

**PhD Program in Institutions, Markets and Technologies
Track in Political History (XXIX Cycle Degree)
Cotutela Italia-Francia**

**École Doctorale 113 – Histoire
Centre D'Histoire Sociale du 20^{ème} Siècle (UMR 8058)
Institut D'Histoire du Temps Présent
Thèse en vue de l'obtention du doctorat en histoire
Cotutelle Italie-France**

*Towards a New “Social Pact”: World War II and Social Policy in Great
Britain, Italy and Vichy France*

*Vers un nouveau « pacte social » : la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et les
politiques sociales en Grande-Bretagne, Italie et dans l'État français*

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IMT School for Advanced Studies, Lucca 2018

“E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle”

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Acknowledgements

These last four and a half years have been challenging and fascinating times. My PhD research has been possible only thanks to the intellectual, moral and material support of many people and institutions. I find it impossible to express my thanks to each single person who crossed my path in these years.

I have been selected as PhD candidate at IMT (Institutions, Markets and Technologies) with scholarship, under the framework of a cotutelle agreement with the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. My first acknowledgements went to all the people who believed in my project and thus made me possible to realize this goal, and to those who helped me throughout these years, both in Italy and in France.

I am deeply grateful to Sara Olson, Daniela Giorgetti, and all the IMT staff, as well as to Prof. Anne Kerlan, Valérie Hugonnard, Nicolas Schmidt, from the IHTP (Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent), for all the material support in my research. A very sincere thank also to Rossana Vaccaro, Barbara Bonazzi, Thérèse Lortolary, Eric Skalecki, Françoise Blum, Prof. Pascale Goetschel, Prof. Sylvie Thénault from the CHS (Centre d'Histoire Sociale), for the wonderful experience at the department's library in these two years, and for the help they gave me until the last days. In addition to that, I would like to thank the professors and colleagues with whom I taught at Sciences Po – Campus Reims from august 2016 to nowadays. I want particularly to thank my colleague Megan Brown, and Prof. Guillaume Piketty, for his time and advices, which went far beyond the simple collaboration for the courses.

Special thanks are due to Prof. Gilda Manganaro Favaretto, whose suggestions in the last ten years have made a decisive contribution in my academic choices. I also would like to thank my external referees Prof. Andrea Rapini and Prof. Michel Margairaz, for their insights on my dissertation and for the advices, which will definitely improve my work, and Prof. Domenico Maria Bruni. Special thanks to Prof. Henry

Rousso, who made the cotutelle possible, supported me in every step of my PhD in France, and provided fundamental reviews to my work throughout the writing process; without him, I could never have this amazing opportunity. I will never able to express enough gratitude to Prof. Rolf Petri, my supervisor but mostly my mentor throughout all these years, whose dedication and knowledge has been, and will always be, a source of inspiration and a real role model of how study history and do research.

My gratitude goes to all the colleagues and friends I met in this journey, in Italy, in France and even in the United Kingdom. I find impossible to list them all, but some special thanks go to two PhD fellow-strugglers, and dearest friends, Sergio Miracola and Samuele Dominioni. Besides, I dedicate a thought to all the friends and even only the people who has shared with me a stretch of road.

Last but not least, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to all my family. Without their moral support and their patience in my darkest hours, without their constant presence even though we were far apart, I would not be here. This work is entirely dedicated to them.

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Abstract

The PhD dissertation concerns the social policies in Great Britain, Vichy France and Fascist Italy during World War II. This work, however, takes into account the path dependences and policy legacies, and opens up to the further developments of the immediate postwar years.

The expansion of compulsory schemes, healthcare and other social provisions is an incremental process, but WWII provided the trigger for a qualitative leap in the political goals and extent of public social policy. The dissertation studies the policy convergences and the ideological divergences in tackling the issue of public social protection in the three countries.

The British universalistic reforms reformulated the “social pact” around the enhancement of the rights of citizenship, strengthening the bonds of social solidarity thanks to the mediation of the State. The coeval proposals in Fascist Italy and in Vichy France opted for different approaches. In Italy, the regime tried to pass a set of provisions to redefine the industrial relations and the income distribution. The Vichy’s ruling classes, instead, tried to recast a corporative order, spreading “occupational solidarity” in each industrial branch. In all these countries there was no consensus on detailed policies, while the common ground was the strengthening of the compulsory insurances; the administrative unification and rationalization; the incorporation of the social welfare as a core State policy area; the overcoming of the social unrest and social question through the establishment of links of solidarity among the members of the national communities.

The “total war” triggered social change due to domestic stabilization and to the ideological content of WWII. The promotion of social enhancement for a “better future” was a key point of propaganda. In Britain, the social plans were a tool to re-assert the role of the country as a leader in the postwar settlement. The military victory of the Allies made possible the spreading of social security. The British universalistic model did not become a model in the Continent, but its core principles fueled the postwar debates and plans of social reforms.

The study shows the intermingling of different processes at the root of the shift from the “social insurances” to the “social security” during and after WWII. On the one hand, some political principles and administrative practices gradually emerged, irrespective of the different political regimes and levels of industrialization. On the other, WWII brought about two different views concerning the goals and the role of the social protection in the modern societies.

Introduction

In his celebrated report, Lord William Beveridge declared that «the prevention of want and the diminution and relief of disease – the special aim of the social services – are in fact a common interest of all citizens. It may be possible to secure a keener realisation of that fact in war than it is in peace, because war breeds national unity. [...] to sacrifice personal interests to the common cause, [...] will be accepted on all hands as advances, but which it might be difficult to make at other times.»¹ The Italian Fascists were also aware of the social implications of the Second World War: «the social question is the main concern of all peoples; from the current conflict expect its solution».² Referring to the British *Beveridge Report*, they insinuated that it «had to promise to the British workers and soldiers a better future after this gruelling war effort. [...] the promises made to the British workers for the post-war are much less substantial than the benefits granted by Fascism even before the outbreak of this war.»³ Also in the *État français* – the official name of the commonly nicknamed Vichy regime – the milieu close to the collaborationist government considered that WWII had revolutionary social and economic effects.⁴ Putting a different

¹ HMSO, *Social Insurance and Allied Services. Report by Sir William Beveridge Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty, November 1942*, London, 1942, Cmd. 6404, p.171. Henceforward, we refer to this edition of the Beveridge Report, unless we mention other editions or translations of this document.

²F. Mezzasoma, *La politica sociale di Mussolini dal settembre 1943. Discorso pronunciato al Teatro Carignano di Torino il 4 febbraio 1945*, Milano, Edizioni Erre, 1945, p. 11.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ J. Winschuh, *Le Chef d'entreprise dans la Nouvelle Europe*, Bruxelles, Maison International d'Édition, 1942; C. Ross, *L'avènement d'une nouvelle Europe dans le cadre d'un nouvel ordre mondial*, Paris, Les Conférences du Groupe « Collaboration », 1941; F. Fried, *Les problèmes sociaux dans l'Europe nouvelle*, Paris, Les Conférences du Groupe « Collaboration », 1941.

accent in comparison with Italian Fascism, the Vichy regime tried to make its own revolution, which also had important social goals. The years 1939-45 were not only years of military and economic mobilization; plans to social reform were set up in the countries directly involved in the conflict, as Britain and Italy, and in those which were not, like the Vichy regime.

The British, French and Italian plans for social reform, meant as policy guidelines *for the postwar period*, and their use for the behalf of propaganda *during the war* represent the very topics of the PhD dissertation. The main question I want to address is why, in the midst of “total war”, these countries invested so much effort to propose detailed plans for the overhaul of the social insurances systems and policies. It is also relevant to carve out the terms of international circulation of these projects. As I will try to demonstrate, some concepts and practices behind social policies – to a certain degree – converged, whereas more important divergences existed in the public narratives. I propose that in the realm of social policy already by the end of the Thirties such common ground existed. I do not want to conduct my research in the field of the mutual transfer of policies and practices between “totalitarian” and “democratic” countries;⁵ in the very specific field of social policy, such contraposition is somehow misleading. I would instead support the hypothesis that, in a global perspective, some structural characteristics, theoretical assumptions and practical tools were common among industrialized countries, and crossed opposing political systems, in spite of the rhetoric of the primary sources of the time.

No wonder, then, that the “new” social policies also responded to some common criteria: the intermingling between social and economic policies; the end of the residual charity-driven approach to the social question, and consequently the crucial role assumed by the State in providing social protection; the unification of the social security agencies, the fiscal rationalization of the insurances and the administrative simplification of the services; the need to secure social

⁵ See for example W. Schivelbusch, *Three New Deals: Reflections on Roosevelt's America, Mussolini's Italy, and Hitler's Germany, 1933-1939*, New York, Picador, 2007.

rest (or social collaboration, according to different ideological lexicons); the aim to rebuild the “social pact” on a new basis after the 19th century *laissez-faire* paradigm vanished.

The social services and insurances would play a key role in the post-war period, as demonstrated by the establishment of the welfare state, according to new political and economic model. The theoretical design of the post-1945 welfare measures was in fact already elaborated by the beginning of the war, at least in its embryonic form. Only WWII, however, allowed the qualitative leap. On the one side, during the war new ideas penetrated the governments’ actions. On the other, the “total” mobilization for the war had a huge impact on the socio-economic and political systems. WWII became the trigger of elaborations that systematized social policy. This happened, to various degrees, in Great Britain, in the Vichy Regime and the Italian Fascist regime. The analysis of these three case-studies constitutes the first part of this research.

But the mobilization and the climate of “total war” cannot completely explain the “Copernican Revolution” in social policies that occurred from 1942 onwards. The paradigm shift also resulted from the gradual revision of the theoretical assumption regarding the scope and aims of public intervention. This already became relevant in the interwar years, especially after 1929. The changing intellectual framework in public policies can help to explain why, between war and post-war years, in the industrialized countries the topic of social security assumed such an overwhelming importance. This was certainly the French case: both Vichy in 1940–44, and the Republican parties in the post-war period set up plans for the social reforms. The ideological background of the two experiences was completely different. Yet, the common goal was to overcome the pre-war French social insurances schemes and re-organize at the same time the national economy. In Italy, the Fascist regime extended the social legislation during the war, without effectively mobilizing both economy and society for war production. After 1943, the creation of the puppet regime named *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* (RSI) represented Fascism’s last attempt to achieve a breakthrough in the socio-economic organization.

The British reforms – which represent the touchstone of the comparison – should be understood in the light of the country's maximum effort to win the war. In Great Britain, the theories of the Thirties helped implementing new legal mechanisms in order to manage the economy, especially since 1941. Ultimately, in all the three countries, the war created a climate favourable for radical social reforms.

Yet, I do not think that “total war” would make sense if used as a one-sided interpretive key. The concept of “total war” is *per se* slippery. In terms of mobilization, it is a relative concept for Britain, and does not apply to the Italian and French cases. Britain steered more than 50% of the production for the war and achieved full employment; Italy converted only one fifth of the industries to war production, with increasing levels of unemployment from 1943; Vichy France, whose economy was embedded in the German war machinery, did not directly mobilize its economy. These differing contingencies in the presence of *similar* long-term stimuli for social reform do not invalidate the causal link between “total war” and social change. Undoubtedly, however, they make it more difficult to establish a direct correlation between “total war” and social reforms; as social policy is a typically incremental process, its understanding is possible only if the influence of warfare is combined with a longer-term perspective, and only if considering the very content and the social propaganda of the warring parties.

Since its first formulations, the concept of “total war” was an abstract model. Carl von Clausewitz's categorization of “absolute war” was anachronistic with regard to the re-conceptualization of “total war” in the interwar period. Erich Ludendorff popularized the term, but its theoretical formulation occurred in Europe against the backdrop of the Great War's experience.⁶ In the era of the mass societies and ideologies, the industrial warfare involved the home front and domestic consensus. The label “total war” was mostly exploited by the

⁶ H.-U. Wehler, «“Absoluter” und “totaler” Krieg: Clausewitz von Ludendorff», *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, n.2-3/1969, pp. 220-248; see also the various contributions in section three of the of R. Chickering, S. Förster (eds.), *Shadows of Total War. Europe, East Asia and the United States, 1919-1939*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 151-253.

opponents as rhetorical device, and therefore care is needed when handling this concept.⁷ I will extensively use the definition of “total war” (in brackets) with a narrower sense. If WWII encompassed all aspects of the society, then the *ideological dimension* of the confrontation is a not secondary element of “total war”. The Second world war, as no conflict before, called into question the previous social models. The policy-makers were compelled to draft post-war reform plans and to account their public opinions of them. There were some constraints to the “total” mobilization for the war, failing which the States would have lost the home front; the limits did not only reside on the economic aspects, but also to the extent of the capacity to strengthen the adherence to a whole set of value system. On both sides, projects of socio-economic reform, linked to a new international settlement, have to be added to the consequences of the war effort. The reform plans also had to do with the rise of Soviet Communism, the other ideological pole and social model.

There never really was the clash between “democratic” and “totalitarian” social policies; at least, not in terms they were depicted by the sides in the conflict, later epitomized as historiographic commonplace. The frontline rather concerned different criteria to be entitled to social rights and benefits; the wartime confrontation made clearer the distinction between two approaches, which deployed regardless political systems. In wartime Britain, the social welfare was linked to the status of “citizen”.⁸ On the Continent, the plans for social reform during the war were instead associated to the traditional equation of the social rights with the status of “worker”, which also

⁷ J. Goebbels, «Nun, Volk steh auf, und Sturm brich los! Rede im Berliner Sportpalast», *Der steile Aufstieg*, Munich, Zentralverlag der NSDAP 1944, pp. 167-204; see also P. Longerich, «Joseph Goebbels und der totale Kriege. Eine unbekannte Denkschrift des Propagandaministers vom 18. July 1944», *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, n.35/1987, pp. 289-314; F. Crivellari, «Der Wille zum totalen Krieg», *Arbeitskreis Militärgeschichte Newsletter*, n.12/2000, pp. 10-14.

⁸ In a different path, also Nordic countries and the Netherlands yielded similar outcomes. On the Dutch case, see W. van Oorschot, «The Dutch Welfare State. From collective solidarity towards individual responsibility», *CCWS Working paper*, 41/2006, pp.1-3.

defined the membership to the national communities.⁹ The bone of contention therefore concerned different ways to understand the social rights of citizenship and the very concept of social solidarity. Only after the war, the European setting progressively contaminated itself with important elements of universalism. This process did not occur right away and did not happen with the same extent everywhere, but the older occupational schemes increasingly coexisted with citizenship-based benefits until the coming of the neo-liberalism, which changed once again policies and paradigms.¹⁰

While distinguished, before and during WWII the different models adopted similar political and administrative solutions. I will argue that social policies structurally converged in their extension, centralization and rationalization. This tendency was evident in the Thirties, and wartime innovations did not represent a radical break. WWII, however, offered the political and cultural climate to enact radical reforms and put to the test different conceptions of the social policies. In Britain, the new social security was related to the rights of citizenship, thanks to the universalism of the compulsory social insurances, which fell under public control. On the contrary, in the Vichy Regime and in the RSI, the social policy relied on principles of social solidarity along the lines of the occupational/professional categories. This setting, which traced the Bismarckian compulsory schemes, overlapped the “corporatist” narrative of the regimes, and resulted – especially in the French case – in a certain opposition to State’s management of the insurances. These ideological resistances made less incisive the reforms, but did not halt the progressive State’s handover.

Eventually, war radicalized ideas; social security proved to be a good way to build consensus and promote (moderate) social and economic reforms. With the victory of the Allies, it secured capitalism

⁹ S. Lanaro, *Nazione e lavoro. Saggio sulla cultura Borghese in Italia (1870-1925)*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2001.

¹⁰ G. Esping-Andersen, «Welfare States without Work: the Impasse of Labour Shedding and Familialism in Continental European Social Policy», in Id. (ed.), *Welfare States in Transition: National Adaptations in Global Economies*, London, Sage, 1996, pp. 68-87, particularly pp. 68-74.

and the democratic institutions. In that very specific regard, the war impressed a radical divergence between the *narratives* of the democracies and the Axis powers; the use of social policy as a tool for propaganda did not apply only at home, but had an important carryover also in the propaganda against the enemy. Notwithstanding the common grounds abovementioned, in the midst of the war both sides promoted two competing vision of the post-war settlement, where social protection had a role in both political agendas. Social policy was exploited to define the respective fields, and the promise of redefining the “social pact” after the war through social security and increased welfare standards was expected to ensure political leadership also in the international relations.

The very concept of “social policy” is shift. A general definition describes them as public policy that encompasses different areas: social insurances, healthcare, education, housing, social services. Some of these fields are directly related to the economic security (social insurances), while others address other human and societal needs. Healthcare and housing responded to different inputs over time, but originally had less to do with the extension of social rights. Still different is the case of the public education, that since the first formulations was regarded as a right of citizenship.¹¹ Historically, different conceptualizations of the meaning of social policy exist. They changed over time and geographical areas; the English definition of *Welfare State* only partially overlaps the Italian *Stato sociale* or the French *État-providence* which have no direct translation in English.¹²

¹¹ In the Jacobin Constitution of the Year I, the article 22 recommended to «put education at the door of every citizen.». See «Constitution of the Year I, June 24, 1793», Frank M. Anderson, (ed.), *The Constitutions and other Select Documents Illustrative of the History of France, 1789-1907*, Minneapolis, Wilson & CO., 1908, pp. 171-174, p. 171

¹² See the contributions in K. Petersen, D. Béland (eds.), *Analysing Social Policy Concepts and Language. Comparative and Transnational Perspectives*, Bristol, Policy Press at the University of Bristol, 2014, and particularly D. Wincott, «Original and imitated or elusive and limited? Towards a genealogy of the welfare state idea in Britain», pp. 127-142, and D. Béland, «Social policy concepts and language in France», pp. 143-156. For a general overview on the *Begriffsgeschichte*, see the essays in H. E. Bödecker (ed.), *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte*, Göttingen, Wallstein Verlag, 2002, and particularly R. Koselleck, «Hinweise auf die temporalen Strukturen begriffsgeschichtlichen Wandels»,

Social policy includes different fields. Each of these passed through the “Copernican Revolution” of the wartime years; yet, I focus on the three core areas that Beveridge himself identified in order to achieve “social security” as ultimate goal: social insurances (including family allowances), national health service and policies for full employment.

My dissertation deals with the paradigm shift that occurred in the political culture and actions as far as social policies were concerned. The combination of longer- and shorter-term views highlights its continuities and ruptures. During WWII, it switched from the haphazard juxtaposition of legislations, whose provisions had different purposes (ensuring the social peace, improving the national public health, demography, anti-cyclical measures), to coherent plans that linked the social rights to the economic security of the citizens and to forms of social solidarity mediated by the State. This was a seismic shift; while differences persisted and were significant, common grounds can be found in the three cases; this suggests, once again, that the development of social policy in the 20th century is irrelevant to opposing political systems. Both “democracies” (Great Britain), and “authoritarian/totalitarian regimes” (the Vichy regime and Fascist Italy) attempted to improve the coherence of the different social policy areas, and to widen coverages and bases of social benefits. Eventually, the progressive affirmation of citizenship-based social policy was linked to the tide of war and to the overarching mobilization for the conflict.

Social politics in historical perspective: a dialogue between historians and social scientists?

The historical studies on social policies have increased over the years, but very few carried out comparative studies, which are used more extensively in social science.¹³ Yet, the most important theorists

pp. 29-47, and M. Bevir, «The role of contexts in understanding and explanation», pp.159-208.

¹³ G. Ritter, *Der Sozialstaat. Entstehung und Entwicklung im internationalen Vergleich*, München, GmbH, 1991; P. Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of European Welfare State, 1875-1975*, Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press, 1990; A. Rapini, *Lo Stato sociale*, Bologna, Archetipo, 2010; C. Conrad, «Wohlfahrtsstaaten im Vergleich: Historische und sozialwissenschaftliche Ansätze», in Heinz-Gerhard Haupt

and scholars in the latter disciplines dealt with the *historical* development of social security, providing models to explain their growth.¹⁴ On the other hand, the historians of welfare policies usually verge on theoretical categories borrowed from social sciences. A refusal of trans-disciplinary methodological and conceptual contaminations would therefore be unjustified in the present field of research. It remains, however, at least in my view, that the historian can deal more appropriately with a certain interpretative level. Generally speaking, political and social sciences supply interpretations over macro-processes and trends, tending to privilege quantitative to qualitative analyses. These models are usually based on general and a-historical patterns of development. Conversely, the historian can make a significant contribution with regard to the deepening of the intellectual, socio-economic and political history of welfare, grounding the analysis on the primary sources.

The political scientist Hugh Heclo indicated four phases in welfare state development, brought about by the economic and intellectual environment. His interpretation considered the link between mass-democratic politics and the increase of social insurances; the role of the economic environments and paradigms in shaping social programmes; the importance of technocratic and/or intellectual milieu, e.g. public officers and civil servants, in encouraging social reforms.

and Jürgen Kocka (eds), *Geschichte und Vergleich: Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung*, Frankfurt -New York, Camous Verlag, 1996, pp. 155–180; T. Inglot, *Welfare States in East Central Europe, 1919-2004*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

¹⁴ C. Kerr, et al., *Industrialism and Industrial Man*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1960; J.K. Galbraith *The New Industrial State*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1967; R. Badham, *Theories of Industrial Society*, London-New York, Routledge, 1986; W. Korpi, «Power Resources and Employer-Centered Approaches in Explanations of Welfare States and Varieties of Capitalism», *World Politics*, n. 58 (Jan. 2006), pp. 167-206; G. Olsen, J. O'Connor, «Understanding the Welfare State: Power Resources Theory and Its Critics», Id. (eds.), *Power Resources Theory and the Welfare State: A Critical Approach*, Toronto, Toronto University Press, 19988, pp. 3-33.

According to this view, State bodies and public authorities were the driving force behind the changes in social policies.¹⁵

This interpretive outlook might be a blueprint for historians. Heclo could be legitimately seen as the forerunner of historical institutionalists. Neoinstitutionalism underlines the importance of *path dependence* to understand political choices. It studies policies in their historical perspective and through the emphasis on the link between institutional legacies and macro-processes. Historical institutionalism refuses all-understanding theories, even if its most important scholars are Marxist or Weberian.¹⁶ The lack of theoretical schemes leads to empiricism and to a focus on multi-causal and contextual explanations, stressing the historical perspective in the study of social policy. Although using frequently the comparative approach, these scholars link political processes back to peculiar country-level institutions, they do not imply a necessary convergence of structural processes, leaving room for the autonomy of political decisions and for contingent circumstances that determine institutional changes.¹⁷ Historical institutionalism highlights the interaction between institutional actors and the State over time, taking into account public authorities and bureaucracies, and various political and social movements that are able to negotiate with the State.

The concepts of *path dependence*, *sequence* and *critical junctures*, largely used by neoinstitutionalism, are “historical” by nature, as they focus on *time*, *evolutions* and *ruptures*. *Path dependence* describes either

¹⁵ H. Heclo, «Towards a New Welfare State?», in Peter Flora, Arnold J. Heidenheimer (eds.), *The Development of Welfare State in Europe and America*, New Brunswick-London, Transaction Publishers, 1984, pp. 384-406; Id., *Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden: from Relief to Income Maintenance*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 1974, pp. 303-306.

¹⁶ P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, T. Skocpol, «On the Road toward a More Adequate Understanding of the State», in Id. (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 347-366.

¹⁷ T. Skocpol, E. Amenta, «States and Social Policies», *Annual Review of Sociology*, n.12/1986, pp. 131-157. E. Amenta, «What We Know about the Development of Social Policy: Comparative and Historical Research in Comparative and Historical Perspective», in Dietrich Rueschemeyer, James Mahoney, (eds.), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 91-130.

the self-reinforcing or the reactive features of political processes. In relation with any *critical juncture*, thus, *path dependence* might explain why policy-makers chose a political path instead of another. Different choices are justified in the light of the political legacy, the positive feedbacks and the *sequence* of temporally ordered and causally connected events. The tie between *critical juncture* and *path dependence* is regarded at the very foundation of any institutional shift. It is not merely the consideration that any crisis produces stable political change; this latter is conversely conceivable only if a *critical juncture* is followed (and sometimes even preceded) by a *path dependence*, making institutions follow a new direction.¹⁸ The *path dependence* explanation, in relation with the *critical junctures* and the concept of *political legacy*, offer interesting insights for the historical analysis of typically incremental processes such as social policies.

A second relevant interpretation was provided by some neo-Marxist scholars in the 1970s, who considered the welfare state as a tool to reconcile social conflict with political consensus. James O'Connor emphasized the connection between the mode of production in the advanced capitalist system and the expansion of public sector and welfare schemes. This trend was characterized by the dual affirmation of the "military-welfare state" and of the monopolistic capitalism. According to O'Connor, the welfare state was part of Western advanced capitalistic societies' evolution, making such a pattern socially sustainable.¹⁹ The British sociologist Ian Gough considered welfare state and Keynesian economic policies functional to the development of advanced capitalism. He stated that «the welfare state is a product of the contradictory development of capitalist society and in turn has generated new contradictions which every day become

¹⁸ J. Mahoney, «Path Dependence in Historical Sociology», *Theory and Society*, n. 29/2000, pp. 507-548; J. Mahoney, D. Schensul, «Historical Context and Path Dependence», in Robert Goodin and Charles Tilly, (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 454-471.

