He was given “the great merit of concretizing the idea of propaganda, to make a new science out of its doctrine, its techniques, its use”<sup>23</sup>. Indeed, Lucien Viborel theorized health propaganda

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<sup>17</sup> The departure was planned as soon as the Mission arrived. Archives Pasteur, CNDT 14, Letter from A. Bruno to Pr. Léon Bernard, October 22, 1918.

<sup>18</sup> Viborel, L. 1954. *La prodigieuse histoire du timbre antituberculeux*. Paris, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Archives Pasteur, CNDT 14, Letter from S.M. Gunn to Dr. Arnaud, director of the CNDT, January 22, 1924.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. This case is not isolated. In Spain, Julio Bravo-Sanfelieu, the conductor of the health propaganda went to the United States in order to learn some new method (Perdiguero, alii, 2007).

<sup>21</sup> Archives Pasteur, CNDT 8, Dossier Viborel, Titres, Travaux, Activités, p. 18. The Rockefeller Mission was at the origin of this Office.

<sup>22</sup> In 1945, Viborel is the director of the National Center of Health, Demographic and Social Education in the Ministry of Public Health and Population. Archives Pasteur, CNDT 8 Dossier Viborel. Titres, Travaux et Activités, dactylographié, 58 p.

<sup>23</sup> Archives Pasteur, CNDT 8 Dossier Viborel, Obituary, p. 2.

methods<sup>24</sup> and he popularized the idea with the goal of educating the public because “ignorance is the biggest factor in our diseases<sup>25</sup>”. He defined health propaganda as:

“The art of propagating, spreading, popularizing, and expanding the idea (...) its main goal is above all to educate and popularize the practical rules of hygiene, because the main goal of propaganda is to ensure conservation in a profound and durable way”<sup>26</sup>.

He was inspired by American methods, especially concerning the simultaneity of the methods they used in order to create a “campaign”. For Viborel, a campaign “creates, determines, impresses, seizes, entertains and precipitates” and it relies on a collection of elements. “The effort must be massive and varied. Each medium taken by itself does not constitute propaganda”. However, nothing seemed to distinguish Viborel’s health propaganda method during the inter-war period in Western Europe, where a collection of medias is mobilized to endorse social hygiene<sup>27</sup>. It was film that was particularly favored by Lucien Viborel. Just like in the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain, film was considered to be an excellent means for spreading a message because it was popular and has a certain emotive power<sup>28</sup>. Also in the inter-war period in Europe, film was used for health education leading to an intense production of documentaries (Murray Levine, 2010 ; De Pastre, 2004 ; Zarch, 2002).

Lucien Viborel perused the program implemented by the Rockefeller Mission. All throughout the inter-war period, he developed an active and coherent policy, created a favorable environment that favored new legislation and created services in accordance with the population’s needs, but also helped develop individual aptitudes for prevention and care. Postage stamp campaigns fighting against the spread of tuberculosis that Viborel imitated responded to this program.

### **The postage stamp campaigns**

Indeed, anti-tuberculosis postage stamp campaigns mobilized all the propaganda means to the benefit of an ambitious health program. The stamp was simultaneously an “instrument of health education”<sup>29</sup>, a means of raising funds and also a means of communication that promoted the health programs already put into place. Its work therefore took place on many levels.

The postage stamp was born in Denmark in 1904; it crossed the Atlantic in 1907 where it was met, like in Europe, with great success (Mouret, 1994). In early 1925, the Rockefeller Mission documented the propaganda committee of the CNDT’s American campaign using postage stamps without knowing whether or not it responded to a need. In October of 1925, the IHB granted a first funding to the CNDT to launch the stamp campaign in a pilot county. It was the county of Meurthe-et-Moselle that was chosen due to the advancement of its health and

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<sup>24</sup> Viborel L., *Les méthodes de propagande* (Rennes, 1936) ; Viborel L., *L’éducation sanitaire, science d’action* (Tours, 1944) ; Viborel L., *L’éducation sanitaire, manuel pratique et précis technique* (Tours, 1953).

<sup>25</sup> Viborel L., « L’effort de propagande d’hygiène sociale par le cinématographe en France », *Revue internationale du cinéma éducateur*, avril (1932), 309.