¹⁹ J. O'Connor, *The Corporation and the State: Essays in the Theory of Capitalism and Imperialism*, New York, Harper&Collins, 1974; Id., *The Fiscal Crisis of the State*, New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 2001.

more apparent.»²⁰ His critique should probably be related to the crisis of the British welfare state in the 1970s, even if the author stressed the historically conservative feature of social insurances.²¹

These analyses grounded on functionalist reasoning; they studied advanced capitalism and the way in which welfare state addressed markets' deficiencies and coordinated increasingly complex industrial societies; economic growth, new demands in public expenditure (namely work-related insurances) and the need to secure the capitalist system explained the expansion of social security.²² Frances Pivot and Richard Cloward eventually took to the extreme this view in their classical work *Regulating the Poor*.²³ These theories are not exempt from oversimplifications; as the Marxian sociologist Göran Therborn stated: «a basic weakness of functionalist explanations, however, is that they tell us nothing about how and in what form solution to a functional problem are found. Here a historical, causal theory is called for, although it should never be forgotten that Clio hardly ever gets firmly caught by any of her theoretical chasers.»²⁴

The neoinstitutionalist and neo-Marxist interpretations offer two distinguished perspectives for my dissertation. Of the former, I retain the core concepts of *path dependence* and *critical conjuncture*; in historical terms, they mean that social policy can be understood on the long-run, *and* that major shifts occur in the presence of structural crises and political turmoil. The neoinstitutionalist theories, with their emphasis on the State, provide a good basis for an historical explanation of the evolution of welfare policies. In turn, a more substantial historical take on the subject could not fail to point out that social security became consistently and “ideologically” a public policy only from WWII onwards. Of the neo-Marxist theories, what is chiefly

²⁰ I. Gough, *The political economy of the welfare state*, London, MacMillan, 1979, p. 152.

²¹ Ivi. pp. 1-15, pp. 55-74 and pp. 128-152

²² N. Ginsburg, *Class, Capital, and Social Policy*, London, MacMillan, 1979.

²³ F.F. Piven, R.A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: the Functions of Public Welfare*, New York, Vintage Editions, 1993.

²⁴ G. Therborn, «Karl Marx returning. The Welfare State and Neo-Marxist, Corporatist, and Statist Theories», *International Political Science Review*, n. 2/1986. The State and the Public Sphere, pp. 131-164, p. 153.

relevant is the critical approach on the matter. Once social insurance schemes structurally took on the role of State policy, they also fulfilled the function of retaining the inherent dynamics of Western capitalism. Welfare states have constraining features and have been functional to rescue the Western Nation-States and capitalism from alternative models that arose throughout the 20th century. This peculiar aspect of social security systems underpins my PhD dissertation.

Studies on social security are a relatively new field of historical investigation. At present, overall transnational interpretations of the historical process from social insurances to the welfare state are still lacking. Usually, and legitimately, the process is treated as a collateral phenomenon of modernization.²⁵ In this brief account of some theories regarding the welfare state, I do not want to place my PhD dissertation under a certain model; rather, it serves to provide some sociological categories may form a useful theoretical background for my research. The related scholarly literature may help to build my working hypotheses, which nonetheless have to pass through the ordeal of the historical documents and sources. I do not want to merely confirm or refute social science theory. I tried to address this subject sticking to an historical approach, pursuing an exploratory research on primary sources and trying to avoid generalizations. The results of my research pointed at providing an interpretation of the contradictory path to the redefinition of social policy after 1945, simultaneously to the resettlement of public policies at home and of international balance of power. This happened in ages of growing ideological polarization at the eve of the «extraordinary, unprecedented, fundamental changes which the world economy, and consequently human societies, had undergone in the period since the Cold War began.»²⁶

Social policy is linked to so many factors (economy, political culture, international relations, employment structures, industrial relations), that it proves impossible to reduce this phenomenon to an

²⁵ D. S. Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus. Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

²⁶ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991*, London, Abacus, 1995, p.256.

unequivocal and comprehensive interpretation. My conclusions are just a possible explanation of the evolution of social policies during and immediately after the war. They resulted from a specific interpretive key and from a selection of primary sources, which does not pretend to be exhaustive. In the conclusions, I tried to take into account all the factors that led to what I would define a “Copernican Revolution” in the scope and goals of social policies, as well as the *limits and contradictions* of this paradigm shift, which are evident to a comparative glance. In Britain, the war years marked a conceptual revolution. Elsewhere, the timing and extent of this upheaval should be nuanced, even if the seeds of change sowed during WWII would germinate also on the European Continent. Holding the strings of the longer- and shorter-run economic, political and international factors complicated the understanding of the topic; in the same time, hopefully, this approach paved the way for further explorations. The key factors I took into consideration are the growth of social insurances as State policy area; the redefinition of social policies around the concepts of solidarity and citizenship; social security as pillar of domestic and international legitimization.

The assumption according to which welfare policies have always been purely State policy seems oversimplifying. The participation of vested interests and social actors in the political process has to be taken into account. A comprehensive historical enquiry could easily highlight the active role of mutual-aid organizations, trade-unions and their affiliates, as well as private insurance companies. All contributed – to varying degrees and in different periods, according to the peculiar development of each country – to the emergence of social protection *before* the birth of the compulsory schemes regulated by law.²⁷ In the present study, however, I will focus on the moment when

²⁷ Pat Thane, «The Working Class and State “Welfare” in Britain, 1880-1914», *The Historical Journal*, n.4/1984, pp. 877-900; B. Harris, P. Bridgen, «Introduction: The “Mixed Economy of Welfare” and the Historiography of the Welfare Provision», and T. Adams, «The Mixed Moral Economy of Welfare: European Perspectives», both in Bernard Harris, Paul Bridgen, (eds.), *Charity and Mutual Aid in Europe and North America Since 1800*, London-New York, Routledge, 2007, respectively pp. 1-18 and pp. 43-66; D. Beito, *From*

the States took over good part of the functions of former private and mutual insurances. From that moment onwards, the social insurance permanently became a matter of public policy, *structurally embedded* within the States' administrations. This change opens up some new interpretive and methodological perspectives. Since the former will be a major concern throughout my whole dissertation, I will not dwell on them at this particular point of the introduction. Regarding methodology, I briefly describe the character of the primary sources I consulted, and argue in favour of their heuristic value, before discussing the structure of my exposition.

Since during 1939-45 the States sought to reorganize the social insurance according to public schemes, I privileged a certain kind of sources: firstly, the laws, reports and surveys by governmental authorities, then official and private documents drafted by civil servants, associations, parties and trade unions. Similar political statements had major relevance in Britain than in Italy or in France; in these countries, the Resistance parties received the British social plans and reforms. The second strand of the research required the sources related to war propaganda. The agencies and authorities to refer to are still the Ministries and other governmental authorities for the mobilization and the psychological warfare. Alongside the directives for the propaganda, the surveys and the confidential dispatches from the home fronts and from the enemy countries, I also investigated the whole chain of the propaganda: bulletins, leaflets, pamphlets, posters, summaries of the plans, journals, newspapers, and – particularly relevant – the broadcastings. The means of mass communication were exploited to an unprecedented extent to reach as wide a public as possible with the promises for the world after the flood of the war. Conference proceedings, the bulletins of study centres and associations, as well as books and essays on the topic fell into the scope of the political propaganda as well.

One last remark concerns the level of detail of the survey, based on the archive records. As the research covers three countries in a

lapse of time dense of events and documents, exhaustiveness cannot be expected. The selection of documents that I have operated followed criteria of relevancy for the two above mentioned principal strands of my research. After the typological selection, a further choice had to be made regarding the documents eventually quoted in the thesis. One of the major difficulties in the writing was the necessity to concentrate on the most significant documents and discard many others, some of which are admittedly redundant. This is especially the case of propaganda material (e.g. leaflets, informational pamphlets), and journal articles (except some chiefly important ones, I have discarded them altogether), but holds also for the correspondences and provisional drafts of reports, laws, and other official documents.

As for the archives and libraries, the largest part of the primary resources comes from the national archives: the Archivio Centrale di Stato (ACS) in Rome, the Archives Nationales (AN) in Paris, and the National Archives (TNA) in London. Besides the State records, other institutional archives were fundamental: the funds Beveridge and Tawney at the London School of Economics (LSEA), the records at the Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent (IHTP), the Centre d'Histoire Sociale du 20ème Siècle (CHS) and the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC), and – in Italy – at the Fondazione Micheletti (FM). Besides archive records, I consulted other kinds of primary and secondary sources in the Central Libraries and research libraries, such as British Library, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze.

The dissertation focuses on the wartime social reforms both in terms of national policies and transnational circulation. As these are two different levels of analysis of processes that are intertwined and often hardly distinguishable on the level of concrete historical events, the organization of the text put some additional problems. I opted for splitting the dissertation in three parts. The first one sketches out the big picture of the social legislation in the three countries until 1939 and reviews the discussion on “total war” and social change, and to what extension this category is applicable to my study. The second section scrutinizes social plans and legislation in each country, and cross-

checks the 1939–45 social programmes. The third part deals with the wartime propaganda and its goals, reconstructing the far-reaching circulation of ideas during the conflict. The first two parts compares different but simultaneous situation, being the context of war the major common link in the second section. The last part opens up to transnational perspectives, as focuses on competition and possible influences from a model to another between war and early post-war years, scrutinizing extent and limits of the wartime transfers.

A similar division of the text implies different kinds of sources and different depths of analysis. The first part resumes the legislative and intellectual environment in Britain, France, and Italy. As it covers a period of nearly seventy years, this overview unavoidably oversimplifies some passages, makes a less extensive use of primary resources and eludes the details. The section on “total war” mainly leans on historical and sociological works. The following two parts are, instead, firmly grounded on archive records and other primary documents, dissecting in much greater detail the years of war.

“Total war” and social change: Germany and the United States (and the USSR)

Given my theoretical assumptions and working proposals, a few lines should be devoted to the reasons why two of the main Powers during WWII have been left out. Monographic studies exist on both Nazi Germany and the United States. On Germany, there is an extensive literature on different aspects of the social policy before and during the war.²⁸ Nazi Germany represented the clearest example of an

²⁸ G. V. Rimlinger, «Social Policy Under German Fascism», in Martin Rein, Gøsta Esping-Andersen, Lee Rainwater (eds.), *Stagnation and Renewal in Social Policy: the Rise and Fall of Social Policy Regimes*, New York, Armonk, 1987; T. Mason, *Social policy in the Third Reich*, New York, Berg, 1993; A. Süssmilch, *Modernisation and Rationalisation in National Socialist Germany, 1933-1945. We Must Create the New Man!*, Hamburg, Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2012; G. Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries. Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State*, New York, Holt Publishers, 2005; D. Liebscher, *Freude und Arbeit. Zur internationalen Freizeit- und Sozialpolitik des faschistischen Italien und des NS-regimes*, Köln, SH-Verlag, 2009; S. Schröder, *Sozialpolitik im “Dritten Reich”. Eine Bewertung der sozialen Entwicklung in Deutschland ab 1933 im Kontext der wirtschaftlichen Situation*, Friedrich Schiller-Universität Jena, Studienarbeit, 2007.

advanced social system in a highly industrialized country committed to “total war”.²⁹ The Nazi regime was also the major target for the Allies. The Germans, for their part, showed the awareness that the confrontation concerned also social policy. The *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (DAP, the German Labour Front) elaborated a comprehensive plan of social reforms, which was extremely expensive and which moved on universalistic lines.³⁰

The United States were the other benchmark. Roosevelt’s *New Deal* in the Thirties represented a turn in the way to conceive the relationship between State and society, and the relation between government and economy.³¹ As for the 1942 project of Robert Ley in Germany, also the US proposed “their own” *Beveridge Report*. In 1943 the *American National Resources Planning Board* came out with a thorough project of social insurance reform, nicknamed the “American Beveridge Plan”.³² Even in the American case, the drafting of these projects implied a certain degree of competition with Britain for taking the lead of the post-war world. This leadership was also grounded on the promise to guarantee greater security and a higher standard of life.

Both practical and interpretive aspects suggested to leave Germany and the United States out of my comparison. From a practical point of view, it would have been hardly affordable to hold the strings of a comparison over five countries, without lowering the quality of the

²⁹ A. Tooze, J. Martin, «The Economics of the War with Nazi Germany», in Adam Tooze, Michael Geyer (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Second World War. Vol. III. Total War: Economy, Society, and Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 27-55; A. Tooze, «No Room for Miracles. German Industrial Outputs in World War II Reassessed», *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, n.3/2005, pp. 439-464.

³⁰ M. H. Geyer, «Social Rights and Citizenship during World War II», in Id. (ed.), *Two Cultures of Rights. The Quest for Inclusion and Participation in Modern America and Germany*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 144-149; M. Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe*, London, Allen Lane, 2008, p.123.

³¹ M. Vaudagna (ed.), *Il New Deal*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1981; K. K. Patel, *The New Deal: A Global History*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2016.

³² M. Vaudagna, «Social Protection and the Promise of a Secure Future in Wartime Europe and America», in Id. *The New Deal and the American Welfare State. Essays from a Transatlantic Perspective (1933-1945)*, New York, Otto Editions, 2014, pp. 275-294, pp. 292-294.

work with the documents. As a result, the comparison most probably would have led to a less meaningful historical analysis. However, the archive records convey the idea of an important wartime circulation of the social programmes in both countries. There is room for further improvement of the transnational perspective on the subject, whether considering the opposition between the Anglo-Saxon projects and the German social plans, or the transatlantic transfers. Such an enlargement of scope could provide perhaps the big picture of the shifting social policies during WWII, with its consequences after the war, even if “smaller” actors, such as the Scandinavian countries and others, should not be forgotten.

As for Germany and the US, the other Power left out of the comparison is the USSR.³³ Soviet Russia was the “spectre” that haunted the debates on the post-war social protection, more as an ideological bogey than for the detailed policies. The references to Soviet Russia were recurring in the British and in the Italian or French documents; the confrontation with Bolshevism affected, to differing degrees, the policy-makers in these countries. The sources I consulted suggest that Soviet Communism was feared by the European ruling classes because embodied the class struggle and social strife, rather than a clear “model” in opposition to which elaborate social policies. At first glance, it seems that Soviet Russia got partially cut off the international network of studies, surveys and flow of information in Europe and between the shores of the Atlantic.

The intention to include Germany and US in this big picture is still valid, but it might be a possible track for further improvement and a subsequent extension of this project, or as brand-new research. Especially the second part of the thesis, grounded on wartime circulations, leaves the door open to further developments. In the light of recent historiographic trends on the transnational welfare studies, on

³³ K. Duncan, «Social Insurance in the Soviet Union», *The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 178, 1935, pp. 181-189; G. V. Rimlinger, *Welfare Policy and Industrialization in Europe, America, and Russia*, New York, Wiley, 1971; D. Caroli, *Un welfare state senza benessere. Insegnanti, impiegati, operai e contadini nel sistema di previdenza sociale dell'Unione Sovietica*, Macerata, EUM, 2008.

which I will dwell more diffusely, I intend my dissertation as a first provisional step. I hope that my work might make a small contribution in the further deepening of a “global” perspective on social policies in the crucial years of the Second world war and in the decade immediately after the conflict. Such approach might allow to open up some perspectives in the understanding of the 20th century evolution of the welfare policies.

From social insurance to the welfare state: a crooked path

The present research deals with a “Copernican Revolution” in social policies that progressively elapsed in Europe between the interwar period and accelerated dramatically during and after WWII. My investigation concerns both political and economic history, and looks simultaneously at political and structural change. Both for the Allies and the Axis and their satellites, the emphasis on the social reforms constituted at once a measure of public policy and an unavoidable necessity related to the war. On the one side, the propaganda and the plans for the post-war recovery aimed at strengthening the political and social consensus on the home front; on the other, social security was exploited to project the own social models abroad. There is, for example, documentary evidence that, while the British addressed their social propaganda against the Axis powers, the underlying confrontation was already directed against the USSR, in view of the coming post-war international and domestic order. If the Allies could crush Nazism and Fascism, this was also due to the successful mobilization of their societies based on the promise of a better world. The social insurances represented a relevant part of the political programme to ensure the “four freedoms” that the President Franklin Delano Roosevelt promised to achieve in the aftermath of the war: freedom of speech and worship, and freedom from want and fear.³⁴

The post-war Western welfare state was strongly associated with the development of inclusive and democratic societies. Since its embryonic wartime formulation, social security was expected to

³⁴F. D. Roosevelt, 1941 *State of the Union Address “The Four Freedoms”*. Discourse pronounced on January 6th, 1941, pp. 20-21.

contribute to increase wealth and economic growth. Providing higher levels of productivity and standards of living formed, according to the economic historian Herman Van der Wee, «a central plank in post-war government programmes. Growth became a frontier, even an obsession.»³⁵ Growth and welfare did not simply constitute an ideology; they were also expected to secure the international order, enforce capitalism and ensure social harmony in the Western European countries. Later, this model of “welfare capitalism” combined social and employment policies with the unforeseen economic growth. In that sense, it went beyond the original intentions of the social reformers of the 1930s and 1940s. It was even further enhanced as the confrontation with Soviet Russia peaked. The welfare state did not only conform to the functional requirements of the advanced capitalist mode of production, but also to the eminently political need to ensure socio-political consensus.

The subject of the social insurances calls into question the overall evolution of the public policies in the modern industrial countries. I tried to not indulge in any sort of *Whig* interpretation, explaining the establishment of the welfare state in Britain (and, later, in the Continent) as the “natural” outcome of the British political culture.³⁶ This was the view of the British social reformists at that time, biased by their political commitment in the midst of “total war”. Historiography should keep a distance from what political sources said. The incremental nature of social policy and the concepts of *path dependence* does not automatically imply the existence of a “straight path” to the welfare state as it eventually deployed. As I will argue in my dissertation, the *conjunctural rupture* involved the political aims of social policies even before than their administrative functioning; before the war, few elements seemed to suggest the radical turn enacted after 1945.

³⁵ H. Van der Wee, *Prosperity and Upheaval: The World Economy, 1945-1980*, Berkley, University of California Press, 1987, p. 35, see also pp. 32-36

³⁶ Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History*, London, Bell, 1931; see also Michael Bentley, *Modern Historiography: An Introduction*, Abingdon-New York, Routledge, 1999, pp. 62-70.

The comparative and transnational analysis is useful because allows to grasp the complexity of simultaneously overlapping different processes behind social welfare legislations. We cannot know for sure, of course, whether the evolution of the social security systems would have taken a similar path without the outbreak of the war. I think that most probably they would have not. To me, it seems that the tragic events through which the social security reforms passed call into question the idyllic visions of a linear path towards the welfare state. In fact, various *critical junctures* determined the paradigm shift: the Great Depression and mass unemployment in most capitalist countries; the alternative proposals by the Nazi-Fascist models to turn to full employment and tackle the conflicts between capital and labour, which then were defeated by the force of arms rather than collapsing because of their inherent inconsistencies; the permanent bogey of Soviet Communism and communist movements in the Western countries; the exceptional conditions and hardships of the war.

After going through all these upheavals, the capitalist countries in the Western world were able to deploy a new model of development. According to different scholars, it has been defined “welfare capitalism”, “mixed economy”, “organized capitalism”, “neo-corporatist”.³⁷ Nowadays, welfare state is a permanent feature of modern capitalist States, pretty much regardless their socio-economic, political and cultural orientations. Its consistent retrenchment is unlikely, although this goal, already proposed by Thatcherism and neoliberalism, is still on the political agenda in Europe, under the hegemony of the ordoliberals and their austerity plans and spending cuts. The structural adjustment plans put pressure on social expenditure and they may affect social welfare in the long-run. The current model of capitalism seems to undergo a structural crisis which in many regards is comparable to that of the Thirties, as it similarly

³⁷G. Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Western Capitalism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990; J. Cronin, *The Politics of State Expansion. War, State and Society in Twentieth Century Britain*, New York, Routledge, 1991; G. D. Buckwitz, *America's Welfare State: From Roosevelt to Reagan*, Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 1991; P. Schmitter, «Still the Century of Corporatism?», *The Review of Politics*, n.1, 1974, pp. 85-131.

called into question the hegemonic policies and discourses. The parallelism ends there; the paradigm shift after 1945 resulted from upheavals and military-ideological confrontations that compelled the Western ruling classes to reformulate their policies, and to establish a link between economic growth, redistribution of wealth and social welfare. Nowadays, while the austerity policies persist with the support of the left and the right, free market, redistributive policies, economic wealth and public social welfare are almost completely falling apart.

Between the end of the Second World War and the coming of the neoliberal globalization, the “social pact” of solidarity and the welfare policies in Western Europe relied on some political and structural assumptions; the democratic forms of representation of the popular sovereignty within the Nation-state, and the Taylorism-Fordism as productive model. The new paradigm’s features have been defined by the sociologist Colin Crouch as the «democratic moment around the mid-point of the 20th century». ³⁸ According to him, the advanced capitalist countries lumped together economic development, democratic inclusiveness and social compromise between capitalist business and working class. Since the 1980s, the affirmation of the “global capitalism” depleted the institutions forged after the war and narrowed the social bases of the democracies towards forms of “supranational” oligarchy. The “post-democracy” impacted on every level on society and politics, calling into questions some issues that transcend the welfare state as a mere “policy”. It questions the concept of citizenship and the limits of the democratic and national sphere of action.

Crouch’s arguments do not differ from those of Zygmunt Bauman or Ulrich Beck, who captured the changes in the social identities and the erosion of the functions of the “classic” welfare states. ³⁹ They ensured domestic and international stabilization after WWII; yet, in our current new order led by growing insecurity and

³⁸ C. Crouch, *Coping with Post-democracy*, London, Fabian Society, 2000, p. 4.

³⁹ Z. Bauman, *Work, consumerism and the new poor*, Maidenhead-New York, Open University Press, 2005, particularly pp. 45-86.

risks, the political legitimization of the welfare systems has been put under attack. The “collectivization” of the individual risks and the establishment of “national” social solidarity, is being replaced by new forms of “individualization” of the social inequalities and the supranationalisation of what Beck defines the “global risk society”; the “post-modernity” strips the Nation-states of their older functions.⁴⁰ Under the pressure of the two rushes to the “global” and to the “individual”, the concept of “welfare citizenship” as asserted after 1945 crumbled; new risks and new needs emerge as the economic and political bases of the welfare states are undermined. The rise of ethnic minorities and new social actors, the changing forms of “work”, the decline of the mass parties, alongside the pre-eminence of global corporations, and of austerity ideology in the international organizations; all these factors contributed to the fragmentation of the welfare state.⁴¹ It is not merely a matter of retrenchment of social expenditure or austerity reforms; the path of the “post-modern” welfare state seems even more crooked than before. Its true nature apparently is the depletion of welfare states’ political scope in the definition of the “social pact” and social rights.

Not unlike the “post-democratic” representative institutions, the welfare states are not withdrawn. The political scientist Paul Pierson underlined how welfare states created a transversal “consensus” and socio-political constituencies: the recipients of the social benefits and the administrative structures. Their interests can be hardly eradicated from the democratic arena, which by nature would tend to preserve the acquired rights.⁴² But the “involution” of welfare

⁴⁰ U. Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London, Sage, 1992.

⁴¹ J. Carter, (ed.), *Postmodernity and the Fragmentation of Welfare*, London-New York, Routledge, 1998, and particularly the contribution of J. Carter, «Studying social policy after modernity», pp. 15-30; S. Croft, P. Beresford, «Postmodernity and the future of welfare. Whose critiques, whose social policy?», pp.103-117; A. Cochrane, «Globalisation, fragmentation and local welfare citizenship», pp. 252-266.

⁴² P. Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State? Reagan, Thatcher and the Politics of Retrenchment*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994; Id., «Coping with Permanent Austerity: Welfare State Restructuring in Affluent Democracies», in Id. (edited by), *The New Politics of the Welfare State*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 410-456.

states might occur in other respects; for instance, by reducing the whole issue of its reform to a mere problem of public accounts. Welfare states lost their political significance in terms of social citizenship and solidarity, whose affirmation during and immediately after WWII is at the core of my dissertation. The Great Recession started in 2008 seems to confirm how the welfare state lost political centrality. No other policy and idea could apparently challenge the dominant neoliberal/ordoliberal austerity.

Scholarly studies have just started studying the functioning and effects of the austerity agenda in Europe; the politics of welfare expenditure's retrenchment is apparently less coherent and more contradictory than one might expect.⁴³ What seems to converge is the incapacity of the traditional political and social actors (State's bureaucracies, parties, trade unions, business) to rethink the welfare policies in the "post-modern" and "post-industrial" societies outside the austerity paradigm. It has to be seen – and this probably will be the main issue of the next years, in spite of this apparent political deadlock – whether Western capitalism will be another time able to rejuvenate itself, and Western democracies to assert a new social pact, just as they did between World War II and the postwar "Golden Age".

⁴³ P. Taylor-Gooby, B. Leruth, H. Chung, *After Austerity: Welfare State Transformation in Europe after the Great Recession*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017; K. van Kersbergen, B. Vis, A. Hemerijck, «The Great Recession and Welfare State Reform: Is Retrenchment Really the Only Game Left in Town?», *Social Policy & Administration*, n.48/2014, pp. 883-904; see also the articles in the thematic issue of *Intereconomics. Review of European Economic Policy*, n.4/2012, special issue Forum: The Welfare State After the Great Recession; J. Kiess, et Al., «Path dependency and convergence of three worlds of welfare policy during the Great Recession: UK, Germany, and Sweden», *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, n.1/2017, pp. 1-17.

Part One. Overview.

1. The “long waves” of social politics: from the origins to World War II

“History matters” even when social scientists study the welfare states.⁴⁴ Different approaches tackled the subject in the long-run perspective, studying the variations over time and the phases in the development of social insurances.⁴⁵ Heclo identified four steps in the achievement of a comprehensive welfare state. The first stage, from 1870 to 1920, was characterized by the “experimentation”, as the States provided the first social insurances and residual social interventions for the poor. It was reinforced by the second phase, shaped by the impact of the economic crisis and the rise of totalitarian regimes. The aftermaths of the war led to a new “consensus” towards social security, which did not envisage the modern post-war welfare state yet. For Heclo, this was still the stage of *social policies*, which had anyway in embryo the key elements of the *welfare state*. The latter was favoured by an unexpected period of economic growth and by an intensified public commitment for full employment and prevailingly pro-welfare intellectual framework. These pillars underwent a crisis starting from the ‘70s; the worldwide recession and high inflation rates accompanied the discredit for the welfare state, high taxation and state bureaucracy. The fourth stage of this transition was only sketched in Heclo’s analysis, written in the early 1980s, in the midst of the welfare states backlashes in the Anglo-Saxon world.⁴⁶ Historians may object on some details of his periodization, but should admit that it is conceptually

⁴⁴ D. C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. VII.

⁴⁵ M. Paci, «Long Waves in the Development of Welfare Systems», in Charles Mayer (ed.), *Changing Boundaries of the Political. Essays on the Evolving Balance between the State and Society, Public and Private in Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 179-200; J. Alber, «Le origini del welfare state: teorie, ipotesi ed analisi empirica», *Rivista italiana di scienza politica*, n.3/1982, pp. 361-421; Id., «L’espansione del welfare state in Europa occidentale: 1900-1975», *Rivista italiana di scienza politica*, n.2/1983, pp. 203-260.

⁴⁶ H. Heclo, «Toward a New Welfare State?», cit., pp. 384-406.

productive for historical enquiry. Breaking down the evolution of social policy into single “long waves” allows to grasp their incremental nature, and their turbulences and ebbs. In this chapter, I will sketch out the overall deployment of social insurances in Britain, Italy and France, to put the wartime innovations in their right historical perspective.

The birth of the modern social policy as compulsory insurances is usually ascribed to the 1883-89 Bismarck’s legislation, considered as the first attempts to provide a modern social policy. While the German schemes constituted the blueprint for many other European countries, another model made inroad on the other side of the Atlantic. In the US, social allowances were improved for family policies and for supporting veterans and mutilated after the 1861–5 American Civil War.⁴⁷ One by one, the other major industrialized countries passed pieces of legislation that culminated with organic reforms in the first decade of the 20th century. They had different labels and political formulas, but represented the peak of the pre-1914 ruling classes’ effort to provide compulsory schemes of social protection. This phase ended with the Great War. A second wave of reforms characterized the interwar periods, under the urges of the post-war recovery, the care for millions of mutilated and orphans and, later on, unemployment effects of the 1929 Great Crash. While they retained piecemeal features, they strengthened the framework of compulsory schemes. However, they did not envisage the “Copernican Revolution” set in motion by the Second World War.

1.1. The social protection from the origins to the Great War

The German legislation pointed at generating loyalty to the political institutions that lavished these benefits. Old-age, sickness and disability insurances were expected to gain the workers’ consensus, by enlarging their economic guarantees in the hierarchical organization of

⁴⁷ T. Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers. The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1992.

the German Reich.⁴⁸ That was the way forward by Germany to integrate the popular classes and to address the “social question”, according to a paternalistic principle, since «public assistance had to be granted as a favour and could never be claimed as a right».⁴⁹ This was one of the features of pre-1945 European social legislations; poor relief, workers’ protection, public health, social benefits were granted either as State benevolence or as a means of paternalistic control.

If the general goals were similar, different institutional environments led to different solutions. Gustav von Rimlinger pointed out that the Bismarckian legislation emerged in a context of Nation-building and militarization of the society. While social welfare is usually linked to the progressive democratization, the very early German legislation tried to impede this process.⁵⁰ In Britain and France the first social provisions at the end of 1800 were passed by conservative governments, under the pressure of the labour organizations. More consistent policies were supported by social reformers, concerned over the increase of dispossessed people. Social inquiries shed light on pauperism; the conditions of the poor were studied with a scientific approach, attentive to the socio-economic reasons of their status, even though a certain social paternalism was still present.⁵¹ The quests of the working class met the changing perception of the “social question” by the establishment. The liberal governments started cooperating with socialist parties. The Italian case slightly differed; as Italy faced the same Nation-building issues of Germany, its ruling classes swigged between top-down authoritarian solutions and more liberal settings. By the outbreak of the Great War,

⁴⁸ S. Fay, «Bismarck’s Welfare State», *Current History*, n.18/1950, pp. 1-7; E. Grimmer-Sollem, *The Rise of Historical Economics and Social Reform in Germany 1864-1894*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, particularly pp. 89-207.

⁴⁹ H. Beck, *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State in Prussia. Conservatives, Bureaucracy, and the Social Question, 1815-70*, Ann Arbor, Michigan University Press, 1995, p. 241, see also pp. 123-260.

⁵⁰ G. V. Rimlinger, «Social Security and Social Change in Germany», *The Journal of Human Resources*, no.4/1968, pp. 409-421.

⁵¹ A.-E. Buret, *De la misère des classes laborieuses en Angleterre et en France*, Paris, Chez Pauline, 1840. See also D. Marucco, *Lavoro e previdenza dall’Unità al fascismo. Il Consiglio della previdenza dal 1869 al 1923*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1984.

Britain, France and Italy had all haphazard systems of social insurances that recalled the compulsoriness of the German one, while social policies adapted to each specific socio-economic condition.

Great Britain: from the Poor Laws to the liberal welfare reforms (1880-1911)

The history of modern assistance in Britain traced back to the rural poor relief in the beginning of the 19th century. Feeble public interventions and *Poor Laws* were accompanied by an ideological paradigm hostile to State action in the self-regulated free market. Although the view of the unregulated *laissez-faire* is somehow stereotypical, these policies were extremely residual and fragmentary, and steadily characterized by the fear of social unrest.⁵² In the second half of the century, the emergence of the “social question” required a qualitative leap. Social policies rose from two contradictory factors: paternalism and social stigma, and the spreading of socialism. In addition, the scientific inquiries on poverty as social phenomenon led to the discovery of pauperism in the British society, affecting the public debate and legislation.⁵³ At the end of century, concurrently with a cyclical crisis and increasing rates of unemployment, new ideas and approaches to poverty developed.⁵⁴ The 1897 *Workmen’s Compensation Act* finally provided benefits for injuries to some categories of workers, regardless the responsibilities or implicit knowledge of danger.⁵⁵ As

⁵² D. Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2003, pp. 16-174; A. Monticone, (ed.), *La storia dei poveri. Pauperismo e assistenza nell’età moderna*, Roma, Studium, 1985; P. Fielder, *Social Welfare in Pre-Industrial England*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2006; P. Slack, *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782*, London, MacMillan, 1990; C. De Boni, *Politica e leggi dell’economia. Il dibattito sulla povertà nell’Inghilterra della rivoluzione industriale*, Padova, CEDAM, 1994; B. Harris, *The Origins of the British Welfare State. State and Social Welfare in England and Wales 1800-1945*, London, Palgrave-MacMillan, 2004.

⁵³ S. Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*, London, MacMillan, 1901.

⁵⁴ J. Harris, «Political Thought and the Welfare State 1870-1940: An Intellectual Framework for British Social policy», *Past&Present*, n. 135/1992, pp. 116-141, see pp. 120-131; see also S. Webb, *The Case for an Eight Hours Bill*, London, Fabian Society, 1891; J. Burns, *The Employed*, London, Fabian Society, 1893; G. Turner, *The Case for State Pensions in Old Age*, London, Fabian Society, 1897.

⁵⁵ «Workmen’s Compensation Act, 1897», full text in *The Workmen’s Compensation Act, What It Mean, and How To Make Use of It*, London, Fabian Society, 1901, pp. 18-23

everywhere, the measures against industrial accidents were the first forms of social protection, even though they were not yet configured as a public insurance scheme.

The decade before the Great War was characterized by the commitment for social reforms, gone down in history as *liberal welfare reforms*, under the *Whig* governments of David Lloyd George and the ideological influence of the *New Liberalism*.⁵⁶ These reforms, in reality, continued the Conservative action, which in 1905-6 introduced the *Unemployed Workmen's Act* and generalized the benefits of the *Workmen's Compensation Act* to all the working categories.⁵⁷ The *Tories* charged a commission to the study of broader reforms of social assistance, opening to the Fabian intellectuals Sidney and Beatrice Webb. "Social issues" became electoral matters, as popular classes acceded to vote, and the *Trade Unions Congress* (TUC) tripled their members in twenty years. The improvement of social protection started being, therefore, a topical issue.

However, it is oversimplifying to reduce the whole social reformism to the pressure of the working-class associations. In the first place, social legislation helped to adjust the labour market to the necessities of an increase in production capacities under the simultaneous condition of labour scarcity; public welfare services fostered the economic efficiency of the national economy.⁵⁸ Secondly, the public social assistance created institutional actors and civil servants who gradually addressed the problem of poverty and unemployment with a different attitude. At the very beginning of the century, some civil servants scientifically analysed the social problems. Economist John A. Hobson studied unemployment in its aftermaths on the economic development, while the social investigator Hubert

⁵⁶ P. Weiler, *The New Liberalism: Liberal Social Theory in Great Britain 1889-1914*, New York, Garland Publishing Inc., 1982.

⁵⁷ HMSO, *Unemployed Workmen's Act*, 1905, Ch 18; HMSO, *Workmen's Compensation Act*, 1906, C. 58.

⁵⁸ J.R.Hay, *The Origins of the Liberal Welfare Reforms 1906-1914*, London, MacMillan, 1977, pp. 25-42.

Llewellyn-Smith advocated for social reforms and wage increase.⁵⁹ In 1909, Beveridge wrote the first edition of *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*, with a brand new approach to unemployment.⁶⁰ He collected data instead of blaming the moral attitude of the unemployed; unemployment was neither a moral fault of the workers nor an irredeemable failure of the economic system. He proposed policies to reorganize the labour market, rather than charity-like and residual aids. Some elements of 1942 Beveridge ideological discourse were already present, as he considered unemployment «not a want to be satisfied, but a disease to be eradicated.»⁶¹

During the *Whig* welfare reforms between 1906 and 1914, the British social protection made the first qualitative leap, setting the framework of the *social service state*.⁶² The *Whigs* introduced old-age pensions, insurances against unemployment, and public services for the children and the poor. The complex of social provisions revealed a residual approach, excluding the middle classes and the poorest. Some measures marked a break with the *Poor Laws* and were driven by public health concerns, especially for the childhood.⁶³ In 1908, social pensions were granted for those who could not benefit from contributory pensions.⁶⁴ The act combined charity-like intervention and public social assistance. It had all the traditional features of the *Poor Laws* and of the *means tests*: discrimination between “deserving” and “undeserving” poor, e.g. the inquires on moral and social behaviour. It marked,

⁵⁹ J.A. Hobson, *The Problem of the Unemployed. An Enquiry and an Economic Policy*, London, Meuthen & Co., 1896; H. Llewellyn-Smith, *Economic Aspects of State Socialism*, Oxford, Corpus Christi College, 1887.

⁶⁰ W. Beveridge, *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*, London-New York-Toronto, Longmans, Green & Co., 1930.

⁶¹ Ivi. *Preface to First Edition*. p. XV.

⁶² A. Briggs, «The Welfare State in Historical Perspective», *European Journal in Historical Perspective*, n.2/1961, Special Issue: On the Welfare State, pp. 221-258, see particularly pp. 221-226.

⁶³ HMSO, *Education (Provision of Meals) Act*, 1906, Ch. 57; HMSO, *Education (Administrative Provisions) Act*, 1907, Ch. 43.

⁶⁴ The text of the law in W. Casson, *Old Age Pension Act*, 1908, London, C. Knight & Co., 1908, pp. 9-30.

however, the involvement of the State to finance non-contributory social pensions for limited indigent categories over 70 years old.

The 1911 *National Insurance Act* encompassed healthcare insurance and unemployment benefits.⁶⁵ The first part dealt with the healthcare insurances, sickness and permanent invalidity. It was not a universalistic healthcare service as it concerned working categories and needy people and was not funded by general revenues, but by employers and employees' contributions, with limited participation of the State. The private and mutual healthcare framework was prominent. The second part of the act established unemployment benefits for very limited working categories in the heavy industry. Britain was the only State to provide public insurance against unemployment. Unlike old-age pension, illness and work-related accidents, the involuntary unemployment directly called into question the free market deficiencies. Accordingly, the 1911 *National Insurance Act* recognized that unemployment was due to the *laissez-faire* economy and that was task of the State to protect the workers against that risk. These measures, therefore, «trace the trajectory of a fast distancing from the minimal State as supported by the Manchester philosophies.»⁶⁶

The 1911 *National Insurance Act* was the swansong of *New Liberalism*. The decline of the Whig party ironically befell simultaneously with their most ambitious (healthcare insurance) and influential (unemployment benefits) reforms.⁶⁷ The healthcare provisions marked the upper limit of social reformism in the Edwardian Era. It also left behind the Puritan view of poverty as personal fault and to some extent the 19th century philanthropy, even if the healthcare provisions were not generalized. They resulted from the compromise with the pre-existing *Friendly Societies* and the *British Medical Association* (BMA), and eventually the original intention to cover widows and orphans in the sickness and invalidity benefits

⁶⁵ HMSO, *National Insurance Act*, 1911, Ch. 55.

⁶⁶ F. Girotti, *Welfare State. Storia, modelli e critica*, Roma, Carocci, 1998, p. 169

⁶⁷ G. Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, New York, H. Smith & R. Hass, 1935.

dropped.⁶⁸ Unemployment insurances modernized British social legislation, representing what Winston Churchill defined «the untrodden field in politics».⁶⁹ The Liberals tackled unemployment with a combined provision of a limited range of benefits and voluntary labour exchanges. Yet, this legislation was still residual. The State limitedly contributed to the funding of the benefits and the compulsory insurances concerned only the wage earners. Lastly, the 1911 national insurance lacked of a comprehensive approach to social policy and wider goals of social enhancement; by no means it prefigured the post-1945 welfare state. In the case of the provisions for healthcare and children, they were rather due to the concerns for national efficiency. These pertained both with the improvement of the conditions of lower classes, and the worries for the health of the “British race” after the Boer War.⁷⁰ However, at the end of the Liberal epoch the foundations of the British *social service state* were laid, alongside with the persistence of the *Poor Law*.

France: from the “égalité” to the social legislation (1893-1910)

According to historian Giovanna Procacci, since 1848 France was the cradle of the modern approaches to social policy; pauperism was separated from labour matters and the assistance for the poor diverged from the insurances for the workers.⁷¹ In the republican rhetoric, they corresponded respectively to the right to assistance and to the right to work. They constituted a difficult compromise between liberal individualism and the aims of social equality; the further French legislation ranged between these two principles.⁷² In the last years of

⁶⁸ B. Gilbert, *The Evolution of National Insurances in Great Britain*, London, Michale Joseph, 1966, pp. 289-447.

⁶⁹ W. Churchill, «The Untrodden Field in Politics», *The Nation*, 7 March 1907.

⁷⁰ B. Gilbert, *The Evolution of National Insurances in Great Britain*, pp. 59-101.

⁷¹ G. Procacci, *Gouverner la misère. La question sociale en France 1789-1848*, Paris, Seuil, 1993. On the traditional distinction between «workers» and «non-workers» see S. Petrungaro, «The Fluid Boundaries of 'Work'. Some Considerations about Concepts, Approaches, and South-Eastern Europe», *Südost-Forschungen*, 72/2013, pp. 271-286, and particularly pp. 271-281.

⁷² G. Procacci, *Gouverner la misère. La question sociale en France 1789-1848*, pp. 257-325.

the 19th century, the French political and public reflection on the “social question” was contradictory: on the one hand, the State had theoretically the duty to improve the social conditions of its citizens; on the other, the liberal ideology did not want to foster the idleness of the poor with public aid.⁷³ Even under a thick layer of egalitarian rhetoric of solidarity, the main concerns behind the social reforms in France still regarded social peace.⁷⁴ The mutualist setting of the French social legislation was seen by liberals as the expression of French “liberty” and “self-regulation”.⁷⁵ This aspect met also the demographic concerns, constituting two long-lasting pillars of the French social policy.

Not unlike Britain, the Radicals reoriented themselves towards a reformist programme, incorporating moderate social elements.⁷⁶ The radical-socialist government of Léon Bourgeois took up the torch of the conservatives’ first social provisions. In 1893, the Parliament passed free medical assistance for injured workers; over the next 20 years, insurances and allowances came into operation, while the budget for welfare expenses doubled. In 1898, the insurances against industrial accidents charged the employers for the benefits regardless the responsibilities of the accident.⁷⁷ By 1923, this insurance covered all workers and some categories of self-employed, and was extended to some occupational diseases. The government also enacted the *Charte de la mutualité*, which encouraged and deregulated voluntary mutualism. The State limited itself to subsidize and monitor the financial management of the mutual funds.⁷⁸ The major reforms were enacted under the 1906-9 Georges Clemenceau’s Ministry. The political goals of these governments did not vary from the coeval approaches to the

⁷³ A. Barbieri, *Lo Stato sociale in Francia dalle origini alla Seconda Guerra Mondiale*, Roma, Donzelli, 1999, pp. 17-26.

⁷⁴ J. Stone, *The Search for Social Peace*, New York, State University of New York Press, 1985, pp. 1-54.

⁷⁵ R. Gregarek, «Le face-à-face de la République française et de l’Empire allemande dans les politiques sociales», *Revue Germanique Internationale*, n.4/1995, pp. 103-126.

⁷⁶ J. Kayser, *Les grandes batailles du radicalisme des origines aux portes du pouvoir 1820-1901*, Paris, Marcel Rivière&Co, 1961, pp. 206-312, and the documentary appendix, pp. 334-351.

⁷⁷ «Loi du 9 avril 1898 concernant les responsabilités dans les accidents du travail», *Journal Officiel*, 10 avril 1898.

⁷⁸ «Loi du 1 avril 1898 relative aux sociétés de secours mutuel», *JO*, 5 avril 1898.

social protection; the Radicals pursued social solidarity with reforms, while securing industrial rest and wiping out the revolutionary trends within the French trade unions, even contemplating repressive measures.

In 1904 were created the first family allowances and maternity assistance programmes, as for the mixed offices providing medical and social assistance for needy expectants. The subsequent year, the first old-age pensions and insurances for disabled persons appeared. In the same year, the *Commission d'assurance et de prévoyance sociales* (Committee for the social insurances), chaired by the socialists Alexandre Millerand and Paul Guieysse proposed the reform of industrial workers' old-age pensions, the invalidity insurances and the survivors' pensions. This was the first step towards a more unified compulsory scheme; among the proposals, the creation of a National Pension Fund had a preeminent opting-out for voluntary insurances. The pension contributions were equally paid by employers and employees, subsidised by the State, and they did not include the farm workers.⁷⁹ The *Loi du 5 avril 1910 sur les retraites ouvrières et paysannes* transposed many of the proposals for an overall reform elaborated in the decades before.⁸⁰ The scheme of national pensions was addressed to industrial, trade and farm workers; it had upper-income limits and provided relatively scarce benefits. The self-employed and the higher wage-earners could subscribe to the voluntary pension scheme. The law retained the contributory principle with State subsidies, and the freedom of choice between public or private funds. The employers and some categories of workers were hostile to the compulsoriness of the pension, due to economic inconvenience or ideological opposition.⁸¹

Historian Philip Nord has defined the first French social legislation «republican and familist in mold.»⁸² The Republican values

⁷⁹ P. Guieysse, *Les retraites ouvrières*, Paris, Congrès des accidents du travail et des assurances sociales, 1904.

⁸⁰ The full text of the law, with the governments decrees and ministerial order in *Retraites ouvrières et paysannes. Loi du 5 avril*, Paris, Dalloz, 1911.

⁸¹ J. Stone, *The Search for Social Peace*, pp. 99-122.

⁸² P. Nord, «The Welfare State in France, 1870-1914», *French Historical Studies*, 3/1994, pp. 821-838, p. 837.

and public discourses forged a rhetoric of *égalité républicaine* and social solidarity. At the same time, French policies for the maternal care were the most advanced in terms of benefits and assistance services. The first laws regulating women's working hours dated back to 1892, while in 1913 the paid leave for childbirth was passed. This kind of protection did not primarily aim at the interests of the women *as workers*, but *as mothers*. Since the beginning, the French social policy was linked to birth-rate policy.⁸³ Another permanent feature was the importance of private assurance companies, medical associations and mutualist funds as providers of "corporatist" self-aid.⁸⁴ The tasks for social insurance schemes rested with the trade associations, the factory agreements, the private sector. The State took in charge the assistance to the indigents. As for Britain, the social provisions addressed with different tools the people able to work and the marginalized. For the latter, the public aid took place effectively. The French social insurances lacked consistent public schemes; the insurance against the accidents was compulsory, but that against sickness relied on the mutual associations. The compulsory old age pensions were residual, in favour of voluntary sector. As for unemployment, the French social legislation lacked of insurance schemes.

Italy: between "Bismarckian" approaches and liberal reforms (1890-1912)

The Italian social policies rooted on a different context if compared to Britain and France. As a newly formed State, Italy faced similar problems of nation-building as Bismarck's Germany, without having the same industrial development. Yet, the goals of the early social legislation were the same than in the "Conservative" Germany or in the "Liberal" Britain: the social protection for the workers, the weakening of the socialists and the control of the poor.

⁸³ F. Thebaud, «Le mouvement nataliste dans la France de l'entre-deux-guerres: l'Alliance nationale pour l'accroissement de la population française», *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 2/1985, pp. 276-346.

⁸⁴ I. Moret Lespinet, Isabelle, «Vers un "corporatisme" républicain? Les réformateurs de l'Office du Travail», and J.-P. Le Crom, «L'Entre-deux-Guerres : un pré-corporatisme ?», both in Steven Kaplan, Philippe Minard (eds.), *La France, malade du corporatisme ? XVIIIème-XXème siècles*, Paris, Belin, 2004, respectively pp. 355-367 and pp. 369-386.

In the last decade of the 19th century, Francesco Crispi's government passed the first pieces of legislation, addressing the assistance to relief the poor with the 1890 *Legge Crispi*.⁸⁵ The ecclesial institutions maintained the monopoly of the social assistance, but they became public authorities. The State recognized the existence of the "social question" and the need to provide social assistance. At the same time, the government avoided the direct public involvement in its management; the mere recognition of previous religious charities did not allow coordination nor unification of services and policies. Only the industrialization of Northern Italy and the growth of the working-class organizations drove the further evolution in the social insurances and the work-related matters. The industrial workforce progressively increased about one million of units from the Unification to the first decade of the 20th century, although with sectorial and geographical breakdowns.⁸⁶ The trade unions strengthened their traditional mutualism, coordinating the employment services, education, and training assistance through self-managed organizations of workers. In the absence of a consistent State intervention, they also granted social provisions.⁸⁷

In 1898 the Parliament passed the compulsory insurances against industrial accidents and created the *Cassa Nazionale di Previdenza per l'invalidità e la vecchiaia* (National Insurance Fund for old-age pensions and disability, later renamed CNAS).⁸⁸ It was not a public authority but constituted the framework of the further Italian social insurances and institutions. These acts were the paternalist response of the Italian political establishment afraid of social disorder and the

⁸⁵ «Legge 17 luglio 1890, n. 6972», *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, 22 luglio 1890, n.171.; G. Procacci, «Le politiche di intervento sociale in Italia tra fine Ottocento e Prima Guerra Mondiale. Alcune osservazioni comparative», *Economia e Lavoro*, 1/2008, pp. 17-43, pp. 6-11; D. Adorni, *L'Italia crispi: riforme e repressione. 1887-1896*, Milano, Sansoni, 2002.

⁸⁶ Vera Zamagni, *The Economic History of Italy, 1860-1990. Recovery after Decline*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997, pp. 75-109.