<sup>26</sup> Viborel L., *La technique moderne de la propagande d’hygiène sociale* (Paris, 1930).

<sup>27</sup> On media and health education see (Lederer, Rogers, 2003). On health poster see (Perdiguero, alii, 2005).

<sup>28</sup> Viborel L., « Propagande : propagande par le film », *La vie saine*, 3 (1923), p. 4 and « L’effort de propagande d’hygiène sociale » *Revue internationale du cinéma éducateur*, avril (1932), 310. For another example, see (Perdiguero, alii, 2007).

<sup>29</sup> Viborel L., *La prodigieuse histoire du timbre antituberculeux* (Paris, 1954), 28.

social advancement with the support of Dr. Jacques Parisot<sup>30</sup>. One month later, a new funding intended to “help the propaganda committee with their work, especially concerning those activities that, while having value for community education, would also have a certain value in raising the national committee’s revenue”<sup>31</sup>. This second funding enabled the financing of the stock necessary to launch the first campaign in nine counties<sup>32</sup>. Starting in 1927, the postage stamp campaign was national. Until the late 1970s, the campaign’s organization was appointed to the national stamp committee, placed under the auspices of the CNDT who also organized the International Conferences on anti-tuberculosis stamps.

In France, the stamp has no postal value. Indeed, the stamp with a surcharge, as it is practiced in certain countries, only pertains to a certain part of the population: “the postage stamp is not a means of propaganda and it can only produce additional revenue<sup>33</sup>”. This was not the only goal of the anti-tuberculosis postage stamp. Despite its small size the stamp carried a message translated in an image and a legend portraying the rules of *A Healthy Life*, to respond to the title of the CNDT’s review (*La Vie Saine* in french). Some titles of legends were, for example, “Of Light” in 1929 or “Cleanliness” in 1930 or another “Pure Air” in 1931. Even if the message changed from one day to another, the Red Cross on the stamps remained nonetheless constant. It was in 1902 in Berlin that the French representative of the International Bureau of Tuberculosis Prevention, Dr. Sersiron, proposed to rally behind an emblem: “the global fight against tuberculosis needs a banner (...) a rallying sign”. Their proposition, “the double red cross” was unanimously accepted and created a recognizable identity and symbolism for the anti-tuberculosis movement or “a symbolic expression capable of generating momentum and enthusiasm and maintaining this to the highest level<sup>34</sup>”. In 1920, the International Union adopted this emblem.

Campaigns were annual and this regular frequency was essential to the educative approach: “the experience proved that an interrupted campaign is very difficult to resume later<sup>35</sup>”. Furthermore, “to conserve the public’s favor” a short sales period was preferable to permanent sales. Finally, “it is necessary for the campaign to take place all over at the same time in order to create a vast propaganda movement in all of France that can benefit everyone”. As elsewhere, the end of the year period was chosen for sales not only because at this time correspondence is the highest allowing the stamp to be at its highest possible circulation but also because “the time of gift-giving means that hearts are open to goodness<sup>36</sup>”. In addition to stamp sales, one day in the month of December was dedicated to a collection in public spaces. People carrying trunks collected offerings from the public and in return gave them the anti-tuberculosis insignia, the double Red Cross<sup>37</sup>.

Since the first campaign, the national stamp committee edited *the week of anti-tuberculosis stamp*, a newspaper intended to link between county committees that supervise local committees. The newspaper provided the price of supplies, stickers, posters, leaflets and films and gave out practical information as well as sales pitches. For example, December 15, 1927, it was recommended to remind customers that: “Don’t conserve the stamps in your drawers, offer

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<sup>30</sup> Archives Pasteur, CNDT 8 Dossier Viborel, Titres, Travaux et Activités, p. 18 p. On Parisot’ activities, see Thévenin, *Jacques Parisot* and Murard, « Social Medicine in the Interwar Years, » 871-890.

<sup>31</sup> Archives Pasteur, CNDT 17, Anti tuberculosis stamp, Letter from the IHB to Dr. Arnaud, November 19, 1925.

<sup>32</sup> « Comment est né le timbre antituberculeux », *La Vie Saine*, November, 1937.