⁸⁷ R. Bruno, *Breve storia del sindacato in Italia. Lavoro, conflitto ed emancipazione*, Roma, Ediesse, 2011, pp. 73-91.

⁸⁸ «Legge 17 marzo 1898, n.80» *GU*, 31 marzo 1898, n. 75; «Legge 17 luglio 1898, n.350», *GU*, 11 agosto 1898, n. 177.

democratization of public institutions.⁸⁹ Their social legislation was intended to halt further democratic reforms. Yet, the laws hooked Italy on the European trend towards public compulsory insurances, with the participation of employers, employees and – in a subsidiary role – of the State in their funding.

At the turn of the century, the working class's social quests obtained some response by the politics of the new Prime Minister Antonio Giolitti.⁹⁰ He opened up to the political mass movements, modernize Italy and mitigate the social tensions. The improvements in the social protection, right to strike and social assistance were not only mere concessions, but the effort to integrate the masses within the liberal institutions. For a period of fifteen years, Giolitti-lead or inspired governments deliberated long-lasting reforms. The most relevant concerned the social insurances for industrial workers, the first legal provisions regarding female labour and workforce of minor age, and the institution, in 1911, of the public primary schools. His governments also favoured wages increases and diluted the anti-labour legislation. In 1904, the assurance against industrial accidents was extended to farmers and seafarers, and made the employers legally responsible for the safety at workplace.⁹¹ Maternity allowances for the industrial workers made their appearance in 1910.

The CNAS was in charge of these benefits; the provision extended its legal and *de facto* competences. The 1910 law also unified the family protection within the fund of social protection.⁹² The watershed year was 1912; with the *Legge 4 aprile 1912, n. 305* the nationalization and coercive merger of the life-insurance agencies in one single public fund took over the previous voluntary framework. It did not envisage an overall reformulation of the social insurances (since they were not compulsory), nor did it operate effective innovations

⁸⁹ G.C. Jocteau, «Le origini della legislazione sociale in Italia. Problemi e prospettive di ricerca», *Movimento operaio e socialista*, 2/1982, pp. 289-302; A. Cherubini, I. Piva, *Dalla libertà all'obbligo. La previdenza sociale fra Giolitti e Mussolini*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 1989.

⁹⁰ E. Gentile, *Le origini dell'Italia contemporanea. L'età giolittiana*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2003.

⁹¹ *Testo Unico della Legge per gli infortuni degli operai sul lavoro: D.R. 31 gennaio 1904, n. 51*, Milano, Società Editrice Libreria, 1904.

⁹² «Legge 17 luglio 1910, n. 520», *GU*, 3 agosto 1910, n.181.

regarding the public authorities. Yet, it established the complete devolution of the remaining profits to the National fund for old-age pensions and disability.⁹³ The civil servants and State offices committed themselves in the study of the phenomenon of unemployment, getting in that regard Italy closer to British experience.⁹⁴ It was political concerns that led to the creation of public employment offices, even if no legislative measures were taken against unemployment.

It was during the years 1901-14 that the Italian approach to social policies changed. Concurrently to the expansion of the electoral franchise, the Liberals recognized the Socialist and Catholic organizations as political counterpart. In addition, the social insurances shifted from paternalistic control to an attempt of integrating the masses in the State. Giolitti's reformism grounded on the collaboration among Liberals and the new mass parties. Good part of liberal establishment agreed with the urgent nature of some actions.⁹⁵ On the other side, both Socialists and Catholics demonstrated to be very sensitive to the social reforms. The first years of the 20th century represented the peak of reformist socialism, whose social programme matched in fact the left-wing liberal reforms. The escalation of the social strife and the backwardness of the Italian socio-economic context prevented a more consistent collaboration.⁹⁶ The Catholics grounded their social commitment on the 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. It backed the measures to protect workers, women and children, as well as confessional workers' organizations, even if they had other reasons compared to liberals and Socialists; the social doctrine of the Catholic Church opposed industrial societies and liberal democracies. As a consequence, it abstained from cooperating in the creation of social

⁹³ «Legge 4 aprile 1912, n. 305», *GU*, 22 aprile 1912, n.96.

⁹⁴ M. Alberti, «La disoccupazione nelle statistiche ufficiali dell'età giolittiana (1901-1914)», *Quaderni Storici*, 2/2010, pp. 295-317

⁹⁵ R. Nieri, *Costituzione e problemi sociali. Il pensiero politico di Sidney Sonnino*, Pisa, ETS; 2000; G. Carocci, *Giolitti e l'età giolittiana*, Torino, Einaudi, 1961.

⁹⁶ E. Bartocci, *Le politiche sociali nell'Italia liberale (1861-1919)*, Roma, Donzelli, 1999, pp. 197-249.

insurances, as «the social action of the Catholics embedded the human promotion of the poor in an overall hierocratic design.»⁹⁷

On the verge of the Great War, the major political and social forces regarded favourably at mutualist forms of self-relief alongside residual compulsory insurances. The liberals promoted the progressive democratization of social institutions with two goals; the traditional response to the social strife, and the aim to include wider cross-section of society within the State. The Italian social protection complied with the European coeval social insurance schemes, even if relatively later than other European States; this was also due to the socio-economic cleavages within the country. The insurances were linked to the occupational categories, accordingly to the geographical and social gaps that affected the employment structure of the country at that time.⁹⁸

1.2. The interwar reforms: recovery and crisis

The more or less explicit collaboration between liberals and socialists characterized the utmost momentum for the pre-war social reforms, which grafted into the first provision enabled by the conservatives. The first compulsory schemes traced the German system. The Italian ruling classes borrowed also the political goals of the German social reformers, while in Britain they adapted the compulsory schemes to some issues (unemployment, healthcare) that affected the society. France retained residual approach to the “social question”, in many regards even more liberal than the British one. The social insurances became compulsory, but this did not automatically mean that the State took in charge of their funding. According to each country and risk category, the social contribution was rather bipartite

⁹⁷ D. Menozzi, «La Chiesa cattolica», in Giovanni Filoramo, Dino Menozzi (eds.), *Storia del cristianesimo. L'età contemporanea*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1997, pp. 129-257, p. 169, see also pp. 166-171.

⁹⁸ G. Procacci, «Le politiche di intervento sociale in Italia tra fine Ottocento e Prima Guerra Mondiale. Alcune osservazioni comparative», pp. 10-14

between workers and employers, with residual State's incentives. [TAB. 1]

TAB.1. Funding of the social insurances in Germany (as reference), Great Britain, France and Italy, according to each risk category (1914)

	Germany	Great Britain	France	Italy
Old-age/Invalidity	2/5 Workers 2/5 Employers 1/5 State	Non-contributory pensions (deserving lower-income workers)	1/2 Workers 1/2 Employers + State subsidies	Voluntary insurance + State/employers' free contribution
Industrial Injuries	Employers	Employers' civil liability	Employers' civil liability	Employers
Sickness/Maternity	2/3 Workers 1/3 Employers	4/9 Workers 3/9 Employers 2/9 State	Voluntary insurance	1/2 Workers 1/2 Employers + State subsidies
Unemployment	–	3/10 Workers 3/10 Employers 4/10 State	–	–

However, the reforms moved towards progressive compulsoriness of insurances. Besides Germany, the sequence of the social insurances started with the industrial injuries to include, in the British case, unemployment benefits. [TAB. 2]

TAB.2. Main reforms of the social insurances in Great Britain, France, Italy (1892-1914)

	Industrial Injuries	Sickness/Maternity	Old-age/Invalidity	Unemployment
Great Britain	1897	1911	1908	1911
France	1898	1898*	1910	–
Italy	1898	1910**	1898***	–

*voluntary insurance

**only maternity

***voluntary pension with State and employers' free contributions

The lib-lab experiments of the first decade of the twentieth century marked the upper limit of the political concessions by conservative and liberal elites, and the major success of socialists' reformist strategy. Both these forces moved within the mind-set of the 19th century bourgeois societies. The Great War swept away the liberal political settings and called into question the existence of pre-war reformism. State policies changed during and after the war. The Soviet Revolution also had a relevant role in the redefinition of the State intervention. Later, the Great Depression of the '30s put a strain on the ideological paradigms that shaped the liberal and bourgeois mindsets between 19th and 20th century. New approaches gradually emerged in the debate, to become public policy after 1945. In the '20s and the '30s, the Weimar Republic and the US experience convey the idea of the changing role of the State with regard to economy and society.

Born on the verge of the proletarian revolution in Germany, the Weimar Constitution incorporated social democratic goals.⁹⁹ Weimar Republic combined repressive policies and social concessions, the latter

⁹⁹ N.L. Flores, «Fear of Revolution», and S. Berger, «Commentary», in Klaus Weinbauer, Anthony McElligott, Kirsten Heinsohn (eds.), *Germany 1916-23. A Revolution in Context*, Bielefeld, Transcript, 2015, pp. 127-150, and pp. 215-256.

resulting in a systematic and far-sighted legislation.¹⁰⁰ Its principles proclaimed the right and duty to work, the social protection, the assistance by the State for inability, occupational disease, accident, family allowances and public pensions. The collective bargaining recognized by the law, the factory councils and cooperative forms of economic production completed the democratic “social state”.¹⁰¹ For the first time, the social policies were coherently linked to democracy and rights.

In spite of the compromise nature of Weimar Republic, the government adopted a wider-ranging approach: from 1923 to 1927, public assistance programmes and social insurances schemes addressed unemployment. The occupational insurance funds were progressively unified, and between 1920 and 1925 the war’s pensions, the insurances against professional diseases and the programmes for the education were part of the compulsory insurance schemes.¹⁰² Yet, due to the higher unemployment rates and increasing fiscal burden of the social schemes in front of the loss of contributory basis, the Weimar social programmes were no longer sustainable.¹⁰³ The deepening of the crisis, with hyperinflation, fiscal bankruptcy and mass unemployment, eventually alienated the middle and working classes from Weimar.¹⁰⁴ The collapse of Weimar “social state” ambitions was a clear signal that social reforms without the endorsement of the middle classes and the bureaucracies were destined to fail. In 1919, the Weimar Republic tried to restore “authority” after the end of the Wilhelmine Empire through the integration of social protection within a new democratic framework; at the same time, it used forceful means to suppress the revolutionary movements. While the older ruling classes constantly tried to push the wheels of history backwards, the fragile social and

¹⁰⁰ N. Bobbio, *L'età dei diritti*, Torino, Einaudi, 1992.

¹⁰¹ «Die Verfassung des Deutschen Reichs vom 11. August 1919», *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1919.

¹⁰² H. Young-Sun, *Welfare, Modernity, and the Weimar State, 1919-1933*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998.

¹⁰³ J.A. Moses, «German Social Policy (Sozialpolitik) in the Weimar Republic 1919-1933», *Labour History*, n. 42/1982, pp. 83-93.

¹⁰⁴ A. McElligott, *Rethinking the Weimar Republic: Authority and Authoritarianism, 1916-1936*, London, Bloomsbury, 2013.

political compromise collapsed under the weight of the 1929 Great Crash, which undermined any residual social and political legitimization.¹⁰⁵

The Great Depression was also behind the other remarkable experience of the interwar period. The US *New Deal* represented the most important forerunner of the post-war social programmes and the first experiment for State interventions against unemployment. When Roosevelt became president, the production halved, while foreign trade collapsed and unemployment grew exponentially within a couple of years. The deflationary policies enacted by the Republican government were overcome by the plans set up from 1933 to 1938.¹⁰⁶ The crisis hit both middle and working classes: suspension of the internal and trade markets, excess of unsold agricultural and industrial products, vertical drop in prices, standstill in investment and eventually contraction in the industrial production and – as consequence – the drastic wage reduction and unemployment for the industrial workers and the indebtedness for the farmers.

The *New Deal* articulated in two phases; the emergency measures in the first 100 days of Roosevelt Administration pointed at convincing the opinion of the stability of the credit, the reform of the banking system (e.g., the separation of commercial banks and financial institutions), the control of financial transition, the creation of Federal Authorities for the industrial and agricultural recovery via public works, progressive taxation and stabilization of prices. A second wave of reforms addressed social security and labour relations, granting

¹⁰⁵ H.A. Winkler, *La Repubblica di Weimar*, Roma, Donzelli 1998, pp. 105-116.

¹⁰⁶ D.M. Du Bois, «From “Coolidge Prosperity” to “Voluntary Associationism”: Andrew Mellon, Herbert Hoover, and America’s Political Economy in the Republican-Era 1920s» and G. Jeansonne, «Hoover’s Vision and His Response to the Great Depression: Voluntary Efforts; Public Works; the Gold Standard; the RFC; the Farm Board; Hoover’s Reputation», both in Katherine Sibley, (ed.), *A Companion to Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover*, Oxford, Wiley, 2014, respectively pp. 212-231 and pp. 465-483; W. J. Barber, *From new era to New Deal. Herbert Hoover, the economists, and American economic policy, 1921-1933*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985.

public schemes for unemployment, old-age, disability funded by tripartite contributions, family allowances and wage policy.¹⁰⁷

The *New Deal* did not reabsorb the levels of cyclical unemployment, but partially restored industrial and farm production. It was instead able to restore confidence in the democratic institutions and in renewed forms of capitalism supported by policies that consolidated the “strong State”: «the New Deal’s greatest success – including its reversal of the terrifying downward economic spiral in 1933 and its establishment of greater economic security in 1935 – insured that its economic reforms would remain secure for at least as long as most voters could remember the Great Depression.»¹⁰⁸

The crisis spread across the Atlantic, with devastating impacts on trades, societies and politics.¹⁰⁹ Its same transmission channels spread also new ideas, which influenced the social reformers during the war. The American *New Deal* was the subject of a bi-univocal transfer between the Atlantic. The *New Deal*, regardless its effective achievements, changed the perception of the relations between State and economy in the US, being studied by social reformers in Europe at that time. Mutually, the United States borrowed some elements from the European model of compulsory insurance schemes.¹¹⁰

Great Britain: the struggle against unemployment

The high unemployment after the Great War oriented the British social policy and polarized the intellectual debate; the main concern throughout the ‘20s was the social peace in the factories after the war, while the emergence of Keynesian theories characterized the ‘30s. The social legislation against unemployment grew rather untidily, in front of persistent economic stagnation. The GDP growth rates

¹⁰⁷ «Social Security Act, August 14th, 1935», 74th Congress, Ch. 531; «National Relation Labour Act, July 5th, 1935». 74th Congress, Ch. 372.

¹⁰⁸ R. Edsforth, *The New Deal. America’s Response to the Great Depression*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2000, p. 285.

¹⁰⁹ H. James, *The End of Globalization: Lessons from the Great Depression*, Harvard, Harvard University Press, 2001

¹¹⁰ D. T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*, Harvard, Harvard University Press, 2000, particularly pp. 409-484.

fluctuated between a first major crisis in 1921-2 and the economic upswing of 1937, when unemployment decreased, also thanks to the rearmament programme. The interwar social policies patched the inefficiencies of British economy, which brought about negative trade balance, falling exports, slowdown of productivity growth, sharp fall in foreign capital investments and depression of the older industrial areas and sectors.¹¹¹ Unemployment never fell below 10% in the interwar years; it peaked with 22,5% in 1932, when nearly 3.3 million workers were registered unemployed.

The post-1918 unemployment benefit schemes were closely tied to the pre-war legislation and to measures related to the demobilization. Complementary measures overlapped and got out of compulsory schemes, as non-contributory benefits were granted to unemployed who did not join the schemes. The contributory system was ceaselessly overstepped with extra-benefits, avoiding that unemployed workers could fall under the *Poor Laws* (renamed *Public Assistance Committees*). Alongside the contributory benefits, from 1921 to 1927 were enacted the uncovenanted, the extended and the transitional benefits, while in 1931 were set the transitional payments.¹¹² These extra benefits were submitted to some forms of *means tests*, but they did not imply the destitution policy underpinning the ancient *Poor Laws*. These constituted the “third stage” of protection against the loss of income, financed with the insurances fund, chronically in deficit.¹¹³

The coexistence of different levels of public assistance raised political and fiscal problems, e.g. for the administrative discretionary power and for the funding of the benefits. In the years 1931–5, the National Government of the former laborite Ramsay MacDonald rationalized the social schemes, in «the worst phase of the interwar

¹¹¹ B.W.E. Alford, *Depression and Recovery? British Economic Growth 1918-1939*, London, MacMillan, 1975.

¹¹² The legislation against unemployment was unsystematic, while constantly expanding. See A. Crew, et al., *The Unemployment Insurance Acts, 1920-1930*, London, Jordan & Sons, 1930; HMSO, *Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance. Final Report*, Cmd. 4185, particularly pp. 1-98.

¹¹³ S. Glynn, J. Oxborrow, *Interwar Britain. A Social and Economic History*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1976, pp. 245-256.

years for the unemployed, at least in the public mind. The household means test, the reduction in the money value of benefits, the sense of national gloom generated by the “fall of the pound” and the rise of fascist governments abroad, and above all the very high level of unemployment, particularly in the depressed areas, combined to make the years 1930-4 the worst of the whole period.»¹¹⁴ The rough household controls operated by the *Public Assistance Committee* were under attack and no longer politically sustainable. The 1934 *Unemployment Assistance Act* unified the management of the *means test*, under the *Unemployment Assistance Board* (UAB), which operated from 1935 on.¹¹⁵ The authority was under the control of the Ministry of Labour and was directly funded by the Treasury.¹¹⁶ The UAB took charge of the assistance to *all* unemployed, those under compulsory schemes and those who previously were granted by non-contributory benefits or by the *Poor Laws*. The UAB in fact replaced the *Poor Laws* and laid the foundations of the administrative structure of post-war welfare agencies; it was a central public authority that unified and rationalized previous institutions. Furthermore, the system of contributory and non-contributory benefits reshaped the State aid to the marginal.¹¹⁷

The reaction to the Great Depression led to more systematic intervention of the State, fixing some main features of the British social policy. At the same time, the debate on social policy shrouded the pre-existing “idealism” of the social reformers in a comprehensive scholarly approach. This combination of policy legacy and newer elaborations resurfaced during the wartime.¹¹⁸ However, the universalistic turn was

¹¹⁴ Ivi. p. 256.

¹¹⁵ G. Montroni, «Lo stato sociale in Gran Bretagna tra le due guerre», *Studi Storici*, 2/2003, pp. 373-397, especially pp. 384-394

¹¹⁶ For the activity of the UAB, see the reports of the Board for the years 1935-38. HMSO, *Report of the Unemployment Assistance Board for the period ended 31st December, 1935*, Cmd. 5177. For the subsequent years, see Cmd. 5526; Cmd. 5752; Cmd. 6021. For the text of 1934 act, HMSO, *Unemployment Assistance Act, 1934*, Ch. 29.

¹¹⁷ S. Checkland, *British Public Policy 1776-1939. An Economic, Social and Political Perspective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 370-384.

¹¹⁸ José Harris, «Political Thought and the Welfare State 1870-1940: An Intellectual framework for British Social Policy», pp. 131-141.

not come yet. In spite of the promotion of even more inclusive social reforms, the administrations continued to operate on discriminative basis and the policy-makers did not directly handle the question of the “social citizenship”. The British social legislation was basically a reaction to the prolonged economic crisis and massive unemployment; the policies enacted were founded on the fear of the desegregation of the social fabric.

Unemployment had deep repercussion in the economic thought. Proposals on how to cope with it proliferated and would have slowly penetrated and affected policies. In 1930, Beveridge returned on this issue. He supported anti-cyclical measures to reduce the disequilibrium between wages and productivity. In his view, benefits alone could not solve the problem of the persistence of high unemployment. He claimed for a mix of reformed old institutions and a newer planning policy to create employment in the most strongly depressed area, e.g. for the strengthening of the *Labour Exchange*, to make labour more fluid in the industrial areas and sectors.¹¹⁹ Beveridge’s view was part of a wider interest in “planning policies” in the Thirties. “Planning”, however, became a catch-all formula, encompassing a vast spectrum of position, from the nationalists to the collectivist plans. They all claimed for more radical solutions than temporary benefits or budgetary policies to boost the demand, even if these latter proved most efficient to relieve unemployment.¹²⁰ For Beveridge, public expenditure could stimulate investments and bank credits. Public money could also subsidize the ailing industries, favor the redeployment of workers to the dynamics industrial areas and reabsorb unemployed manpower due to industrial improvement and rationalization.¹²¹ Beveridge did not consider unemployment as an unavoidable side effect of free market, as «some things in Britain’s destiny are beyond management by its government and its leaders; [...]

¹¹⁹ W. Beveridge, *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*, pp. 253-420.

¹²⁰ D. Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning. The Debate On Economic Planning in Britain in the 1930s*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997.

¹²¹ W. Beveridge, *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*, pp. 414-420.

But unemployment is not of these.»¹²² At the same time, he regarded the patchwork quilts against the income losses as double edged-worse. They did not solve the *economic and industrial roots* of unemployment and demoralized political and social actors. Beveridge developed an approach attentive to the causes of unemployment, some of them would have been more systematically elaborated during WWII.¹²³

A real paradigm shift was spreading within British political and cultural elites: «change of heart or change of some sort is indispensable today – in business policy, in labour policies, in statesmanship. We must be ready for all sorts of new expedients in the control of industry and in government. We have got to find planners and give them power and trust them.»¹²⁴ The first incentives for the buildings or the schedules of manpower in the sectors with labour shortage moved in this direction, albeit they were not consistent policies yet. In the Thirties, “planning policies” did not go beyond political debate. Even before the publication of the major Keynesian works on unemployment, it was generally agreed in the huddle of experts and civil servants that supply-side oriented policies could more easily reduce unemployment than demand-side ones. Export bonuses on general tariffs, dole to employers, cheaper capital for industries, tax reductions, national works, and employment agencies were some of the proposals at stake.¹²⁵

It is difficult to dig out the effective penetration of “planning” ideas in British public policy during the ‘30s; while economic theories affected the public debate, politics had to take under control public expenditure and the effective monetary policy. Before 1936–7, when Britain started a programme of rearmament, the Treasury remained

¹²² Ivi. p. 419.

¹²³ Id., *The Past and Present of Unemployment Insurance*, London, Oxford University Press, 1930, pp. 43-47.

¹²⁴ Id., *Causes and Cures of Unemployment*, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1931, p. 58.

¹²⁵ R.C. Davison, *The Unemployed. Old Policies and New*, London-New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1929; R. Trouton, *Unemployment. Its Causes and Their Remedies*, London, Hogart Press, 1931; A.L. Bowley, F.D. Stuart, «Regularising the demand for labour by postponing or accelerating works», in AA.VV., *Is It Unemployment Inevitable? An Analysis and a Forecast*, London, MacMillan, 1925, pp. 366-377.

reluctant to enact deficit spending or borrowing to reduce unemployment, for example through public works.¹²⁶ However, the most advanced solutions were not totally insensible to forms of redistributive policies, or even to the national planning of industries.¹²⁷ This was the case of the pro-fascist and “corporatist” position of Oswald Mosley, or the fascination for bolshevist collectivism, which affected the Fabian circles. Keynes himself was quite pragmatic when it came to the best solution to cope with the factual end of the *laissez-faire* economy.

France: the social insurances and the family welfare

The “corporatist” mutual aid watered down after the Great War, when the voluntary social assurances gradually lost ground in the French social protection. The years of the recovery were marked by the illusion of a quick return to the *laissez-faire*, and the political projects of compulsory insurances faced the harsh opposition of the assurance business.¹²⁸ The most important input to overcome the residual French system came from the re-annexation of the Alsatian and Lorraine territories after the war. There, the workers previously enjoyed the German compulsory social assurances for sickness, old-age, invalidity and accidents; with the exception of the work accidents, all these insurances were neither compulsory nor public in France.¹²⁹ The fragmented French social protection experienced further differentiations, as the juxtaposition of voluntary insurances with public schemes required the harmonization with the compulsory German system. The French social reformers addressed this fragmentation with a compromise upwards, extending the benefits to the whole French territories. The compulsory insurances were longer

¹²⁶ G.C. Peden, «The “Treasury View” on Public Works and Employment in the Interwar Period», *The Economic History Review*, 2/1984, pp. 167-181.

¹²⁷ J. Stevenson, C. Cook, *The Slump. Society and Politics during the Depression*, London, Caper, 1977, pp. 195-217.

¹²⁸ M. Dreyfus, et. al., *Se protéger, être protégé. Une histoire des Assurances sociales en France*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006, pp. 19-79.

¹²⁹ M. Chollet, G. Hamon, *Le problème des assurances sociales en Alsace-Lorraine*, Paris, Giard&Brière, 1919.

overdue; yet, they faced the opposition of medical and private business, but – unlike the pre-war years – public social reforms were endorsed by labour organizations.

Compulsory insurances were adopted in France only in 1928 and 1930, even if the first commissions to study the reform dated back to 1921.¹³⁰ The two complementary laws of 5th April 1928 and 30th April 1930 constituted a turn in the French social policy.¹³¹ They were at the same time the culmination of pre-war reformism and the result of post-war concerns. They implemented a compulsory and unique system of insurances, funded by employers and employees with a relatively small contribution by the State, covering all the risk categories except unemployment.¹³² It covered all the working categories (industrial workers, shopkeepers, farm workers). The peasants had their own social insurances with the *Loi du 30 avril 1930*. These laws retained separate schemes for specific categories, e.g. the miners; the occupational framework remained within compulsory schemes, as well as the wide room left for voluntary sector. The lack of unemployment benefits signaled the persistence of social stigma and exclusion for this condition. The French approach still combined private charity and public assistance with the voluntary insurances financially supported by the State since 1905.

During the Great Depression France did not experience disruptive unemployment.¹³³ While Britain implemented the *Unemployment Assistance Act* in 1934, France tried to create work supply.¹³⁴ This latter was expected to be achieved through monetary or supply-side policies, rather than policies to boost the demand. For

¹³⁰ P. Rosanvallon, *L'État en France. De 1789 à nos jours*, Paris, Seuil, 1991, pp. 179-183.

¹³¹ Ministère du Travail et de la Prévoyance Sociale, *Texte officiel et complet de la Loi sur les Assurances sociales. Loi du 5 avril 1928 modifiée par la loi du 30 avril 1930*, Paris, Etienne Chiron Editeur, 1930.

¹³² The law of the April 5th, 1928 established the social contribution for involuntary unemployment, only for workers with a contract of employment and only up to 10% of the wage. See article 21.

¹³³ G. Letellier, et. al., *Le chômage en France de 1930 à 1936*, Paris, Sirey, 1938.

¹³⁴ P.-J. Hesse, «France and Unemployment Insurance from 1920 to 1985. The Myth of Social Security», in Noel Whiteside, Robert Salais, (eds.) *Governance, Industry and Labour Markets in Britain and France*, London-New York, Routledge, 1998, pp. 193-211.

instance, the government tried to favor the “return to land” to balance employment levels between cities and countryside. Not even the structural crisis led to a global rethinking of unemployment provisions. While Britain set up programmes against mass unemployment, in France the traditional paradigms persisted. Only the Popular Front tried to provide some benefits with the *Loi du 28 août 1936*; also in this case, the benefits were rather subsidiary to other policies against unemployment, e.g. public works, and were not framed in a more organic scheme of compulsory insurances.

In turn, in the mid-30s the family policy was a key area of the French social protection; it marked a difference with the other countries, as resulted from the dread of demographic decline after WWI. The 1932 *Loi Laundry* extended the services and the coverage of the family allowances, which were generalized and made compulsory for all the workers in the industrial and trade sector.¹³⁵ While the extra-contributions made for the employees with at least two children became compulsory, the employers were left free to choose the insurance funds agreed upon the State. This measure eventually turned into a genuinely universalistic feature in 1939, under the impulse of birth-rate concerns. The family allowances were extended to the whole active population, either employed or unemployed, and the arbitrariness of the allowances was partially amended with a system of quotas, particularly favorable for the peasant families, considered the “core” of the nation.¹³⁶

By the end of the Thirties, France moved toward two distinguished trends. In the social insurances the mutualist substrate persisted, centered on the action of working class organizations, the collaboration/struggle with the employers, the separate occupational schemes, the key role of private insurances. Unemployment benefits, for instance, were devolved to the trade unions self-help, under the

¹³⁵ «Loi du 11 mars 1932 modifiant les titres III et V du livre 1^{er} du code du travail et l'article 2101 du code civil», *JO*, 12 mars 1932.

¹³⁶ P. V. Dutton, *The Origins of the French Welfare State. The Struggle for social reform in France 1914-1947*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 118-130, and pp. 178-182.

supervision of the Labour Office. But mutualism forged the whole setting of social insurances, geographically and financially decentralized along corporatist/occupational lines.¹³⁷ In the family policies, instead, the interwar France did important steps toward State-directed and universalistic services, albeit the fiscal involvement of the State was still relatively secondary. The universalization of the services did not automatically imply a right-based political discourse. The political consensus towards the extension of social provisions for the motherhood had first and foremost birth-rate concerns.¹³⁸ In that regard, there are continuities between the III Republic and the Vichy demographic actions, e.g. for the primacy of rural over urban families.

Italy: from the liberal to the fascist social legislation

In Italy, the interwar social policies did not experience major ruptures, in spite of political breakdowns; the Fascist seizure of power changed the institutional order in Italy, but the public policies developed from the last liberal provisions. The regime carried out longer-run projects of industrial and social modernization to “fill the gap” with other more advanced Western countries; protectionist barriers, public investments and subsidies to industry, public work, new industrial settlements.¹³⁹ These eclectic policies applied also for labour and social matters. While, for example, Fascism implemented harsh deflationary policy and outlawed the non-fascist trade unions, the regime could also claim for the settlement of a wide-range system of social insurances.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ B. Gibaud, *De la mutualité à la sécurité sociale. Conflits et convergences*, Paris, Les Éditions Ouvrières, 1986, pp. 96-104.

¹³⁸ C. Capuano, «L'internationalisation des milieux natalistes et familistes durant l'entre-deux-guerres : un échec ?», in Jean-Paul Zúñiga, *Pratiques du transnational. Terrains, preuves, limites*, Paris, Centre de Recherche Historique, 2011, pp. 37-55, particularly pp. 39-43.

¹³⁹ V. Zamagni, *Dalla periferia al centro. La seconda rinascita economica dell'Italia (1861-1990)*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1990, pp. 313-388. See also E. Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity*, Westport-London, Praeger, 2003.

¹⁴⁰ F. Cordova, *Verso lo Stato totalitario. Sindacati, società e fascismo*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2005.

In Italy, not unlike Britain and France, the Great War gave momentum for social reformism. The Italian government set up a special Commission on social insurances as part of the reconstruction policy. As a consequence of the war, social policies did not involve only the industrial workers, but also peasants and middle class. In 1919, the old-age pensions, concerning almost 12 million workers, became compulsory and the government passed the first unemployment insurances.¹⁴¹ The claims of trade unions were also granted: minimum wage, collective labour agreements, profit sharing via workers' share owning, the establishment of the Central Employment Office. The impetus toward the unification of social insurances came up against the limits of the liberal ruling class and the festering of the social fights in 1919–20. The results were feeble reforms, as for the establishment of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Fascism, instead, claimed to face the “social question” head-on. In reality, the Fascist regime retained continuities with the liberals in the Twenties, and enacted improvements in the Thirties, which nonetheless did not depart from trends in other nations. In the 1920s, the annexing of two former Austrian provinces, which had compulsory insurances against ill and sickness, did not serve to upward adequate the Italian insurances. Vice versa, those compulsory insurances were strongly restricted even where they were previously enacted. The Fascist regime favored the small retailers and their corporative claims, rather than salaried workers.¹⁴² The regime initially opted for relying on self-aid, and later to frame the occupational social protection within the corporative construction, resulting in a very high fragmentation of social protection on occupational basis.

From 1927 onward, the Fascist regime followed up on a more consistent social policy, whose ideological features were stated in the *Carta del Lavoro* (Labour Charter): work was defined as a social duty

¹⁴¹ «Decreto-Legge n. 603, 21 aprile 1919», *GU*, 1 maggio 1919, n.104; «Decreto Luogotenenziale n.6, 5 gennaio 1919», *GU*, 30 gennaio 1919, n.25.

¹⁴² P. Sylos Labini, *Saggio sulle classi sociali*, Bari, Laterza, 1974, pp. 73-79; J. Morris, «Fascism and the Origins of the Social Protection of Shopkeepers in Italy», *Contemporary European History*, n.3/1996, pp. 285-318.

and was protected in order to strengthen the national power. Fascists set up the collective employment agreements, the organization of the associations of workers and employers. The Labour Charter also committed in the improvement of social insurances: accident insurances; extension of the maternity allowances; insurance against work-related illnesses and tuberculosis; sickness insurances; involuntary unemployment benefits; insurance policies for young workers and measures to combat youth unemployment. Social insurances were halfway between corporatist fragmentation and compulsory public schemes. For example, the corporations took in charge the workers' professional training or actions for the security at work. The mixed funding employers/employees retained the liberal schemes of public compulsory insurances. The State, instead, controlled unemployment rates on national basis.¹⁴³

Although developed autonomously from the outset of the Labour Charter, Fascist rhetoric stressed the link among social insurances and corporative ideology. In the Thirties, this intermingling resulted in the creation of the *Enti Pubblici* (the Fascist Public Authorities) expressly designed to manage the social schemes and to centralize the services.¹⁴⁴ While the Fascists fostered the crystallization of privileges and inequalities among the insured categories, the legislative actions served to demonstrate the «socialist face of the regime».¹⁴⁵ These measures marked the departure from the liberal approach to become public policy; the harshest years of crisis 1929-32 compelled to strengthen the social protection schemes. The State became at the same time banker and entrepreneur, via the creation of the *Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale* (IRI, Institute for Industrial Reconstruction) and the *Istituto Mobiliare Italiano* (IMI, Institute for National Credit). New social agencies were also created: the *Istituto*

¹⁴³ *Carta del Lavoro*, edited in Gianni Silei, *Lo Stato sociale in Italia. Storia e documenti. Vol. I: Dall'Unità al fascismo (1861-1943)*, Manduria-Bari-Roma, Piero Lacaita, 2003, pp. 369-374.

¹⁴⁴ On the peculiarities of the *Enti Pubblici* in the long-run, see M. Salvati, «The Long History of Corporatism in Italy: A Question of Culture or Economics?», *Contemporary European History*, n. 2/2006, pp. 223-244.

¹⁴⁵ F. Bertini, «Il fascismo dalle assicurazioni per i lavoratori allo Stato sociale», in Marco Palla (ed.), *Lo Stato fascista*, Milano, La Nuova Italia, 2001, pp. 177-313.

Nazionale Fascista per l'Assicurazione contro gli Infortuni sul Lavoro (INFAIL, the Fascist National Fund for Work Injuries) unified all precedent funds in a single national authority; the *Istituto Nazionale Fascista della Previdenza Sociale* (INFPS, the Fascist National Fund of Social Security) succeeded the CNAS of the liberal era. From residual social insurances, the regime foreshadowed a comprehensive system, centralized (but also widespread and intrusive in the periphery), and controlled by the Ministry of the Corporations.

The first director of the INFPS was Giuseppe Bottai, former Head of the Ministry of the Corporations and theorist behind the Labour Charter. The subsequent legislation of the regime until 1943 moved along the lines of this first reorganization. The INFAIL enlarged the range of industrial injury insurances, now compulsory for every industry and inclusive of compensation and healthcare assistance. The amount of the compensation was linked to the workers' family units, relating social benefits with family policies; social insurances dwelt at the crossroad of demographic goals, policies of eugenic safeguard, effective modernization of public assistance and healthcare and the expansion of the State.¹⁴⁶ Similarly, alongside the classic risk categories – disability, old age, illness, unemployment, maternity – and the war pensions, the regime established two new categories: marriage and birth.

The Fascist measures moved toward a “solidarity” coverage, albeit primarily addressed to indigent, poor mothers, orphans. They were not, anyway, expression of any recognition of the social rights. The regime rather regimented the “social question” through the creation of State-owned authorities; the rationalization and unification of the insurances was the consequence of the aim for strengthening its political basis. The creation of these bodies created consensus and distributed social benefits according to the loyalty of administrative bodies and working categories. No wonder then, a very high occupational fragmentation of social benefits characterized the Italian

¹⁴⁶ D. La Banca, *Welfare in transizione. L'esperienza dell'ONMI (1943-1950)*, pp. 33-53; C. Mantovani, *Rigenerare la società. L'eugenetica in Italia dalle origini ottocentesche agli anni Trenta*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2004.

social protection.¹⁴⁷ Overall, the regime guided the Italian transition from the residual social insurances to the compulsory public schemes, managed by Fascist central authorities.

Fascist social policy changed over time according to different orientations, although always under the smoke-screen of the “corporatist revolution”. The shift occurred in the years 1929-32; from the liberal setting of the beginnings, the regime implemented wide-ranging socio-economic policies. The system of public authorities gathered different social and economic interests, waged political consensus and became a tool for implementing State-directed economy. The historian Chiara Giorgi wrote that «in the new reality of that time characterized by innovative forms of State interventionism in the economic processes, the Infps will become one of the most important auxiliary authorities of the Treasury, other than a fundamental provider of investments to fund public enterprises.»¹⁴⁸ The peculiar trait of the Italian social policy in the Thirties was the intermingling between social and economic policies. However, during that decade other countries, like the United States, Sweden, or Nazi Germany, arrived at similar solutions. Yet, the effective legislation implemented by the Fascist regime went beyond those put up in Great Britain and especially France. The awareness of the achievement made by the regime in this field resurfaced as propagandistic mottos in the eve of its dissolution in 1942.

1.3. The State and the crisis: corporatism, planning, collectivism, and Keynesianism on the verge of the war

The development of social insurances in the interwar years was incremental; previous schemes expanded for the recipients, the benefits and the risk categories. According to each national situation, certain insurances improved more than others. Italy and France rearranged their compulsory schemes; to some extent, the Italian and French

¹⁴⁷ L. Conti, *L'assistenza e la previdenza sociale. Storia e problemi*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1958.

¹⁴⁸ C. Giorgi, *La previdenza del regime. Storia dell'Inps durante il fascismo*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2004, p. 17, see also pp. 7-20.

reforms were more organic, while Britain mostly passed emergency legislation coping with mass unemployment. The two continental countries, which had a leeway to make-up, passed important and comprehensive legislative reforms, which constituted the foundations for further improvements. In turn, France and Italy did not reconsider the occupational/mutualist setting of the social insurances, with relative few room left for State's financial commitment. In Britain, instead, the need to patch the loss of incomes caused by high unemployment led to rethink the parameters to enjoy social benefits. Some elements of universalism were present, especially for the old-age pensions and the unemployment benefits, even if still directed to specific lower-income or risk categories. The issue of the citizenship-based social rights was not addressed in a coherent way, as during and after WWII. [TAB.3]

Overall, the social schemes converged toward centralization and administrative coherence. Bone of contention in the Thirties was the ways of dealing with the collapse of free market paradigms. In Western Europe two main directions were at stake: different forms of planning and corporatism. Eventually, both these ideas fell into the category of the "third way" between Soviet collectivism and *laissez-faire* capitalism.

The "corporatist myth" in Fascist Italy during the Great Depression

In Italy, the regime claimed to have solved the contradictions of capitalism with new forms of social organization. In his discourses to the trade unions, Mussolini remarked that corporative collaboration took over the class struggle.¹⁴⁹ This was the official stance of the regime, which actually hid the harsh and thorough confrontation of the different trends within Fascism. The settlement of the social strife for the "supreme interest of the nation" was the classical formulation of the philosopher Giovanni Gentile and the jurist Alfredo Rocco, who also

¹⁴⁹ B. Mussolini, «Il secolo scorso ha visto l'economia capitalistica, il secolo attuale vedrà l'economia corporativa. Congresso dei Sindacati fascisti, Roma 7 maggio 1928-VII», in Id., *Mussolini parla agli operai*, Roma, Confederazione Fascista dei Lavoratori dell'Industria, 1941, pp. 25-27.

TAB.3 Reforms of the social insurances in Great Britain, France and Italy, and funding mechanisms (1919-1939)

	Legislation/Government	Policy Area
Great Britain	<p><i>Widows', Orphans', and Old-Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1925/Conservatives</i></p> <p><i>Unemployment Insurance Act, 1920/Conservatives</i></p> <p><i>Unemployment Act, 1934/National Government</i></p>	<p>First public contributory pensions scheme, funded by workers and employers</p> <p>Extensions of working categories; dole system funded by workers and employers</p> <p>Creation of UAB (non-contributory unemployment assistance); extension of contributory benefits</p>
France	<p><i>Loi du 5 avril 1928 /National Government (amended with the Loi du 30 avril 1930/Radical Party)</i></p> <p><i>Loi du 11 mars /Centre-Right</i></p> <p><i>Décret-loi du 29 juillet 1939 /Radical Party</i></p> <p><i>Loi du 20 juin 1936 /Front Populaire</i></p>	<p>Compulsory insurances against invalidity, sickness, and old-age pensions to all the industrial workers; set up of the High Council of the Social Insurances</p> <p>Compulsory family allowances to all the industrial and trade salaried workers (two children or more)</p> <p>Extension of the family allowances to the whole active population</p> <p>Two weeks paid vacations extended to all the salaried workers</p>
Italy	<i>Decreto Legge 21 aprile 1919/Liberal</i>	Compulsory old-age pensions for all the salaried

	<p><i>Decreto Luogotenenziale 5 gennaio 1919/Liberal</i></p> <p><i>Regio Decreto Legge 23 marzo 1933/Fascism</i></p> <p><i>Regio Decreto Legge 27 marzo 1933/Fascism</i></p> <p><i>Regio Decreto Legge 4 ottobre 1935/Fascism</i></p>	<p>workers</p> <p>Compulsory insurances against unemployment for farm/industrial salaried workers and employees</p> <p>Unification of the funds against industrial injuries under the INFAIL</p> <p>Coordination of all the compulsory insurances under the INFPS</p> <p>Social insurances became a State duty; the insurance contract is automatic as the social benefits</p>
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passed the anti-union legislation.¹⁵⁰ Both carried out a comprehensive critique of the doctrines centered on the class struggle: Liberalism and Marxism. The Fascist State was corporative as the different social bodies and interests found their representativeness, regulated by the government.¹⁵¹

Minister Bottai stated that the Labour Charter, by overcoming collectivism and individualism, showed to the “plutocratic” countries that «employers and workers [...] can make united front without being submitted to the spiteful democratic tradition.»¹⁵² Bottai justified corporatism by the collapse of the liberal State in its historical forms. He was committed to the administrative and intellectual deepening of corporatist theories; he created the *Scuola di Perfezionamento di Scienze Corporative*, which had an important role in the formation of the technocratic elite.¹⁵³ The “institutional” positions caged the most revolutionary trends within the Fascist trade unionism. These were still alive and inspired to varying degrees the coeval para-fascist movements in Europe.¹⁵⁴ The “left-wing” Fascist Ugo Spirito supported the creation of a State of producers, through the “owner corporatism”, that is, the shareholding by all the producers in each enterprise.¹⁵⁵ His ideas were minority during the *Ventennio*, but returned with the collapse of the regime in 1943; assimilated to the so called “Fascist left-wing”, they had a role in the last Fascist programmes.

¹⁵⁰ «Legge n. 563 del 3 aprile 1926», *GU*, 14 aprile 1926, n. 87.

¹⁵¹ B. Mussolini [G. Gentile], *La dottrina del Fascismo*, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1935; on Alfredo Rocco, see G. Simone, *Il Guardasigilli del regime. L'itinerario politico e culturale di Alfredo Rocco*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2012;

¹⁵² G. Bottai, *La Carta del Lavoro*, Roma, Edizioni del Lavoro, 1928, p. 12.

¹⁵³ S. Cassese, «Bottai e l'economia fascista», in Renzo De Felice (ed.), *L'economia italiana tra le due guerre. 1919-1939*, Roma, Ipsoa, 1984, p. 120.

¹⁵⁴ F. Perfetti, *Il sindacalismo fascista. Dalle origini alla vigilia dello Stato corporativo (1919-1930). Vol I*, Rome, Bonacci Editore, 1988; on other corporative experiences in the Thirties, see the essays in A. Costa Pinto (ed.), *Corporatism and Fascism: the Corporatist Wave in Europe*, London, Routledge, 2017; D. Musliedak (ed.), *Les expériences corporatives dans l'aire latine*, Berne, Peter Lang, 2010; A. Mazzacane, A. Somma, M. Stolleis, (eds.), *Il corporativismo nelle dittature sudeuropee*, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 2005.

¹⁵⁵ U. Spirito, *Il corporativismo*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2009.

The spreading of corporatism – emphasized by the Fascist propaganda – could be correlated with the harshening of the economic crisis. Fascism adopted a thorough policy which included corporate and banks bailouts, creation of industrial cartels and trusts, protectionism, State intervention to save private enterprises; these measures helped to control the prices and to regulate industrial investments. Policies of wage squeeze, instead, were eased by the corporatist structures. Statistical arrangements allowed the regime to adjust the figures on unemployment, which in reality was stable around 15%. The study of the Fascist economic policies before and during the Great Depression is out of the scope of this thesis. At all events, they had different stages; initially, in accordance with some liberal goals, they emphasized productivism, while in the Thirties the regime put in place policies for industrial recovery and modernization. The regime seized the opportunity to regulate industrial and economic life, and to confront the “plutocratic” capitalist powers.¹⁵⁶

Corporatism was perceived by various milieus, both in Italy and abroad, as being the most viable solution to recover from the crisis and reorganize the industrial relations. Fascism tried to boost this idea through direct propaganda and the promotion of cultural initiatives.¹⁵⁷ The *Convegno italo-francese di studi corporativi*, held in Rome in 1935, was a good example of it. The meeting was organized by the *Istituto Fascista di Cultura*, which promoted Fascist ideology in Italy and abroad, and had Bottai and Hubert Lagardelle as political sponsors. The meeting gathered some of the most relevant Fascist intellectuals such as Spirito and Bottai, with former revolutionary unionists, Edmondo Rossoni and Luigi Razza, and representatives of the Fascist industrial trade unions. On the French side, participated exponents of the *non conformistes* and critical sectors of the trade unionism, with less relevance for the traditional right-wings. The most consistent group adhered to the

¹⁵⁶ B. Mussolini, «La crisi economica mondiale», in Id., *Il corporativismo fascista*, Firenze, La Fenice, 1983, pp. 89-92; Partito Nazionale Fascista, *La politica sociale del fascismo*, Rome, Libreria dello Stato, 1936.

¹⁵⁷ See for examples the set of pamphlet on the Labour Charter, *La Carta del Lavoro nei principi generali del diritto fascista*, Rome, Istituto Nazionale per le Relazioni Culturali con l'estero, 1942.

movements *Ordre Nouveau*, *Homme Nouveau* and *Esprit*; Paul Marion, George Roditi, Emmanuel Mounier, and Gaston Bergery were some of the delegates. Also representatives of *XXeme Siècle* and *Homme Réel* were invited. The debates did not untangle the main issues of corporatism and from the Italian point of view the meeting failed its goals. Nonetheless, it allowed the French *non conformistes* to deepen the study of corporatism in the context of the crisis of French republican institutions in the Thirties.¹⁵⁸ The meeting was one of the most relevant attempts by Fascists to promote corporatism and to provide cultural sophistication to it, just the year after the introduction of the corporations by law.

After 1935, however, the intellectual debate lost momentum. In Italy, corporatism became an administrative and bureaucratic matter. The historiographic debate on Italian corporatism distinguished between the “ideological” corporatism supported by Fascism, which refers to a specific historical context, and the broader European trend that involved employment relations, representative bodies, decision-making structures.¹⁵⁹ According to historian Rolf Petri “corporatism” as set of institutions, practices, legislation went beyond the Fascist ideological scope. Fascism reluctantly opted for corporatism, and later autarchy, only in the 1930s. The corporative organization and the autarchic policies grounded on the neo-classical theory and their cultural background dated back to Neo-mercantilism and liberal protectionism.¹⁶⁰ In Petri’s interpretation, the theoretical bases of “Corporatism” should not be retraced in a specific ideology, but rather in a set of practices of socio-economic mediation and inclusion of private business within the decision-making processes.

¹⁵⁸ G. Parlato, *Il convegno di studi italo-francesi (1935) con il testo integrale degli atti*, Roma, Fondazione Ugo Spirito, 1990.

¹⁵⁹ A. Gagliardi, *Il corporativismo fascista*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2010; S. Cassese, *Lo Stato fascista*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2010; see also the contributions in M. Pasetti (ed.), *Progetti corporativi tra le due guerre mondiali*, Roma, Carocci, 2006; Id., *L'Europa corporativa. Una storia transnazionale tra le due guerre mondiali*, Bologna, Bononia University Press, 2016.

¹⁶⁰ R. Petri, *Von der Autarkie zum Wirtschaftswunder. Wirtschaftspolitik un industrieller Wandel in Italien 1935-1963*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag Tübingen, 2001, pp. 32-59.