<sup>33</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, The Stamp Campaign, some answer after the Congrès (Lyon April 12, 1927).

<sup>34</sup> Viborel, *Le timbre antituberculeux instrument d’action médico-sociale*, Paris 1936

<sup>35</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, The Stamp Campaign, *ibid*.

<sup>36</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, The Stamp Campaign, *ibid*.

<sup>37</sup> Archives Pasteur, CNDT 17, The anti tuberculosis stamp, history, January 14, 1965.

them to everyone, circulate the greeting sticker everywhere<sup>38</sup>”. Each campaign gives place to the production of a pamphlet that was largely circulated. For example in 1938, the stamp of *Clean and Clear* explained :

“It is a message of cleanliness. To be clean and clear, this must be the first rule of he who wants to victoriously defend himself against the disease and conserve his health (...) To buy and use the anti-tuberculosis December stamp is to insure the health and future of our race. It is to contribute to habits of cleanliness”<sup>39</sup>.

The committee coordinated campaigns by mobilizing many medias. Posters on the walls announced stamp campaigns. During the first stamp campaign “the sun’s kiss”, Jean Rouveyre’s poem was read on the radio” “Give! It is health that your hand dispenses, collections to the sun, to the air, for childhood, for those who are being slowly consumed by the epidemic”. The CNDT’s posters were on all walls. For example in 1934 one such poster read:

“It is above all the organization of national anti-tuberculosis stamp campaigns that the physiognomy of our country has totally changed from the point of view of the fight against tuberculosis (...) From 1881 to 1934 the pulmonary tuberculosis mortality rate has diminished by 64% in Paris and the overall tuberculosis mortality rate has dropped by 59.7%. This means that from 1881 to 1934 we have saved 7500 human lives per year. 7500 human lives were saved per year in the fight against a single epidemic! Tuberculosis is in descent! Help us! Buy and help sell the “the defense against tuberculosis” stamp”<sup>40</sup>.

On the screens of darkened movie theatres, Gaumont publicized the stamp campaigns. In 1923, one such advertisement showed the frenetic activity of a rotating machine in a workshop that was printing anti-tuberculosis stamps<sup>41</sup>. On December 12, 1930, the Chronicle of the Pathé newspaper announced the launch of a Cleanliness stamp: “Let us practice using water constantly, let us practice hygiene, we must vanquish an epidemic of modern times, tuberculosis, and protect small children from this terrible disease, buy the anti-tuberculosis stamp in 1930”<sup>42</sup>. In 1934, the advertisements reminded audiences that “the terrible epidemic created many painful and often desperate households”<sup>43</sup>. “Two cents for health”<sup>44</sup> is not too much. For several days these messages were played in succession.

### Complex propaganda

In the field, the organization of stamp campaigns was faced with situations that lead to setting up annual experiences to respond to the demands of local nobilities but also the local population’s expectations. This also revealed what remained in the field from an ambitious health education program.

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<sup>38</sup> *La semaine du timbre antituberculeux*, 1<sup>re</sup> année, 17 (1927), 5.

<sup>39</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, Flyer of the 12<sup>e</sup> anti tuberculosis stamp (1938).

<sup>40</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, CNDT’s poster.

<sup>41</sup> « Pour sauver des malades. La campagne du timbre antituberculeux est ouverte », Gaumont News, 30 seconde, December, 1, 1923.

<sup>42</sup> « Chronique philanthropique », Pathé News, 50 seconde, black and white, First diffusion on December 12, 1930

<sup>43</sup> « Paris. 8<sup>e</sup>me campagne du timbre antituberculeux », Gaumont News, 39 secondes, 1<sup>re</sup> diffusion, November 30, 1934.

<sup>44</sup> Archives Pathé Gaumont – News, November 29, 1934.



On March 1, 1927, the president of the CNDT wrote to prefectures to explain their reasons for deciding to undertake a first stamp campaign in 1927 after the probing results from pilot counties while insisting on the funds that the stamps raised. The division of benefits among counties, which the committee was very in favor of because they contributed 90% of the revenues for the campaign in order to bring the anti-tuberculosis fight to a local level<sup>45</sup>. In 1933, 95% of the revenues came back to the counties.

In July 1927, the prefecture of Hérault tackled the organization of a county committee based on the model recommended by the CNDT<sup>46</sup>. Local celebrities that were contacted promptly accepted to participate in the fight against the epidemic. Several associations informed the prefecture that they were prepared to collaborate in the anti-tuberculosis movement such as the federation of lung casualties<sup>47</sup>. On October 7, 1927, the county committee met for the first time, their secretary presented the mission: “we have directives from the national committee but they are large enough that while respecting their spirit we can very easily move according to our ideas and decisions and after deliberations and exchanges amongst us”. They recalled what must guide their actions: “in the spirit of these promoters, the postage stamp is a good way of creating resources but it is above all a means of propaganda and community education from a health point of view<sup>48</sup>”. The county committee held its headquarters at the prefecture and insured relationships with local committees that were being organized in these municipalities. A significant pyramid organization was created. Exchanges between local and county committees were frequent: information, clarifications, evaluations, and follow-ups on activities, innovations... Each committee gathered the local celebrities within reach. On January 28, 1928, the mayor of Marseillan notified the prefecture that he created a local committee composed of members of the city council, teaching faculty, doctors and pharmacists, of the parish, and the mayor’s secretarial staff: “the members of the committee, each in their respective reach have spread the idea of selling the stamp and its deeply humanitarian goal in order to make large sales<sup>49</sup>”. These committees reformed for each new campaign. Their activities, however, were far from being equal. Starting with the second stamp campaign in Hérault, the county committee indicated conflicts in local committees, like in Castries and Montpellier, where the local committee was an empty shell. Personal rivalries, conflicts over the means of implementation, but above all over the management of the profits plagued these local committees.

In parallel, the county committee and its “publicity” branch had articles published in local newspapers that called to people’s good will<sup>50</sup>. They solicited competition among athletic associations, football groups, bullfighting associations, etc... They manufactured banners saying, “buy the anti-tuberculosis stamp”; proposed conferences that were then broadcast on the radio. Dances and concert halls were also used. The conductor of the orchestra was also asked to remind concertgoers to “buy the anti-tuberculosis stamp”.

“No medium shall be ignored (...). To put our stamp into today’s trend, it is necessary that the phrase announcing stamp sales becomes a leitmotif in which we

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<sup>45</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, Letter from the president of the CNDT to the préfets, March 1, 1927.

<sup>46</sup> Archives Pasteur, CNDT 17, « Le timbre antituberculeux, Instructions générales pour l’organisation de la campagne du timbre antituberculeux, Organisation de la propagande, organisation de la publicité », 15 p.

<sup>47</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, Letter from the National Federation of lung casualties, November 29, 1927.

<sup>48</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, « Rapport sur l’organisation des comités dans l’Hérault, 1<sup>re</sup> partie », July 27, 1927.

<sup>49</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, Letter from the mayor of Marseillan to the préfet, January 28, 1928.

<sup>50</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, Letter from the préfet to the redactors (model), November 15, 1936.

have room to expand. For this, an intense publicity, everywhere and by all mediums, will guarantee success. Well advertised, the stamp must succeed<sup>51</sup>”.

In the course of the second campaign, 6000 leaflets and 11000 small-format pamphlets were given out. Conferences followed by film screenings were organized: “education through anti-tuberculosis propaganda films is perhaps the most effective means, in any case, the most favored by the crowd<sup>52</sup>”. Radio shows were broadcast and a window-dressing contest was launched for shopkeepers. Announcements were made in churches while tombolas and village fairs were organized. In 1934 a contest was organized by the Montpellier merchants’ labor union to profit the stamp campaign. The lottery offered ten extra lavish prizes: a luxury automobile, a refrigerator and a fur coat. For young people, diplomas and medals were offered. However, “in the unanimous opinion of school principals, the prize of diplomas and medals did not excite the youth. We must therefore take modern tastes into account, especially taste in sports, and offer winners bikes, balloons or scooters, depending on their age<sup>53</sup>”. The following year, it was cameras, balloons, dolls and pens that were given to winning kids. This same year, the Hérault flying club also offered free flights to winners.