The Fascist “formal corporatism” did not achieve its declared goals: corporatism did not solve the class struggle nor overhauled the conflict of the different vested interests. The “substantial corporatism”, instead, pre-existed and survived to the Fascist wave.¹⁶¹ Corporative tools to settle social strife and to harmonize the productive and economic factors were enacted: collective agreements, public authorities, the cartels, the study institutions and committees, the price regulations and production, social protection matters. In this sense, some of the Fascist corporative institutions and methods, e.g. the *Enti Pubblici* and the collective agreements, survived to the regime. They contributed to the Italian economic modernization, arguably because they were, in reality, normative tools of interest intermediation, related to the reorganization of functional interests in industrial societies: «rightly, Schmitter’s distinction of a *state corporatism* from the rising postwar *societal corporatism*, refers mostly to the highly differentiated, but equally efficient, integration of the enterprises and social organizations in the economic decision-makings. Precisely because the Fascist Corporatism did not overcome the opposite and conflicting interests, as required by its “integralist” representatives, it eventually revealed to be a specific form of the Neo-corporatist practices, enacted in many 20th century mass societies.»¹⁶²

At that time, however, corporatism served to the Fascist anti-“demo-plutocratic” propaganda, which confusingly equalized corporatism and social policy. In reality, the corporatist system concerned the organization of the labour market, the prices and the production, while social insurances were somehow disengaged by the corporations and their management was controlled by State-owned authorities. The Fascists tended to superimpose corporatism and social legislation; since the very beginning, they identified corporatism with

¹⁶¹ P. C. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch, (eds.), *Trends Toward Corporatist Intermediation*, London, Sage, 1979; Id., (eds.), *Patterns of Corporatist Policy Making*, London, Sage, 1982; AA.VV., *The Corporate State, Reality or Myth?: A Symposium*, London, Centre for Studies in Social Policy, 1976; S. D. Berger, (ed.), *Organizing Interests in Western Europe: Pluralism, Corporatism, and the Transformation of Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

¹⁶² R. Petri, *Von der Autarkie zum Wirtschaftswunder*, p.81.

the “social functions” of the State to secure social justice.¹⁶³ In Fascist propaganda, the social legislation was a crucial part of the Fascist revolution in the «construction of the “new order” [...] in function of the power of the Fascist idea, which is the idea of social justice, civil solidarity, and national unity.»¹⁶⁴ Social policy encompassed social insurances and corporatism, as ratified by the Labour Chamber, and as exemplified by the political career of Bottai, supporter of corporatism, Minister of the Corporations from 1929 to 1932, and first President of INFPS until 1935. Corporatism was the crowbar of the social propaganda, to gain consensus at home and to promote the Fascism abroad, in the year of crisis.

France: economic orthodoxy and “non conformist” debates

Corporatist thought had a rather long history in France.¹⁶⁵ This theory was shared by reactionary Catholics and nationalists, as well as by some strands of the revolutionary unionism; La Tour du Pin or Charles Maurras belonged to the former, while Lagardelle, Gustav Hervé, Georges Valois to the latter. These theorizations dated back to pre-1914, but got new blood in the interwar period; Historian Zeev Sternhell argued that sectors of the French political culture close to Sorel’s revolutionary unionism borrowed from nationalism some theoretical elements, coming to a new theoretical synthesis.¹⁶⁶ According to him, Fascism was born in France even before WWI, merging Socialism and Nationalism; the Italian model represented the statehood achievement two decades later. In reality, there is no direct correlation between Fascist corporatism and the French debate in the 1930s. Essays, revues and pamphlets backing corporatism flourished around the Twenties and the Thirties; many of them had little originality, but all showed a “French background” and a very limited influence from the coeval Italian experiments in that field.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ G. Vella, *Stato liberale-democratico e Stato corporativo fascista*, Trani, Paganelli, 1930.

¹⁶⁴ PNF, *La politica sociale del fascismo*, p.9.

¹⁶⁵ See the essays in Steven L. Kaplan, P. Minard (eds.), *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁶ Z. Sternhell, *Ni droite ni gauche. L'idéologie fasciste en France*, Paris, Gallimard, 2012.

¹⁶⁷ G. Pirou, *Le Corporatisme*, Paris, Sirey, 1935; Id., *Essais sur le corporatisme*, Paris, Sirey, 1938; M. Bouvier-Ajam, *La Doctrine corporative*, Paris, Sirey, 1937; E. Mathon, *La*

In the Thirties the corporatist theories coexisted with other modernizing trends, usually gathered around the French label of *les non conformistes des Années 30*, which encompassed different groups, intellectuals and political orientations, which shared some common characteristics.¹⁶⁸ They gravitated around revues like the abovementioned *Ordre Nouveau*, *Homme Nouveau* and *Esprit*. But some walk-outs of the far right could be assimilated to this intellectual vague, as well as the research group *X-Crise*. These latter were for the main part young technocrats of the *Ecole Polytechnique* and had high economic, technical and administrative preparation. They were an elite that claimed for State-driven family, pronatalist and welfare policies; a break with the worn-out Republican institutions; economic planning; anti-communism and some “national revolutionary” aspirations. This did not imply any sympathy for Fascism, as journals like *Esprit* campaigned for “moral” revolutions, alternative to Fascism in their arguments against Liberalism and Bolshevism.¹⁶⁹

They generally had an eclectic interest for the foreign and transatlantic coeval experiences.¹⁷⁰ Groups like *X-Crise* were keen of the policies and theories, including the Soviet plans and corporatism.¹⁷¹ This modernizing vague eventually penetrated the governmental machinery. Already by the end of the Thirties some personalities close to the *non conformistes* were public functionaries; some of them adhered

corporation. *Base de l'organisation économique*, Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1934; A. Boissard, *La renaissance de la corporation*, Paris, Siley, 1934; F. Perroux, *Capitalisme et communauté du travail*, Paris, Sirey, 1938. See the editorial series «Le nouvel ordre économique». See also M.H. Elbow, *French Corporative Theory, 1789-1948 : A Chapter in the History of Ideas*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1953; J.-P. Le Crom, «L'Entre-deux-Guerres: un pré-corporatisme?», in Steven L. Kaplan, Philippe Minard (ed.s), *op.cit.*, pp. 369-386.

¹⁶⁸ J.-L. Loubet Del Bayle, *Les non-conformistes des Années 30. Une tentative de renouvellement de la pensée politique française*, Paris, Seuil, 1969.

¹⁶⁹ P. Nord, *France's New Deal. From the Thirties to the Postwar Era*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010, pp. 18-67. The journal *Esprit* was directed by Emanuel Mounier, the founding father of the *personnalisme*, an important trend among young French Christians.

¹⁷⁰ D. Strauss, «The Roosevelt Revolution: French Observers and the New Deal», *American Studies*, 2/1973, pp. 25-42.

¹⁷¹ See the monthly bulletins *Centre polytechnicien d'études économiques. X Crise*, Paris, 1931-1939.

to Vichy but a good part joined the Resistance. Their planning-centered policies might affect post-war planning with the theoretical and political background of the Thirties. An illustrative case was Pierre Laroque, social reformer and civil servant in the 1930s and the 1940s; he initially collaborated with Vichy government to join Free France in London and eventually became the founding father of the French *sécurité sociale* after the war.¹⁷²

A third consistent trend in the French debate in the 1930s was *planisme*, which eventually converged to some technocratic solutions, but originally came out of the revisionist socialists. Directly influenced by the Secretary of the *Parti Ouvrier Belge*, Henri De Man, relevant sectors of the French Socialist Party (SFIO) and of the CGT, pushed for the adoption of *planisme* in the official programme of socialist organizations.¹⁷³ These groups were the *néo-socialistes* of Marcel Déat, and the trends *Syndicats !* of the Secretary of the CGT René Belin, both anti-Communists.¹⁷⁴ They joined later the Vichy regime. The supporters of *planisme* harked back to wartime “socialist” planning, where the State managed a mixed economy, under the democratic supervision of producers’ representative bodies. The planning was presented as a “third way”, alternative to Communism and reformism. *Planisme* sought to overcome Marxism and to retain democratic institutions. It criticized therefore the reformists, who were not able to contrast Bolshevism and Fascism. Even if the main part of the *néo-socialistes* eventually joined fascism (and the same did De Man), *planisme* was originally meant to bring the socialists and the democracies out of the political and cultural paralysis of in front of the rise of fascism in Europe.

The background of all these movements was the crisis of the French III Republic. France was the last country to be affected by the crisis, but – unlike the others – could not recover until the aftermath of

¹⁷² E. Jabbari, *Pierre Laroque and the Welfare State in Postwar France*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012.

¹⁷³ H. De Man, *Le Plan du travail*, Bruxelles, Institut d'économie européenne, 1934.

¹⁷⁴ M. Bonnafous, M. Déat, A. Marquet, and B. Montagnon, *Néo-socialisme ? Ordre, autorité, nation*, Paris, Grasset, 1933.

the war. In certain economic indicators France diverged from the American and British trends; unemployment, for instance, became one of the major issues only during WWII, and especially after the defeat. The causes of the long recovery of France are controversial, but deflationary policies, the stubborn refusal to devalue, indirect taxation in place of more consistent income taxes, the protectionist policies, and the persistence of Malthusian mentalities within the elites contributed to prevent economic recovery in the Thirties.¹⁷⁵ The outdated orthodoxy matched the overall backwardness of industrial apparatus, in front of an harsh politics of cut spending that encompassed public pensions and even the military, in absence of wide-ranging plans of rearmament as the British and German ones.¹⁷⁶

The Thirties were also dominated by political instability. Eleven governments succeeded between 1932 and 1936; they did not have coherent foreign policies in front of Nazi Germany and, at home, facing the rise of the far-right. The social and political strife culminated in the facts of 6th February 1934, when the Fascist leagues clashed against the police in front of the Parliament.¹⁷⁷ As a consequence, the French lefts reorganized in the Popular Front, which won the elections in 1936 with promises of social and democratic progresses operating a U-turn with previous policies. The first government of Léon Blum introduced social and economic reforms: collective agreements, labour legislation, price and wages policies, paid leaves, reductions of the weekly working hours. It passed also a first vague of nationalizations, authorities to support the agricultural sector, the control of the financial operations and budgetary measures for macro-economic stabilization.¹⁷⁸ All these actions did not prevent the drop in production and consumption, the need to devalue and the rising unemployment. The weakening of popular support and the liberal-conservative

¹⁷⁵ J. Jackson, *The Politics of Depression in France, 1932-1936*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985.

¹⁷⁶ T. Inlay, «Democracy and War: Political Regime, Industrial Relations, and Economic Preparations for War in France and Britain up to 1940», *The Journal of Modern History*, n.1/2007, pp. 1-47.

¹⁷⁷ E. Weber, *La France des années 30. Tourments et perplexités*, Paris, Fayard, 1995.

¹⁷⁸ Jean Vigreux, *Histoire du Front Populaire*, Paris, Tallandier, 2016, pp. 147-196.

opposition marked the return of Edouard Daladier at the government and the backlash in the social and economic reforms.

The Thirties in France were a hive of intellectual debate; from corporatism to *dirigisme* and planning, different solutions were supposed to address the crisis of the French institutions and economy. Corporatists harked back to the anti-Republican traditions of the Catholic and nationalist far-right. Planners had a modernizing programme, not necessarily anti-democratic, but sharing with the corporatists the mistrust for the *laissez-faire* capitalism and for the inefficiencies of the Republican democracy. These two groups eventually confronted for the hegemony during the Vichy experience, as they were factually lumped together by a negative outlook of Third Republic's moral and political collapse.

Britain: the Keynesian revolution in the making?

The identification between "corporatism" and "Fascism" was purposely propagandized by the Fascists. In reality, the keen interest for forms of industrial collaboration in Britain did not imply neither the adoption of "corporatism", as socio-economic practice, nor the adherence "Fascism", as political ideology. Corporatism was historically stranger to Anglo-Saxon economic culture. The fewer groups that studied Italian corporations, were not interested in them as a specific product of Fascism, but rather as a doable way to achieve social concord in national life.¹⁷⁹ As for the Fascist ideology, it only inspired Edward Mosley's British Union of Fascists. This movement never gained a wide public support, and also the pretended sympathy of Anglo-Saxon ruling classes for the Fascist regime has probably been overestimated.¹⁸⁰

From the mid-'30s were rather the Nazi socio-economic policies to constitute a potential danger.¹⁸¹ The lack of interest in the Italian

¹⁷⁹ L.P. Carpenter, «Corporatism in Britain, 1930-45», *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1/1976, pp. 3-25.

¹⁸⁰ M. Palla, *Fascismo e stato corporativo. Un'inchiesta della diplomazia britannica*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1992, pp. 117-8.

¹⁸¹ N. Götz, K. K. Patel, «Facing the Fascist Model: Discourse and the Construction of Labour Service in the USA and Sweden in the 1930s and 1940s», *Journal of Contemporary*

corporatism was probably also due to the poor knowledge of the very conditions in the country, even if the Italian Embassy in London reported that – between 1929 and 1931 – in Britain arose a certain interest for some of the assistance and social institutions of Fascist Italy.¹⁸² However, the studies on Fascist Italy were rather sporadic and had limited follow-up. A keener interest rather concerned the Soviet model. This was the case of the Webbs' enthusiasm for Soviet Communism:

«In 1933, when settling the title of the book-to-be, we chose "Soviet Communism" to express our purpose of describing the actual organization of the USSR. Before publication, in 1935, we added the query, "A New Civilization?". What we have learnt of the developments during 1936-1937 has persuaded us to withdraw the interrogation mark. We see no sign in the USSR of any weakening on the stern prohibition of private profit-making; [...] Moreover, fifteen years' experience of three successive Five-Year Plans has demonstrated the practicability of what the western world declared to be beyond human capacity, namely, the advance planning of the wealth production and the cultural activities of an immense population.»¹⁸³

The Webbs represented the "collectivist" trend within the Fabian movement and their interest for the Russian experience grounded on the acknowledgement of «the economic discovery that the substitution, for profit-making manufacturing, of planned production for community consumption frees the nation [...] from

History, 1/2006, pp. 57-73; P.R. Sinclair, «Fascism and Crisis in Capitalist Society», *New German Critique*, 9/1976, pp. 87-112, particularly pp. 93-97.

¹⁸² ACS, MinCulPop, Reports, 21/38/Paresce Gabriele, «Rapporto del Dott. Gabriele Paresce trasmesso da codesto R. Ufficio con Appunto n. 3142/1161 del 26 maggio u.s.».

¹⁸³ S. Webb, B. Webb, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*, London-New York, Longmans & Green, 1944, pp. 971-972.

the hitherto incessant social malady of involuntary mass unemployment.»¹⁸⁴

The temporary infatuation of Labour Party with planning was however due to Cole, who supported socialization of industries and property.¹⁸⁵ This stance was part of a wider debate on “planning policies” and management of economy, which overcame the socialists. Unlike the French planners, these groups pushed forward for economic and political reforms within the capitalist system. This was the case of the *Political and Economic Planning* (PEP), which had an important role as research institute after the war or of the *New Five Years*, which claimed for progressive planning to reconcile the different national interests.

Their cultural background differed from the French *non conformistes*, but they equally were in favor of State’s takeover of some functions of the free market. The pro-planning ferment of British “centrist” milieu was rather heterogeneous, and the “myth” of the economic plan progressively declined. Nonetheless, it paved the way to State’s interventions, such as in housing policy. The governmental committees appointed before and during the war, and the 1947 *Town and Country Planning Act* might owe something to this debate.¹⁸⁶ The demand-side oriented programs for social housing combined demand-side policies, urban decongestion and social enhancement.¹⁸⁷ After 1936, Keynesian solutions covered the lion’s share in public debate and many former “planners” moved into Keynesianism, even if this was something theoretically and practically different from the

¹⁸⁴ Ivi., p. 972.

¹⁸⁵ G.D.H., *Guild Socialism Re-Stated*, London, Leonard Parsons, 1920; Id., *A Plan for Britain*, London, Clarion Press, 1930; Id., *Socialist Control of Industry*, London, Socialist League, 1933.

¹⁸⁶ HMSO, *Town and Country Planning Act, 1947*. 10 & 11 Geo. 6. Ch. 51; see also J.A. Yelling, *Slums and Redevelopment. Policy and Practice in Britain, 1918-1945*, London, UCL Press, 1992.

¹⁸⁷ Town and Country Planning Association, *Replanning Britain: being a summarized report of the Oxford conference of the Town and Country Planning Association, Spring 1941*, London, Faber & Faber Limited, 1941.

planning as prefigured in the 1930s. The Keynesian agenda proved to be a tool to settle differences and establish consensus, providing «an early indication of the role played by Keynesian economics in national politics during and after the war.»¹⁸⁸

Mass unemployment decisively affected the debate in this sense. The government was called upon to directly assume responsibility of more structured economic policies, besides social benefits.¹⁸⁹ Keynes' *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* was the outcome of a long reflection on monetary and ideological limits of the classical theory, started with the 1919 pamphlet *The Economic Consequence of the Peace*.¹⁹⁰ In his masterpiece, Keynes turned the linchpins of the classical theories upside-down. He challenged the vision of the self-regulating capitalism, which proved to tend to underemployment and underinvestment. Once assumed the many fails of the free market, the revolutionary part of his theory consisted in the renewed role of the State to boost the effective demands, which otherwise might fall even more. The *General Theory* was not a political agenda, but rather an analysis of the structural problems of the British economy and a gesture of how the contingent problems of capitalism could be solved with a radical "paradigm shift".

More detailed policies were the outcome of this new approach; the State could help to "multiply" the incomes available for consumption, investment and employment. The means to achieve this result were public works, redistribution of income and public expenditure, even at the expenses of deficit spending and increase of public debt, which, in a time of crisis was a tool to

¹⁸⁸ Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning. The Debate on Economic Planning in Britain in the 1930s*, p. 345.

¹⁸⁹ D. Lloyd George, *How to Tackle Unemployment. The Liberal Plans as laid before the Government and the Nation*, London, The Press Printers, 1930; Labour Party, *How to Conquer Unemployment*, London, Labour Party, 1927; J.A. Hobson, *Rationalisation and Unemployment. An Economic Dilemma*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1930.

¹⁹⁰ J.M. Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, New York, Harcourt, 1920; Id., *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes. Vol. XIII. The General Theory and After. Part I. Preparation*, London, MacMillan, 1973.

recover. Just after the publication of the *General Theory*, Keynes committed himself to the divulcation of his theory, which he himself considered revolutionary in many regards.¹⁹¹ He run up against the Treasury, which entrenched in orthodox positions. The Treasury denied the possibility that fiscal policy could affect the effective demand and boost economic activities and employment. Keynes advocated a change of course in British economic policy. It has been argued that most of his writings might be understood in the light of the effort to convince the Treasury to abandon its stance.¹⁹² The “Treasury View” was gradually undermined by events, as one by one all the bulwarks of orthodoxy weakened: gold standard and free trade collapsed in 1931, while the 1932-6 unemployment schemes demanded state borrowing and the rearmament from 1937 was achieved by an increase in taxation.

On the other side, Keynes’ ideas spread among the economists and the opinion. Many scholars and economists – labeled under the name of “Keynesians” – borrowed elements and ideas from Keynes’ *General Theory*, also distorting some of his assumptions.¹⁹³ Beveridge himself initially opposed to Keynesian theories on unemployment. Even if he was transitioning to more critical positions with regard to free market and the classical liberal assumption, he criticized the *General Theory* as «a work that seemed to challenge many of his most cherished beliefs about both the nature of social science and the direction of public policy. In general he took strong objection to Keynes’ reliance on deductive reasoning and to his reduction of economic concepts to a high level of abstraction.»¹⁹⁴ Keynes’ theories split the British academic world, and Beveridge only partially received them. Their divergences were ironed out during the war, thanks to the

¹⁹¹ Id., *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*. Vol. XIV. *The General Theory and After. Part II. Defence and Development*, London, MacMillan, 1973.

¹⁹² G. C. Peden, *Keynes and His Critics. Treasury Responses to the Keynesian Revolution 1925-1946*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.

¹⁹³ T.W.Hutchison, *Keynes versus the “Keynesians”... ?*, London, Institute of Economic Affairs, 1977.

¹⁹⁴ J. Harris, *William Beveridge. A Biography*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997, p. 321.

common effort to have their proposals adopted by the government.¹⁹⁵

The economic policies in the Thirties between conjuncture and intellectual change

In the Thirties, a broad debate crossed Western countries on the methods to respond to the crisis of *laissez-faire* capitalism, without falling into the Soviet collectivism. The Great Depression and its aftermaths challenged the political legitimization in France and Britain; the aim was to integrate the working masses within the economic and productive processes, resolving the class struggle in favor of the stabilization of capitalism.¹⁹⁶ The Italian regime's source of legitimization at home and in the international arena tapped into the uncertainties that spread in Western Europe.

From 1933 on, Fascists devoted their propaganda to identify "Fascism" with "corporatism". This narrative was just in time to prove that Italian industrial policies offered a solution for the crisis of liberal capitalism.¹⁹⁷ The Fascist "revolutionary" ambitions had very little success abroad and among popular masses. The European reactionary and para-fascist movements captured the coercive aspects of the corporative experience, that is, the authoritarian regulation of the class struggle, which was the effective dynamic set in motion by the Fascist

¹⁹⁵ M. C. Marcuzzo, «Whose Welfare State? Beveridge versus Keynes», in Roger E. Backhouse and Tamotsu Nishizawa (eds.), *No Wealth but Life. Welfare Economics and the Welfare State in Britain, 1880-1945*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 189-206.

¹⁹⁶ M. De Angelis, *Keynesianism, Social Conflict and Political Economy*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2000, particularly pp. 1-74; C. R. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe. Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 355-594.

¹⁹⁷ James Q. Whitman, «Of Corporatism, Fascism, and the First New Deal», *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 4/1991, pp. 747-778, particularly pp. 752-763; F. Cavarocchi, *Avanguardie dello spirito. Il fascismo e la propaganda culturale all'estero*, Roma, Carocci, 2010; M. Pasetti, «Un'operazione di "marketing": la propaganda all'estero del corporativismo fascista», in Alberto Pen-Rodríguez, Heloísa Paulo, *A cultura do poder. A propaganda nos estados autoritários*, Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2016, pp. 215-238.

regime.¹⁹⁸ While British ruling classes proved to disregard Italian corporatism, in France it had many supporters, at least until 1935-6. Except for Georges Valois' *Faisceau des combattants et de producteurs* and for Jacques Doriot's endorsement of the Fascist corporative model in Italy, there was no necessarily identification between corporatism and Fascism.¹⁹⁹ The *non conformistes* received the Italian experiment merely as the effort to overcome *laissez-faire*, individualism and the class struggle through new forms of social organization and economic regulations.

Louis Franck, a French contemporary observer of corporatism in Italy, criticized the general lack of knowledge of its real mechanisms. He concluded that the regime only restated older protectionist principles, made even unfairer after the crush of the workers' organizations; Fascism eventually solved the class struggle in support of industrialists.²⁰⁰ These became an oligarchy within the corporatist institutions, while the interests of the industrial organizations intermingled with those of the party and the bureaucracies. From his pages emerged the concern of good part of the French left-wing, squeezed between domestic crisis and the rise of the Nazi Germany. In the political and economic uncertainties of that time, some intellectual and politicians – in the socialist area – started to wonder «if Fascism was the Western form of socialism, and the Bolshevism the Eastern form.»²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ G. Santomassimo, *La terza via fascista. Il mito del corporativismo*, Roma, Carocci, 2006, pp. 181-190.

¹⁹⁹ R. Soucy, *Le fascisme français, 1924-1933*, Paris, Presse Universitaire de France, 1989, pp. 179-242; Id., *Fascismes français ? 1933-1939. Mouvements antidémocratiques*, Paris, Editions Autrement, 2004, pp. 303-358.

²⁰⁰ Franck's studies were among the main references for the supporters of Fascist policies as "failure". This interpretation has been nowadays revisited by historiography. M. Pasetti, «Neither Bluff nor Revolution. The Corporations and the Consolidation of the Fascist Regime», in Giulia Albanese, Roberta Pergher (eds.), *In the Society of the Fascists: Acclamation, Acquiescence and Agency in Mussolini's Italy*, New York, Palgrave Mac Millan, 2012, pp. 87-107.

²⁰¹ L. Franck, *Il corporativismo e l'economia dell'Italia fascista*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 1990, p. 31.

The equation between “Fascism” and “corporatism” should be revisited beyond political and historical commonplaces. The witnesses of the former Fascists – usually coming from the “revolutionary” wings – tried to portray the interpretation of a half-finished revolution, while historiography borrowed stereotypical views of Fascism as a “propaganda bluff”, of which Franck’s constituted one of the main references. In fact, the regime opted for emergency measures, which later became structural. In that regard, is commendable the opinion of historian Gianpasquale Santomassimo: «the choice made, beyond the rhetorical smokescreen, was in fact the mixed economy. [...] the corporative framework was not the central element, and the solution adopted in Italy did not differ, in its broad lines, from those of the other “capitalist” economies. In addition, it worth notice the return of substantial hegemony of the liberal economic thought, and the withdrawal of corporative doctrines, not quantitatively, but in the effective capacity to have an impact and to propose solutions and perspectives. It is as if, once passed the corporations, the whole ideological construction started to creak, to survive as mere rhetoric and propaganda.»²⁰² The same dynamic applied for the social insurances, where the ideological discourse of the regime masked the substantial convergence towards the other European trends.

By the end of the Thirties, forms of State intervention were shared by different political systems. Even France abandoned the orthodox approach with the Popular Front; the nationalizations of strategic sectors, the creation of the State railways and a stricter control over the Bank of France were followed by a programme of public spending for the rearmament, especially after 1936. Given the previous outflow of private capitals, to manage this programme the government had to plan the industrial production in heavy sectors, the funding with public capitals and the regulation of the industrial relations. According to historian Robert Frankenstein, the rearmament had a fundamental role in the further development of French policies, as «it was at once the best forerunner and the foundation to the current interventionism which broadly developed in civilian sector after the

²⁰² G. Santomassimo, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-214.

Second World War.»²⁰³ The effort for the rearmament compelled the government to partially rethink budgetary policies; the Head of Cabinet George Boris and the State Secretary Pierre Mendès-France proposed to fund it in deficit spending. This policy could questionably be defined “Keynesian” and had not carryover; it had mostly circumstantial reasons, and the Parliament rejected the bill.²⁰⁴ But it was the first attempt to introduce in French public policies more consistent planning. The plan for the rearmament confirmed the statement of the historian Eugen Weber, according to whom there was «continuity between the planning of State-driven economy, which paved the way to the triumphant success of the *commissariat au plan* of the 4th Republic, as well as to the collaboration between State and industry, which inspired the hierarchs of Vichy and the leaders of the economic miracle of the post-war.»²⁰⁵ Mendès-France, for instance, was one of the key figures in the economic modernization of France through planning, while at the eve of the war the theories of the planners were gradually shifting from the intellectual debate to the governmental policies.

Similar process occurred in Britain. The plans for the rearmament introduced economic policies that were not officially accepted in the governmental circles yet. Unlike France, however, the thorough debate on planning had a more solid background. Webbs’ fascination for Soviet collectivism was surely not shared by Keynes; however, after a travel to Russia, he also caught the inherent nature of the Soviet experiment, at the crossroad between «missionary religion and experimental economic technique.»²⁰⁶ Keynes did not regard Communism as an efficient economic system to address the contemporary issues of Western capitalism, but he positively assessed the ideological shift impressed by the Soviet Revolution. It was a

²⁰³ R. Frankenstein, «Intervention étatique et réarmement en France 1935-1939», *Revue économique*, n.4/1980, pp. 743-781, p. 781.

²⁰⁴ M. Margairaz, *L’État, les finances et l’économie. Histoire d’une conversion 1932-1952*, Paris, Ministère de l’Economie des Finances et du Budget, 1991, pp. 429-439.

²⁰⁵ E. Weber, *op. cit.*, p.15.

²⁰⁶ J.M.Keynes, «A Short View of Russia», London, Hogart Press, 1925, now in Id., *The Collected Writing of John Maynard Keynes. Vol. IX. Essays in Persuasion*, London, MacMillan, 1972, pp. 253-271.

counterexample to the lack of idealistic goals that affected capitalism: «a revolution in our ways of thinking and feeling about money may become the growing purpose of contemporary embodiments of the ideal. Perhaps, therefore, Russian Communism does represent the first confused stirrings of a great religion.»²⁰⁷ This evaluation was accompanied by the feeling that the older theoretical paradigms were outdated:

«Let us clear from the ground the metaphysical or general principles upon which, from time to time, *laissez-faire* has been founded. It is *not* true that individuals possess a prescriptive “natural liberty” in their economic activities. There is *no* “compact” conferring perpetual rights on those who Have or on those who Acquire. The world is *not* so governed from above that private and social interest always coincide. It is *not* so managed here below that in practice they coincide. It is *not* a correct deduction from the principles of economics that enlightened self-interest always operates in the public interest. Nor is it true that self-interest generally *is* enlightened; more often individuals acting separately to promote their own ends are too ignorant or too weak to attain even these. Experience does *not* show that individuals, when they make up a social unit, are always less clear-sighted than when they act separately.»²⁰⁸

The challenge of Keynesianism was not accepted initially by the government, which refused to open-up to budget policies. The first counter-cyclical public work policy was the rearmament programme, which from 1935 supported the pace of recovery and expansion of the heavy industries. While the Treasury was initially reluctant, the rearmament represented the more consistent Keynesian-like

²⁰⁷ Ivi. p. 269.

²⁰⁸ Id., «The end of *laissez-faire*», London, Hogart Press, 1926, now in Id., *The Collected Writing of John Maynard Keynes*. Vol. IX. *Essays in Persuasion*, pp. 287-288.

programme of public works and multiplier of effective demand, boosted by government expenditure and borrowings.

From 1933 to 1938 Britain spent approximatively 1,200 million pounds for the rearmament, less than half in comparison with the German military investments. The programme increased the production of the heavy industrial sectors (coal, iron and steel industries, engineering and shipbuilding), created employment (one million jobs per year), enabled some measure of “regional planning” of manpower allocation, and represented a wide-range programmes of rationalization in the allocation of resources.²⁰⁹ Other analyses challenged the effective impact of “Keynesian” multipliers, recognizing nonetheless the positive private sector’s response to a long-lasting programme of defence expenditure.²¹⁰ Whether Keynesian or not, the rearmament created new governmental bodies to manage the industrial process, like the Ministry of Supply, after the failure of the collaboration between government and industries.²¹¹

The gradual and reluctant transition to new ways to manage economy thanks to rearmament loan finance and expenditure did not imply, however, any conversion to “Keynesianism” in ideological terms. Treasury was increasingly attentive to the macro-economic impact of the fiscal policies, but only the war cut the Gordian knot of ideological resistances. On the one side, Britain managed public expenditure in such a scale that made necessary the adoption of tools that took into consideration the national-income accounts. On the other, the wartime climate favoured the agreement towards some Keynesian principles which overlooked the residual resistances in the parties and governmental administration.²¹²

²⁰⁹ G.C. Peden, *British Rearmament and the Treasury: 1932-1939*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1979.

²¹⁰ N. Craft, T. C. Mills, «Rearmament to the Rescue? New Estimates of the Impact of “Keynesian” Policies in 1930s’ Britain», *EHES Working Papers in Economic History*, 31/2012.

²¹¹ R. P. Shay Jr., *British Rearmament in the Thirties. Politics and Profit*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977.

²¹² P. Clarke, *The Keynesian Revolution in the Making, 1924-1936*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988, pp. 313-323.

Everywhere the debates – especially in the non-governmental circles – focused on the necessity to elaborate new forms of State interventionism, and opened-up to various forms of “mixed economy”. This transition was neither linear nor immediate; British ruling class in the Thirties still refused to tackle unemployment through public works, relying on cash benefits rather than countercyclical policies.²¹³ There is no agreement among economic historians on the factual implementation of Keynes’ public policies after 1941; some scholars even disputed the effective implementation of any “Keynesian revolution” in public policies.²¹⁴ The same applied for France, where the return of the liberals in 1938 slowed further involvement of the State in social and economic affairs. The tripartite structures put in place by the Popular Front, the attempt to settle forms of regulation and redistribution and the nationalizations of the military sectors frightened the liberal establishment. However, these structures of consultations and the first macro-economic approaches were not withdrawn in the subsequent years.²¹⁵ In Italy the economic policy was characterized by State intervention to rescue and finance the private sectors, and by the public control of industrial investments. This form of “mixed economy” accelerated the modernization of the industrial structures, in continuity with some productivism stances of the late Liberal era and laid the groundworks for further evolutions in the post-war.²¹⁶

²¹³ T. Skocpol, M. Weir, «State Structures and the Possibilities for “Keynesian” Responses to the Great Depression in Sweden, Britain, and the United States», in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, *Bring the State Back In*, pp. 107-163.

²¹⁴ See J. Tomlinson, «Why Was there Never a “Keynesian Revolution” in Economic Policy?», *Economy and Society*, 10/1981, pp. 72-87; A. Booth, «Defining a “Keynesians Revolution”», *The Economic History Review*, 2/1984, pp. 263-267; Id., «New Revisionists and the Keynesian Era in British Economic Policy», *Economic History Review*, 2/2001, pp. 346-366; G.C.Peden, «New revisionists and the Keynesian era in British economic policy: a comment», *Economic History Review*, 1/2003, pp. 118-124; A. Booth, «New Revisionists and the Keynesian era: an expanding consensus?», *Economic History Review*, 1/2003, pp. 125-130.

²¹⁵ M. Margairaz, *op.cit.*, pp. 367-496.

²¹⁶ R. Petri, *Storia economica d'Italia. Dalla Grande Guerra al miracolo economico*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2002.

As for the social insurances, the compulsory schemes were present in all the major countries, residual in their benefits and coverages, with wider room for opt-out and voluntary insurances. The policy-makers did not handle the issue of the social reforms as a unity, but rather treated it as a conjunctural policy; this might be the example of the overwhelming importance given to unemployment benefits in Britain or their substantial neglecting in France. Social policy was not coordinated among the different policy areas yet, but was submitted to an incremental process in scope and financial burden, due to emergency reasons, as well as to the creation of public authorities and a wider audience of recipients of the social services. Gradually, social insurances anchored in State structures and policies. The convergences, by the end of the Thirties, dwelt on the strengthening of compulsory/voluntary social schemes, to set up central administrative structures and to overcome the older residual and liberal ideology.

The adoption of “mixed economies” and strengthening of social insurances was not expected to be permanent in any of these three countries, even if there was a full debate on different ways to address the Great Depression. The rush towards the rearmaments involved all the major European countries, representing the testing ground for the mobilization and beyond. It committed the governments in public programmes and restored the industrial production. In Germany the arms industry circumscribed forms of “military Keynesianism”, and State’s stimuli on specific industrial sectors sustained the recovery and the growth.²¹⁷ Later, in the midst of “total war” the ideological mobilization led the European countries to address for the first time the social protection as a whole, overlapping the past experiences with the wartime situation, and projecting the reformulation of the “new” social policy to a future of peace and prosperity after the war.

²¹⁷ R.J. Overy, *The Nazi Economic Recovery, 1932-1938*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996; J. Bähr, R. Banken, «L’organisation de l’économie allemande sous le national-socialisme 1933-1945. Synthèse et bilan critique des recherches», in Hervé Joly (ed.), *Les comités d’organisation et l’économie dirigée du régime de Vichy. Actes du colloque international, 3-4 avril 2003*, Caen, Centre de recherche d’histoire quantitative 2004, pp. 21-38.

1.4. "Total war" and social change: effectiveness and limits of the interpretive category

Theories and studies on "total war" and social change have been elaborated by political scientists, economists and historians.²¹⁸ The Great War contributed to open a new historical phase in public policies; the States' planning and regulatory capacities were largely expanded. Alongside political rights, also assistance measures, insurance schemes and labour legislation were addressed to soldiers, workers (men and women) and families. The outbreak of the Soviet Revolution in 1917 impacted on post-war politics and society as well. WWII had an even wider impact on social insurances; other than the structural aspect, the conflict had "total" ideological features.²¹⁹ No one was expecting that the post-war order would be similar to the pre-1939 era. For this reason, the wartime debate on social policy generated detailed plans for the reconstruction.

"Total war" is a catch-all label that eventually escapes precise definitions. It indicates the mobilization of labour and industries, the magnitude of destruction and civilians' involvement, the "totalizing" features of the war fought everywhere and with greater use of destructive technologies. In the formulations of its principal theorists, from Clausewitz to Ludendorff, "total war" was not limited to the armies, but required the participation of all political, productive and social forces of a belligerent country to ensure the "total" annihilation

²¹⁸ C. Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, London, Blackwell, 1990, see chapter 3, pp. 67-95; B. Porter, *War and the Rise of the Nation-State. The Military Foundations of Modern Politics*, New York, Simon&Schuster, 1994; S. Halperin, *War and Social Change in Modern Europe. The Great Transformation Revisited*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004; A.J. Toynbee, *War and Civilization*, London-New York-Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1951.

²¹⁹ R. Chickering, S. Förster (eds.), *Great War, Total War. Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, see particularly the contributions in parts V and VI; Id., *A World at Total War. Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction, 1937-1945*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, contributions in parts III and IV.

of the enemy.²²⁰ These theorizations adapted the military strategies to the mass industrial societies, but did not serve to capture the link between war and social change throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Conventionally, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars are regarded as having huge impact on political institutions and self-perceptions of the communities, prefiguring some of the dynamics of the 20th century world wars; the military universal conscription, for instance, changed the boundaries of the citizenship and the kind of relation between the individual and State.²²¹ The label “total war”, however, was coined only later; more appropriately, it takes into due consideration the key factor of the industrial production. The percentage of the military production over the civilian one defines the magnitude of industrial mobilization, which has to be scaled to the different societies. For semi-industrial countries like Italy and the USSR, a high level of mobilization would have led to rationing and deprivations that hit the population to a major extent than Britain, Germany and the US. Mutually, the different productive potential among the powers in conflict resulted in different outcomes of the mobilization.²²² The gap between the major industrial powers and the others was too wide to have similar results in the allocation of resources and aftermaths of the war. The overall impact of “total war” might be assessed by looking at the structural, political and psychological consequences on the society: the impact on industrial production and economic policies; the integration of the productive elements in the decision-making structures; the changes in the political culture and in the (self)perceptions of the societies; the capacity to overcome resistances to social and political reforms from vested interests.

²²⁰ J. Honig, «The of Total War from Clausewitz to Ludendorff», in AA.VV., *The Pacific War as Total War: Proceedings of the 2011 International Forum on War History*, Tokyo, National Institute for Defence Studies, 2012, pp. 29-41.

²²¹ D. Bell, *The First Total War, Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*, Boston-New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007.

²²² M. Harrison, «The economics of World War II: an overview», in Id. (ed.), *The Economics of World War II: Six Powers in International Comparison*, pp. 1-42, see also the table 1.8., p. 21.

The works of Alan Milward were pioneering because addressed warfare as economic policy, and the welfare state as *indirect* result of this process.²²³ He contributed to open up the perspective on the role of the war as “generator” of economic growth, trade integrations and technological improvement.²²⁴ Functionalist sociology also stressed the role of wartime forced mobilization of manpower and resources in levelling social differences. In the stratified industrial societies, different social statuses might represent a serious obstacle to wage the war, slowing down the pace of mobilization or leading to social unrest and desegregation of the internal front.²²⁵ Higher social cohesion and productive efficiency transited from war to peace, to become features of the post-war Western societies during the so-called “Golden Age”, as they responded to structural and political needs:

«The total-war system attempted to unite all the people under the slogan of a common destiny as citizens of a single national community and to intervene against the momentum toward social exclusion and conflict that had been inherent in modern societies since their inception. The policy of “enforced homogeneity” was pursued under the extraordinary and irrational circumstance of war, but its implementation was not confined to such circumstances.»²²⁶

The functionalist approach regarded “total war” as the transitional moment in the reorganization of societal dynamics from

²²³ A. Milward, *War, Economy, and Society*, London, Allen Lane, 1977, pp. 208-365.

²²⁴ F. Guirao, F. Lynch, S. Ramirez Pérez (eds.), *Alan S. Milward and a Century of European Change*, London-New York, Routledge, 2012; see particularly L. Neal, «Alan S. Milward and the European Economies at War», pp. 157-167; V. Zamagni, «Economic History and the Political Economic Approach», pp. 189-205.

²²⁵ The democracies eventually “enforced homogeneity” in the national communities, similar to the Nazi *Gleichschaltung*. D. Schoenbaum, *Hitler’s Social Revolution*, New York, Doubledays, 1966.

²²⁶ Yasushi Yamanouchi, «Total War and Social Integration: A Methodological Introduction», Yasushi Yamanouchi, J. Victor Koschmann, Ryūichi Narita (eds.), *Total War and “Modernization”*, New York, Cornell University East Asia Program, 1998, pp. 1-39, p. 3.

class conflict to integration. According to Talcott Parsons, the post-1945 States were restructured as “system” and no longer as class-society, incorporating all their members and institutionalizing the conflict via multiple policies and functions.²²⁷ This shift occurred in the representation of the interests and in the political culture. The post-war British universalist social security dilute differences in the access to equal and uniform social protection and provided a new “social pact” between State and citizens. As a result, social welfare progressively became State policy. In Britain, which experienced a relative high degree of “total war” mobilization, this link was expressed in almost explicit terms; but the connection between social citizenship and welfare state would have progressively deployed as principle also on the Continent.

The legacy and the myth of the “classless” society at war affected the British studies on welfare state, as good part of these analyses were made during the years of apparent “consensus”.²²⁸ Sociologist Richard Titmuss elaborated the classical formulation on the direct link between “total war” and social improvement.²²⁹ The modern warfare redefined social policy both for the organizational machinery and for the aftermaths of the conflict on population; his take was decisively affected by the wartime narrative that boosted the self-perception of a society fully mobilized for social progress:²³⁰ the Ministry of Health dealt with the evacuees, with the care for air-raided victims in the towns and with other assistance for the town dwellers; the Ministry of Pension provided non-contributory benefits for the civilian and military injured, survivors’ pensions, children’ allowances and the pensions for veterans; the *National Assistance Board*, the *Board of Trade* and the local authorities, traditionally in charge of the assistance tasks, faced massive claims for compensation for damage to land, building and personal chattels.

²²⁷ T. Parsons, *The System of Modern Societies.*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1971.

²²⁸ D. Kavanagh, «The Post-War Consensus», *Twentieth Century British History*, n.2/1992, pp. 175-190.

²²⁹ R. Titmuss, «War and Social Policy», in Id., *Essays on the Welfare State*, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1958, pp. 75-86.

²³⁰ H. Fyfe, *Britain’s Wartime Revolution*, London, V. Gollancz Limited, 1944.

The British healthcare system underwent a process of centralization and nationalization, amalgamation and empowering of the health services, planning, modernization and research, promotion of health education, public prevention measures, nutrition policies and the free treatment for evacuated, also becoming employment sector. The *Emergency Hospitals Service* was the forerunner, in the service and in the “spirit”, to the post-war NHS. The *Assistance Board* was charged of the new schemes for the prevention and relief of distress caused by the war, including «all kinds of persons who had never before been in need of State help».²³¹ The social assistance overlapped functions of the social insurances, as for injury and supplementary pensions. War broadened the categories of recipients of public benefits and grants, and led to greater national unity, as exemplified by the agreement on the abolition of the *means tests*. Lastly, the wartime productive conditions affected directly the manpower. Its strong militarization entailed some provisions to guarantee facilities and services for the workers. The unions were also involved in co-joint committees to bargain welfare measures in the workplace.

All these modifications were expected to be structural.²³² The setting up of a Ministry for the Reconstruction established a road map for the wider-ranging reforms, which went beyond the “inherent” changes brought about by the war:

«All this is essential war service. Finding hostels, for evacuees, starting mothers’ clubs, feeding the homeless – these and similar activities are parts of the nation’s effort to win the war. They shelter and comfort those who are bombed out; they play a part in preserving morale. But they are more than that. The social services of Britain at war are at the same time part of the reconstruction of Britain after the war is won. Evacuation is only one of the great social experiments from which we are learning practical lessons for

²³¹ TNA, PIN/8/164, «Britain’s Social Services and the War», p. 7.

²³² R.H.Tawney, «The Abolition of Economic Controls», *Economic History Review*, n.1/1943, pp. 1-30.

the future. Steps have been taken since the war began which go very far indeed towards establishing a national minimum standard of well being for all.»²³³

Titmuss probably projected the consensus of the *Butskellism* over wartime Britain.²³⁴ The idea of the 1940-1 people's war and "classless" society has been disputed by historiography, which challenged both the extent of wartime consensus and Titmuss' interpretation.²³⁵ More recently, historian David Edgerton criticized the dichotomy between "British liberal welfare state" and "Nazi totalitarian warfare state". In reality, the main feature of British mobilization was a "liberal militarism" opposed to "Prussian militarism"; the two kinds of warfare only differed for the strategy to annihilate the enemy. According to Edgerton, the overall level of social services dramatically collapsed during wartime; the social expenditure did not reach the levels of the 1930s until the early 1950s.²³⁶ His interpretation provides some challenging insights regarding the interpenetration of the models of warfare/welfare in the years 1939-45; the "malleable" boundaries between the two sides in conflict concerned also social policy.

A wider comparative view seems to confirm, however, that 20th century wars drove socio-political reforms. Arthur Marwick provided a systematic pattern of the tie between war and social change in the 20th century, grounded on four moments of transition: the war as material and institutional destruction; the war as test of the existing practices and "paradigms"; the war as social enhancement for the lower classes; the cultural and psychological impact of the war on the communities.²³⁷

²³³ TNA, PIN/8/164, *Britain's Social Services and the War*, p.1

²³⁴ David Reisman, *Richard Titmuss: Welfare and Society*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2001.

²³⁵ H. Smith (ed), *War and Social Change. British Society in the Second World War*, 1986; R. Lowe, «The Second World War, Consensus, and the Foundations of the Welfare State», *Twentieth Century British History*, n. 2/1990, pp. 152-182; A. Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz*, London, Pimico, 1991.

²³⁶ D. Edgerton, *Britain's War Machine*, pp. 1-10 and pp. 295-302.

²³⁷ A. Marwick, *War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century: A Comparative Study of Britain, France, Germany, Russia and United States*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 1974.

Marwick did not necessarily identified “social change” with welfare state, but with deeper transformations that concerned different fields: the underprivileged social groups; the revolution; the culture. As for Milward’s studies on the economy of WWII, Marwick’s parameters paved the way to the historiographic debate. The impact of wars on State institutions and social actors has proven undeniable, even if «it is also necessary to place wartime change and development within the context of long-term social trends, which often suggest evolutionary rather than revolutionary change during the course of the longer period. [...] Total war could not fail to generate some change through its sheer scale, but it is important to judge how far changes survived the immediate postwar situation that generated them and, indeed how far such changes would have occurred in any case.»²³⁸ The monographic studies problematized these theoretical assumptions, reducing the general trends to the national specificities and providing documentary evidence of the changes brought about by the war.

The Great War has been widely investigated, in comparative perspective and with a focus on single national cases.²³⁹ Historian Procacci studied the reconfiguration of the relations between State and society in Italy, the changes in administrative practices and industrial relations. The rights of citizenship were ambiguously granted to soldiers and workers during and after the war, with a trade-off between social control and social assistance/protection.²⁴⁰ Even before Fascism, the attempts at reforming the social legislation after 1918 were

²³⁸ I. Beckett, «Total War», in Arthur Marwick, Clive Emsley, Wendy Simpson (eds.), *Total War and Historical Change. Europe 1914-1955*, London, Open University Press, 2001, pp. 24-41, p.24.

²³⁹ J. Horne, *Labour at War. France and Britain, 1914-1918*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991; Id., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997; Id., *La guerre totale, le tournant de 1914-1915*, Paris, Tallandier, 2010; A. Milward, *The Economic Effects of the Two World Wars on Britain*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 1970; A. Marwick, *Britain in the Century of Total War: War, Peace and Social Change 1900-1967*, London, Pelican Books, 1968.

²⁴⁰ G. Procacci, *Welfare-Warfare. Intervento dello Stato e diritti dei cittadini*, Roma, Carocci, 2013; Id., «Il fronte interno. Organizzazione del consenso e controllo sociale», in Daniele Menozzi, Giovanna Procacci, Simonetta Soldani (eds.), *Un Paese in guerra. La mobilitazione civile in Italia (1914-1918)*, Firenze, Edizioni Unicopli, 2010, pp. 15-24.

driven by the war, as for the studies of the Royal Commission Rava, which was charged of the reassessment of the social insurance just after the end of the war.²⁴¹ These studies suggest a causal relation between war and social enhancement, and a *path dependence* in the social reforms, which crossed each nation. After the Great War, indeed, the regulation of the class struggle was not only on the political agenda of Fascism. It was a central issue in all the major industrial countries, and concerned conservatives and left-wing; the formers were afraid of the rise of unemployment and its social aftermaths, while the latter hoped that the reconstruction could have brought about social enhancement.²⁴²

Recent approaches are attentive of these transnational relations and transfers.²⁴³ According to historian Akira Iriye, «transnational history perspective enriches our understanding of a more traditional subject like war. Indeed, the study of the war will never be the same now that transnational history has made its inroad even into such a geopolitical subject.»²⁴⁴ War is not merely a governmental activity, but a transnational phenomenon by definition. Military and civilian

²⁴¹ A. Rapini, «Il discorso politico di Luigi Rava: lavoro, democrazia, riforma sociale», in Paolo Mattera (ed.), *Momenti del "welfare" in Italia. Storiografia e percorsi di ricerca*, Roma, Viella, 2012, 19-53, pp. 40-45; Id., «Attori, spazi e saperi della riforma sociale durante la Grande guerra», *Passato e Presente*, 99/2016, pp. 59-86.

²⁴² B. Mussolini, *La pace sociale e l'avvenire d'Italia*, Roma, Berlutti Editore, s.d.; H. Chantry, *Capital et Travail. Leurs rapports après la guerre*, Nice, Imprimerie de l'Eclaireur, 1917; E. Sona, *Le problème de la paix*, Paris, Desfossés, 1917; M.E. Aubert, *Rapport d'ensemble sur les fleaux sociaux*, Paris, Union des grandes associations françaises pour l'essor national, 1920; *Industrial Unrest. The Reports of the Commissioners (July 1917)*. Collated and Epistomed, London, P.S.King and Son, 1917; The Commission on Foreign Inquiry on the National Civic Federation, *The Labor Situation in Great Britain and France*, New York, E.P. Dutton & Co., 1919; B. Worsfold, *The and Social Reform*, London, John Murray, 1919; *After War. A Future Policy*, London, The St. Catherine Press, s.d.; B. Russell, *Principles of Social Reconstruction*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1919, pp. 44-110.