Stamp campaigns relied in particular on schools (Guillaume, 1986, 201), where they inserted themselves into all means put into place to fight against social epidemics, especially alcoholism (De Luca Barrusse, 2013). Teachers, in particular, were mobilized. The general elementary school teaching manual published articles that the national stamp committee had sent to them (Mouret, 1994). Here, for example, there were assigned essay topics, dictations, lessons on tuberculosis and the means to prevent it in schools. It was above all children that represented the stamp campaign’s privileged targets because they were instructed to sell them in their neighborhoods and networks. A small school guide that taught children how to solicit their neighbors was written for them. “Do not stamp letters and packages with the anti-tuberculosis stamp, it’s like committing a moral fault against one’s neighbor”. The guide explained that before soliciting the sale of a book of anti-tuberculosis stamps, the child must understand that “it is not about being an intrusive solicitor, but the servant of a cause for social solidarity<sup>54</sup>”. With each new campaign, schools received an illustrated notification on the theme of the year:

Well organized and well penetrated into the education that the student receives from their teacher on the subject of fighting tuberculosis, solidarity, the first of all social obligations and virtues, schoolchildren will find the best provisions for actively participating in the campaign<sup>55</sup>.

The moral report of the campaign from 1934-1935 insured that” the stamp carries its fruits to the schools, not only from the point of view of financial results but also from a moral point of view because it gives children a high lesson on altruism and solidarity and teaches them to love a healthy life in the open air to defend themselves against the social epidemic that is tuberculosis<sup>56</sup>”. It is, indeed, in schools that the mobilization was the most active. “Schoolchildren are the best propagandists<sup>57</sup>”, insisted the county committee. Some local committees suggested giving a diploma to “schoolchildren that have been the most active at the

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<sup>51</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, Rapport sur l’organisation des comités dans l’Hérault, 1<sup>re</sup> partie, dactylographié, 27 juillet 1927.

<sup>52</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, « Rapport moral sur le timbre antituberculeux, 1928-1929 », 86 p.

<sup>53</sup> AD Hérault, « Rapport moral de la campagne de 1934 1935 du timbre antituberculeux », May 10, 1935.

<sup>54</sup> Viborel quoted in (Mouret, 1994, 12).

<sup>55</sup> Viborel L., *La prodigieuse histoire du timbre antituberculeux* (Paris 1954, 87).

<sup>56</sup> AD Hérault, « Rapport moral de la campagne de 1934 1935 du timbre antituberculeux », May 10, 1935.

<sup>57</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, « Rapport moral sur le timbre antituberculeux, 1928-1929 », p 3.

moment of stamp sales. It is clear that a diploma or engraving would encourage students, big and small, to favor competition<sup>58</sup>. Children indulged themselves in a real competition: it was about selling the most stamps possible in booklet form (Guillaume, 1988, 201). The success was stupendous. In 1927, 3.5 stamps were sold per citizen and up to 4.4 per person in 1928. In 1928, 181,538,425 stamps were sold in total.

### Collecting funds in a competitive space

The anti-tuberculosis postage stamp was a fundraiser. At the local level the CNDT directives concerning the appropriation of profits did not vary. Resources linked to campaigns were assigned based on prevention priority: newborns, placements to children in rural areas, summer camps, placements of people infected with tuberculosis into institutions and creating more beds in these institutions<sup>59</sup>. Like in other European or North American countries, children were the object of particular attention and a specific care system<sup>60</sup>. The works subsidized by the national committee were, for example, the Grancher project that relocated children living in shelters where people infected with tuberculosis also resided to foster families (Becquemin, 2005). In Hérault, discussions relative to the redistribution of funds from the sale of stamps showed that preference also went to child protection associations.

The stamp being a fundraising tool, it was important to make the contributions and benefits of the national effort known to the public because “everyone must be able to feel that their efforts did not remain fruitless and that everyone knows how much the anti-tuberculosis stamp has relieved so many misfortunes<sup>61</sup>”. The CNDT urged the prefecture of Hérault to present the results of stamp sales without delay because “the publication of these numbers and later of the destination of the resulting funds is the best of all propagandas<sup>62</sup>”. Every year, based on county committee reports, the CNDT published campaign evaluations and presented the subsidies that they would be given to anti-tuberculosis projects in a brochure entitled *The prolific work of the anti-tuberculosis stamp*. They also published classifications of counties according to their contribution; undoubtedly to generate competition between them. Furthermore, every year the committee organized the production of several films to present the sales releases. Films showing life in sanatoriums or showing a typical day in a convalescent home were staged. “It was using this mode of propaganda that the population would understand the importance of the fight that we are perusing and that their generous anti-tuberculosis stamp contests is contributing to<sup>63</sup>”. In 1936, the news gravely announced: “there are times when human charity fights with the death of innumerable existences, the anti-tuberculosis stamp facilitates the maintenance of the sanatoriums, how many human lives have already been preserved by this little stamp?<sup>64</sup>”. The following year and up until at least 1939, the news showed prevention clinics set up thanks to the collective efforts to introduce the new campaign<sup>65</sup>.

However, the postage stamp campaigns petered out. As the result of the 1930-1931 campaign, the county committee of Hérault observed that:

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<sup>58</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, Rapport moral sur le timbre antituberculeux, 1928-1929 », p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> AD Hérault, « L'œuvre féconde du timbre en 1933 », edited by CNDT, 1934.

<sup>60</sup> In Canada for example see (MC Cuaig K., 2000, 157-178).

<sup>61</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, « Rapport moral 1927-1928 adressé au Comité national le 15 février 1928 ».

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, « Instructions concernant l'efficacité de l'effort par le cinématographe », no date, 5 p.

<sup>64</sup> Archives Pathé Gaumont, News, December 9, 1936.

<sup>65</sup> Archives Pathé Gaumont, News, December 7, 1938, December 28, 1938, December 21, 1939.

“We must note a certain fatigue has seized the public concerning the purchase of anti-tuberculosis stamps (...) A certain number of mayors in rural areas expressed the desire to see these sales deleted with the goal of favoring collectives rather than individuals, and they asked for a simple additional credit to the state and county budget for the fight against tuberculosis”<sup>66</sup>.

Some counties announced that they would not be participating in future campaigns, such as Marseillan, who still had the top stamp sales. Teachers also demonstrated their inconvenience before the demanded mobilization of stamp sales. The movement needed to innovate. Proceeds were linked to innovations: the organization of balls, tombolas, lotteries and sidewalk sales for which a portion of sales was given to the committee.

“It would be disastrous to see (the stamp project) fade away as a result of the public’s weariness. This is why it seems useful to submit the question to the national committee so that they can consider the possibility of new methods for circulating the stamp so that the scope of this collective humanitarian effort will not be dominated”<sup>67</sup>”.

The prefect of Hérault warned the minister of health to the public’s weariness and the risk of falling stamp sales. On June 22, 1931, the minister responded that the “circulation of the anti-tuberculosis stamp aims not only to raise resources but also to interest the public in the question of tuberculosis, thanks to a campaign organized each year in the counties under the direction of the CNDT. For this reason it deserves to be encouraged”<sup>68</sup>”. The response was clear: the stamp campaign has not only the sole purpose of fundraising but it was also educative.

It is true that many stamps were competing. The success obtained by the anti-tuberculosis stamp prompting other associations to launch their own stamp campaigns. For example, in 1931, the Federation of merchants launched a stamp to “help the unemployed; in 1938, after the Society for Encouraging the Good, it was the Health and moral prophylaxis society, the main organization in the fight against venereal diseases that launched their stamp “to save the race” (De Luca Barrusse, 2013). The CNDT, voiced by its president André Honnorat, worried about its competition. Honnorat wrote to the general director of the CNDT, Dr. Evrot, about this latest imitative:

“I am extremely bothered by this initiative given that it is my colleague and friend Justin Godart who is the president of the Society for encouraging the good. I am therefore obliged to send my subscription for a stamp competition. I know very well that competition is relative since the launch happened only after the conclusion of our campaign. It will not last less by boring the public by too frequent solicitations, we risk diminishing the stamp’s proceeds”<sup>69</sup>”.

Several times, Honnorat and the CNDT claimed the stamp monopoly to the minister. These competitions put a shadow over the anti-tuberculosis stamp campaigns by reducing the number of calls for generosity but also by exhausting local resources among associations of all orders that were constantly being mobilized for “good causes”. Also, despite being high, the proceeds

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<sup>66</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, « Timbre antituberculeux, campagne 1930-1931, compte rendu moral », 15 p.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> AD Hérault, 5 M 158, Letter from the Minister of Health to the prefect, June 22, 1931.

<sup>69</sup> Letter from Honnorat to Dr. Evrot, January 3, 1939 quoted in (Tronchet, 2009, 380).

fluctuated from one year to another<sup>70</sup>. The anti-tuberculosis stamp resisted its competition. Its historicity and the campaigns that it was a part of undoubtedly explain its success.

## Conclusion

When in 1958 Lucien Viborel evaluated the anti-tuberculosis movement, he made stamp campaigns the most probing element and his greatest success: “the resources procured by the anti-tuberculosis stamp campaigns were used according to a rational program, have strongly favored the creation of multiple means of fighting against the disease ranging from dispensaries to infirmaries all the way to sanatoriums and hospitals, not to mention the scale of preventative acts, treatment and post-cure follow-up<sup>71</sup>”. His work was not limited to fundraising, it was also related to health education: “under his influence, the reduction of tuberculosis-related mortality rates has begun and has not stopped intensifying. This has been exactly because of the psychological work done by the anti-tuberculosis stamp campaigns<sup>72</sup>”. This opinion was shared. In particular by professor Claude Bernarnd at the head of the CNDT who, in 1934, confirmed that:

“In comparing the curve of pulmonary tuberculosis mortality rates (...) we clearly see that the rates are diminishing for pulmonary tuberculosis than for general mortality rates and more particularly started with an energetic prevention effort being perused in France. This undeniable regression of tuberculosis in France is in large part the priceless victory of the anti-tuberculosis stamp educational campaign<sup>73</sup>”.

Using the statistics relating to cause of death at the time of the stamp campaign's introduction in France, Jacques Vallin and France Meslé estimate that at the time tuberculosis counted for between 19.4 and 23 out of 10,000 deaths. In 1935, tuberculosis counted for between 12.5 and 14.6 out of 10,000 deaths (Vallin, Meslé, 1988). The decline was certain and occurred at the same time as an intense health education campaign but this should also not obscure the development of health policy structures during this time, such as those that Viborel spoke of<sup>74</sup>.

This health education took place through the population's progressive internalization of favorable gestures conducive to personal and collective health. It contributed to spreading the idea that hygiene is a common, shared capital. Education against the tuberculosis epidemic was above all the promotion of health; the goal having been to make health a personal value and a collective good to preserve and maintain. Furthermore, this health education taught people about existing measures, preventative health services, care places and programs. It was therefore a way to promote health and at the same time to promote health policy. The stamp campaigns in particular responded to a double approach geared toward spreading awareness: awareness of the risks related to tuberculosis but also awareness of the policies put into place to end tuberculosis. The goal was to cause the population to join the national effort in favor of the anti-tuberculosis fight and to recruit people of all ages to this fight. The success of stamp campaigns and the simultaneous reduction of tuberculosis-related deaths bolstered the chosen

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<sup>70</sup> Archives Pasteur, CNDT 17, « Le timbre antituberculeux, Bilan annuel, cahiers de tenue des recettes », 9 p.

<sup>71</sup> Archives Pasteur, CNDT 8 Dossier Viborel, Titres, Travaux et Activités, p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> Viborel L., *La prodigieuse histoire du timbre antituberculeux* (Paris, 1954, 28).

<sup>73</sup> Archives Pasteur, CNDT 8 Dossier Viborel, Titres, Travaux et Activités, p. 26.

<sup>74</sup> For an local example, in Lyon, see (Dessertine, Faure, 1988).

health policies. The Third Republic in France had therefore constructed a health policy inspired by the American model. The long-term presence of Lucien Viborel, the head of organizations in charge of health propaganda that was confused with education explains the stability of the model and this despite an unstable institutional context.

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