²⁴³ An account on the scientific literature in transnational history is S. MacDonald, «Transnational History: a review of past and present scholarship», *UCL – Centre For Transnational History*, 2013. URL: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/centre-transnational-history/objectives/simon_macdonald_tns_review.

²⁴⁴ A. Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: the Past, Present, and Future*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p.58.

mobilizations, industries and technologies, pacifism, assistance are transnational phenomena that escape national boundaries and governmental controls.²⁴⁵ The works on the emergence of supranational humanitarianism and international associations at the end of WWI fruitfully combined the study of the relations between mass wars and the emergence of “social policy”.²⁴⁶ The idea of “human rights” wormed its way after the Great War and their “exploitation” strengthened the political position of the winners.²⁴⁷ International aid accompanied the aim of reshaping post-war international relations and ideas. These two “dimensions” of social policies, between solidarity and power politics, constituted a pattern after WWII; the intermingling between domestic social security and international settlement was even more organic and articulated after 1945.

The transnational approach puzzles the historical processes and digs out the interrelations of the factors at the foundation of social protection. Recent works study the public policies during the interwar years with a focus on supranational transfers.²⁴⁸ This does not necessarily mean that policy-makers merely borrowed ideas or policies from abroad, nor that models were “shared” between different political systems. But trans-European and trans-Atlantic networks existed and they did not involve only governmental policies, but also cultural circles (academics and civil servants), political and social groups,

²⁴⁵ M. S. Neiberg, «Towards a Transnational History of World War I», *Canadian Military History*, n.3/2008, pp. 31-37;

²⁴⁶ B. Cabares, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918-1924*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014.

²⁴⁷ B. Little, «An explosion of new endeavours: global humanitarian responses to industrialized warfare in the First World War Era», in *First World War Studies*, 1/2014, pp. 1-16. In the same issue, see also J.F. Irwin, «The disaster of war: American understanding of catastrophe, conflict and relief», pp. 17-28; T.D. Westermann, «Touring occupied Belgium: American humanitarians at ‘work’ and ‘leisure’ (1914-1917)», pp. 43-53; M.E. McGuire, «‘A highly successful experiment in international partnership?’ The limited resonance of the American Committee for Devastated France», pp. 101-115.

²⁴⁸ Daniel Laqua (ed.), *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2011; K.K. Patel, S. Reichardt, «The Dark Side of Transnationalism: Social Engineering and Nazism, 1930s-1940s’», *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1/2016, pp. 3-21.

transnational organizations.²⁴⁹ The first wave of globalization did not withdraw in the interwar period; flow of policies and practices even intensified in the Thirties, to be institutionalized after the war. The new researches frame social policies in a wider space of circulations, which also include the Nazi and Fascist social models. But this interpretation could apply also to non-governmental organizations and forums; the Thirties were a decisive moment not only for the implementation of economic and social reforms, but also for the reformulation of ideas and approaches after the 1929 Great Crash.²⁵⁰ The mutual exchange between State policies, non-governmental actors and technicians suggests an important transnational circulation in the context of the overarching confrontation of WWII. The British social plans were part of a wider mutual exchange between Allied and Axis powers, where the policies blended in with propaganda, and the projects of social reform with power politics. On the other side, the spread of information about the British project and its influence in the immediate post-war Europe showed the strength of these transnational transfers.

In last instance, “total war” impacted on social policy on multiple levels. For the British case, the maximum effort of the years 1941–3 was accompanied by socio-political dynamics that led to post-war legislation. But “total war” set in motion changes also on the Continent; in the countries not directly involved in the conflict, like the Vichy regime, or in those which did not experience “total” war mobilization, like Italy. Both regimes grounded on social enhancement good part of their political legitimation, and, by facing emergency, elaborated plans for reform that actually overcame wartime conjuncture and prepared the “aftermaths”, just as Britain did. The Resistance movements presented programmes of social reforms as well; drafted in the midst of the conflict, they were affected by the ongoing British debate and the wartime circulation of British documents, even if

²⁴⁹ D.T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*; K.K. Patel, *The New Deal: A Global History*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2016.

²⁵⁰ H. Schulz-Forberg, «Laying the Groundwork: Transnational Networks and the Semantics of Neoliberalism in the 1930s», in Hagen Schulz-Forberg, Niklas Olsen (eds.), *Re-Inventing Western Civilisation : Transnational Reconstructions of Liberalism in Europe in the Twentieth Century*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, pp. 13-39.

the legislative outcomes, as for the French case, merged the national policy legacies and traditions with the new principles of “social security”.

“Total war” pattern – usually applied to the British case – might be used in a supranational perspective, shifting the focus from the structural mobilization to a similar wartime climate which actually favoured the flow of information and the commitment to reconstruction plans, which involved governments, social and political actors, international organizations. The link between “total war” and social change did not lie only in the structural transformations, nor in the State’s tasks facing the material devastations and humanitarian action, and not even in the establishment of a “classless society”. These factors explain part of the paradigm shift operated during WWII, but they rest on a national level. The war led to social reforms also because the policy-makers on both sides prefigured the establishment of a new “social pact” and international settlement. Two distinctive features were the crucible of the war between 1939 and 1945: on the one side, the myth of “the war that ends all wars”; on the other, the attempt to solve once for all the “social question” in the modern industrial Nation-State through more inclusiveness.

Part Two. Politics and Policies in Comparison

2. Great Britain: social policy as right of citizenship

From 1939 to 1941 the British government concentrated efforts to resist to the Nazi assault. On 9th May 1940 the *War Cabinet* held by Neville Chamberlain resigned. The new Churchill's *War Coalition* included Labour and Liberals. Labour hold key positions: Clement Attlee as Deputy Prime Minister, Ernst Bevin as Minister of Labour and National Service, Herbert Morrison as Home Secretary, and Arthur Greenwood as Minister without Portfolio. Later during the war, the left-wing former laborite Stafford Cripps was nominated Lord Privy Seal, then Minister of Aircraft Production. This last Ministry was taken by the only Liberal, Ernest Brown, who had an important role as Minister of Health from 1941 to 1943. However, Conservatives had under control wartime economics: the Lord Beaverbrook was Minister of Wartime Production and the Lord Woolton Minister of Reconstruction from 1943. Chancellors of the Exchequer were the Conservatives Sir Kinglsey Wood, and Sir John Anderson. Churchill was Prime Minister, First Lord of Treasury, and Minister of Defense, influencing all the ministers related with war production. The *War Coalition* was a watershed in the war conduct and organization of the administrative machinery.

In the biennial 1940-41 the war took a catastrophic turn for Britain. After the evacuation from Dunkerque, the *Luftwaffe* hammered London and the major aircraft industries during the three-months Battle of Britain. These events gathered the nation around the so-called "Dunkirk Spirit" and the subsequent narrative of the Britain "standing alone" against the Nazi enemy, carefully fostered by propaganda.²⁵¹ The structure of the government was reshaped according to wartime exigencies. It was a restricted cabinet (from nine to five members), and

²⁵¹ G. Campion, *The Good Fight. Battle of Britain Propaganda and The Few*, London, Plaggrave MacMillan, 2009; R. Mackay, *Half the Battle. Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2002.

grounded on some charismatic leaders: Winston Churchill, Lord Beaverbrook, and Bevin. This encountered the critics against the previous *War Cabinet*, like Beveridge, who claimed for a centralized and powerful government with strong leaders, coordinating few ministers to decongest the administrative machinery. In turn, the national unity government balanced the relations with the Parliament and created political consensus for the centralization of functions. Churchill quickly got the grip over the war production matters, but other domestic affairs fell over his sphere of influence; new ministerial departments, boards, committees and sub-committees gave birth to that central “thinking and planning machine” Churchill claimed for.²⁵² The highest levels of the government represented the whole political spectrum, while the executive machinery intermingled political control and non-politicians civil servants, whose expertise was particularly demanded in the organization of the warfare production. By 1942, British *War Cabinet* was the head of an highly structured administrative war machine. It had strong decision-making power to secure production for the war and to coordinate other aspects of domestic and foreign affairs.

The biennial 1940-1 were the years of the emergence; by the end of 1941, however, the “Dunkirk Spirit” and the wartime administrative reforms could be addressed to the issues of the reconstruction.²⁵³ The reform of the social security was linked to the wartime planning and to the achievement of consensus through a plan for the aftermath of the war.

2.1. “*The war is everywhere*”: planning for war and reconstruction

2.1.1. *The war effort: mobilization, production, and labour relations*

Until the comprehensive proposals of the *Beveridge Report* – which had not immediate legislative outcomes – the governmental actions did not differ from the social provisions already set up during World War I: allowances and pensions for veterans and their families,

²⁵² H. Daalder, *Cabinet Reform in Britain, 1914-1963*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1963, pp. 80-98.

²⁵³ H. Dalton, *The Fateful Years: Memoirs, 1931-1945*, London, Muller, 1957, p.410.

services pay, emergency labour legislation. The regulation of industrial and social issues assumed growing importance as Britain steered to war production, and the *War Cabinet* needed to strengthen social fabric. Wartime industrial policies and political consensus had a certain impact on the drafting of social reforms.

British economy steered to war production faster than Nazi Germany, which was oriented towards the total war only in 1942-3.²⁵⁴ The 1935-9 rearmament were two antecedents for the wartime economic planning. The expenditure for rearmament had a more favourable impact on political and economic establishment, which generally mistrusted the coeval social programmes.²⁵⁵ Spending for war was easier than spending for unemployment or for public works. The rearmament also imposed the re-allocation of manpower in the war production. Government had thus to bargain wages policies between employers and the unions in sectors like engineering and building.²⁵⁶ This collaboration, refused during the harshest years of crisis, was needed to secure the expansion of war production.

War also transformed production and labour market. By 1943, Britain increased the total volume of its production: the economy turned around as long as industries produced more and the civilian market consumed less; the unemployment rates fell under 3%; the women massively entered the labour market; the working hours were extended to the limits; production efficiency improved; the investments at home and abroad were concentrated to wartime production. The State extended control on allocation and prices of raw materials, on the industrial capacity, on restriction of supplies, utilities, and transports. Imports were limited to the essential supplies, while the exports were regulated among the allies for the necessities related to the war effort,

²⁵⁴ See different interpretations on the *Blitzkrieg* in A. Milward, *The German Economy at War*, London, Athlone Press, 1965; R. Overy, *War and Economy in the Third Reich*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994; A. Tooze, «No Room for Miracles. German Industrial Output in World War II Reassessed», *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, n.3/2005, pp. 439-464.

²⁵⁵ M. Thomas, «Rearmament and Economic Recovery in the Late 1930s», *The Economic History Review*, n.4/1983, pp. 552-579.

²⁵⁶ R. Parker, «British Rearmament 1936-9: Treasury, Trade Unions and Skilled Labour», *The English Historical Review*, n. 379/1981, pp. 306-343.

or to pay in goods the imports of the essential materials for the British economy. The civilian market was squeezed in order to make possible the expansion of the warfare production.

The necessities of the war drew manpower from the unessential industries to the key sectors of the war production. When unskilled workforce was taken out of labour market due to the conscription, the unemployed, non-employed or under-employed workers were called up in the factories. Britain showed a greater capacity to mobilize manpower than during the Great War, reaching the full employment by the beginning of 1943. From 1939 to 1944 the total number of men and women employed in the services or in industry rose from 18 to more than 22 million. Less than 50% of the total industrial manpower was actually employed in the war production (engineering, shipbuilding, metals and chemical industries, munitions) and 53% were involved in food supply and other civil services.²⁵⁷

Important changes involved also taxation and consumptions. Britain shifted national resources to war economy in three ways: direct control, taxation, and consumptions' rationing. In these domains, State's expansion allowed to wage the wartime effort. The government increased direct taxation and income taxes, which doubled in wartime. The indirect taxes levied by central government and local authorities more than doubled; governmental taxes quadrupled from peacetime to 1943. All kinds of taxes were introduced: income taxes and surtaxes (this later partially recovered by post-war credit); the Excess Profit Tax burdened war profit of 100% and was covered by post-war credit; indirect and purchase taxation for luxury goods in some cases rose to 100%.²⁵⁸ The increase in direct/indirect taxation, the personal savings and the rationing of essential supplies reduced the purchasing power and thus the demand for goods and services for personal consumption.

²⁵⁷ HMSO, *Statistics Relating to the War Effort of the United Kingdom*, 1944, Cmd. 6564. In December 1941 the *National Service Act* made every man under 50 and every woman under 30 liable to government assignment for war production. HMSO, *National Service Act, 1941*, 5 & 6 Geo 6, Ch. 4

²⁵⁸ R.S. Sayers, *Financial Policy 1939-45*, London, HMSO and Longmans, Green & Co., 1956, pp. 85-90.

The mere financial leverage was not enough to achieve overarching control consumption. The Ministry of Food was set up in 1939. It rationed food supply, controlled prices and tried to prevent the profiteering and the expansion of the black market. The government also provided subsidies to slow down the cost-of-living increase.²⁵⁹ Regardless the general scarcity and restriction of non-priority classes of goods, the governmental reports highlighted that «rationing and other measures have tended to reduce the inequalities in food consumptions which existed before the war.»²⁶⁰ The production and rationing of durable goods was instead stricter, in some cases even suspending the production. The manufacture and distribution of some food was submitted to austerity as for the staple foodstuff, and other categories of food were strictly limited or even prohibited. The increased output of weapons was achieved at the expenses of a *qualitative* recomposition of food consumption and of the heavy cut of other goods.²⁶¹

The 1940 *Conditions of Employment and National Arbitration Code* (commonly called *Order 1305*), and the 1941 *Essential Work Orders* combined coercive measures and welfare provisions.²⁶² They established that wage standards and working conditions should be determined in any trade by collective agreements; the limitation of the maximum working hours (which in 1941 largely overcome the 60 hours per weeks in some industrial sectors);²⁶³ the restriction of the movement of workers; the guaranteed weekly wage and welfare facilities, e.g. canteens, training, and safety. The *Order 1305* prohibited strikes and lockouts, and made compulsory for employers to observe the terms and conditions of collective agreements and arbitrations. Even more

²⁵⁹ James S. Barley, William Lacy, «British Wartime Control of Prices», *Law and Contemporary Problems*, n.1/1942, pp. 160-172; HMSO, *Price of Goods Act, 1939*, 2 & 3 Geo 6, Ch. 118; HMSO, *Goods and Services (Price Control Act)*, 1941, C. 31.

²⁶⁰ HMSO, *Statistics Relating to the War Effort of the United Kingdom*, p. 26.

²⁶¹ Ministry of Information, *Britain's War Economy. The mobilisation of British Resources for War*, London, 1943.

²⁶² ILO, *Labour Conditions in War Contracts. With Special Reference to Canada, Great Britain and the United States*, Montreal, International Labour Office, 1943, pp. 19-35.

²⁶³ M. Kossoris, «Hours and Efficiency in British Industry», *Monthly Labor Review*, n.6/1941, pp. 1337-1346.

related to the war effort was the *Essential Work (General Provisions) Order*, concerning 7,5 millions of workers. It limited industrial labour turnover and transfer, placing under the control of the *National Service Office* the dismissal or replacement of workers. It also established the “guaranteed wage”, and limited the maximum number of weekly hours to 60 for men and 55 for women. In 1942, when the war production almost reached its maximum capacity, governmental circles proposed the further diminution of the working scheduled and the improvement of working conditions and managerial efficiency to preserve high production.²⁶⁴

The issue of the working hours was a key point of the wartime industrial policies, as concerned the need to maintain the high level of productivity of the factories. At the same time, it showed the failure to institute efficient public training programmes to form skilled workers in the first years of the war. As the employers encountered problems to recruit and train the skilled manpower, it was impossible to reduce the overall working hours (the work was over-intensified up to 80/90 hours per week). From 1941, the approach in industrial relations changed, when Britain could efficiently run at full capacity labour mobilization and allocation of resources. Under Bevin’s Minister, the *War Cabinet* strengthened tripartite industrial relations, which already underpinned the industrial relations since the 1935-39 rearmament programme; employers and labour, coordinated by the government, bargained policies to keep inflation under control and to allocate resources. From 1941 onwards, central and local governmental structures eased this collaboration. The *Central Production Advisory Committee*, later renamed *National Production Advisory Council*, was a consultative board subordinated to *War Cabinet*, where representatives of employers and trade unions advised government on production and industrial relations. The transmission belt between government and medium-sized and large factories were instead the *Joint Production Committees*. These advisory committees reported the condition of manpower and resource allocations to the Ministry of Supply and Production. Britain ran the war economy with a steady state of growth in productivity, and

²⁶⁴ HMSO, *Control of Manpower in Britain*, London, 1942.

stabilizing the supply of manpower and raw materials. This was made possible by cooperative industrial relations; this choice reduced industrial unrest, prevented the slowdown in productivity due to strikes and changed employment structure, e.g. for the involvement of women in industries.²⁶⁵ Wartime tripartism was a tool to secure industrial concord rather than an enlargement of social participation, but turned out to provide an efficient management of the economy. As side-effect, trade unions were also allowed to enter in the boardroom of the war effort.

The government tried to prevent social movements in the factories also through other means. Until 1941 the Communists, politically weak but very numerous in the trade unions, refused to be bound by war commitment. The USSR entry into the war and the presence of the charismatic and anti-Communist former trade unionist Bevin crushed their resistance. He set up the *Joint Consultative Committee*, which took over pre-war institutions such as the *National Joint Advisory Committee*. The new seven-a-side structure integrated trade unions in the national unity “consensus”, as for the wage policy as for the prevention of industrial action.²⁶⁶ The Minister of Labour preferred to settle conflict through conciliation rather than coercive methods. All industries scheduled for the *Essential Work Order* had to provide welfare arrangements for the workers, to guarantee breaks and work shifts, and to relieve the material working conditions in the war industries. He also did much political work to convince the workers that their strains and their inhuman paces of work (from 10 to 12 hours per day, including Sunday, at the peak of the war mobilization) were to “secure a better Britain”. Bevin’s attitude explains the relative lack of zeal in the application of the *Order 1305*. Many strikes (except for those which were considered “subversive actions”, harshly sanctioned from 1943 onwards) were regarded as relief valves and harmless moments of rest from the wartime working conditions. Stoppages, strikes, loss of days’ production increased as the war continued, reaching their peak in

²⁶⁵ T. Imlay, «Democracy and War: Political Regime, Industrial Relations, and Economic Preparations for War in France and Britain up to 1940», see pp. 31-47.

²⁶⁶ J. Price, *British Trade Unions and the War*, London, Ministry of Information, 1945.

1944. Yet, the number of unionist effectively persecuted or even imprisoned was very limited, as proceedings were taken only in 6 cases.²⁶⁷ These actions usually spin from the control of TUC leaders, who generally endorsed governmental policies. The illegal strikes had minimal impact; in 1941 more than 1000 illegal strikes took place, but – after Soviet Russia joined the war – only Trotskyites carried out agitations in the factories.

War changed the industrial relations, rebalancing the power of the regulative State to workers and employers. This favoured further legislative turns, as «the need to maximise war production together with a growing realisation of the relation between the well-being of workers and their productive efficiency have led to a new emphasis on welfare measures.»²⁶⁸ The Ministry of Labour created two departments dealing with the tripartite bargaining of welfare measures: the *Welfare Department* and the *Factory and Welfare Advisory Board*. These authorities addressed the daily needs of the workers involved in the war production: canteens and other facilities, measure to secure safety and first aid in the workplaces, clothing, sleeping and washing accommodation, amenities for the free time. To preserve the highest productivity, with shortage of labour and difficult changeover of skilled workers, the commitment was to improve working and living conditions.

2.1.2. *The financial policy and the Keynesian budgets*

The adoption of emergency “Keynesian” policies and of higher tax extraction also contributed to structurally change public policies. The overall income taxation doubled from 1938 to 1944, resulting from a policy that relied on taxation rather than loan and debt.²⁶⁹ The fiscal policy only partially followed Keynes’ recommendations to increase taxation and compulsory savings or deferred pay from salaried,

²⁶⁷ E. Wigham, *Strikes and the Government 1893-1974*, London, MacMillan, 1976, pp. 83-100; on Bevin, see A. Bullock, *Ernest Bevin. A Biography*, London, Politicos, 2002.

²⁶⁸ ILO, *Labour Conditions in War Contracts. With Special Reference to Canada, Great Britain and the United States*, p. 29.

²⁶⁹ M. Daunton, *The Politics of Taxation in Britain, 1914-1979*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 176-193.

lending money to government.²⁷⁰ Other social measures invoked by Keynes had better luck, as for the subsidies in food and the family allowances, the major social reform passed during wartime. Keynes' first concern was to avoid inflation and extra-taxation, which would have depressed the demand for the post-war recovery. He defined as "inflationary gap" the overestimation of the expected expenditure over the outputs. This condition was inherent in economies with reduced civilian goods and expanded military production. Keynes thus proposed to finance the war and boost the demand for the recovery, once the workers would have withdrawn their own savings: «from the exigency of war positive social improvements. The complete scheme now proposed, including universal family allowances in cash, the accumulation of working-class wealth under working-class control, a cheap ration of necessities, and a capital levy (or tax) after the war, embodies an advance towards economic equality greater than any which we have made in recent times.»²⁷¹

The sacrifices of the war could have led to more social justice and to a wider redistribution of national wealth, instead of its further concentration through higher taxation and inflation, as it happened in WWI. He proposed a set of policies «conceived in a spirit of social justice, a plan which uses a time of general sacrifice, not as an excuse for postponing desirable reforms, but as an opportunity for moving further than we have moved hitherto towards reducing inequalities.»²⁷² Alongside the unavoidable shortage of goods and services, the compulsory savings and borrowings would have granted the sustainable funding of the war, and limited the inflation without dramatically bringing down consumptions.²⁷³ This protected the lower incomes and equilibrated aggregate consumptions between higher and lower income groups. Alongside the financial tools, the cash benefits

²⁷⁰ J.M. Keynes, *How to Pay for the War, A Radical Plan for the Chancellor of the Exchequer*, London, MacMillan, 1940.

²⁷¹ Ivi. pp. III-IV.

²⁷² J.M. Keynes, *How to Pay for the War, A Radical Plan for the Chancellor of the Exchequer*, p. 1.

²⁷³ Ivi., pp. 20-57; R. Skidelski, *John Maynard Keynes. Vol. 3. Fighting for Freedom, 1937-1946*, New York, Penguin, 2002, pp. 3-72 and 135-178.

showed to be the best option: family allowances, the national minimum income (similar to the benefits proposed by the *Beveridge Report*, £35 and £45 respectively for unmarried and married men), and the indexation of the social provisions to the changes in costs of limited rationed articles. Keynes wanted to secure a fairer redistribution of wealth in favour of the working class. He was probably aware of the need to grant the social collaboration during and after the war, and indeed he sought for the support of the TUC.

Some aspects of the plan were contested by the Labour movement, probably mostly for ideological distrust for Keynes' ideas and background, and because the watchwords of these organizations were still centred on the "direct control" rather than macroeconomic management and stabilization.²⁷⁴ One of the main bones of contentions was the anti-inflationary orientation and the reduction of the wartime demand brought about by these proposals, which prevented the rise of basic wage-rates due to full employment and increase of working hours. If Keynes' plan had not the complete endorsement of the workers' organizations, his proposals fair means to finance the war fell on receptive ears in the public opinion. In turn, his influence on policy-making was still ambivalent. On the one side, the Treasury was increasingly penetrated by Keynes' ideas, and the "Keynesians" were co-opted within the wartime committees, even if Keynes was never directly involved. On the other, the government increased taxation, price controls and rationing, that is, the traditional tools to wage the war economy. Family allowances were enacted during wartime, but the act was passed only in 1944. What changed was the concept of "annual budget" and the use of the budget accountability as a tool of macroeconomic stabilization. This economic innovation was originally implemented as emergency measure. After 1945, the Keynesian use of the budget proved useful to accompany social welfare and redistributive policies.

One of the most important sources to finance the war was the income tax. One of the last measures enacted by Chamberlain's *War*

²⁷⁴ Toye, Richard, «Keynes, the Labour Movement, and "How to Pay for the War"», *Twentieth Century British History*, n.10/1999, pp. 255-281.

Cabinet in 1940 was the abovementioned Excess Profits Tax, and was retained by Churchill's Cabinet.²⁷⁵ For wage earners income tax, some concerns regarded the workers' «hardship and discouragement of full support for war production»,²⁷⁶ due to the system of tax levied, perceived as unequal. TUC and employers deplored the delay of the fiscal deductions, the overall loss of the families when both spouses called back to work, and mostly the taxation of the overtime earnings.²⁷⁷ The introduction of the "Pay As You Earn" system in 1944, was saluted as a fairer method to calculate the effective charge of tax in the financial year to define the workers' true liability, and, in case, refund them.²⁷⁸ This reform revised the tax levied and did not imply any redistributive change, but nonetheless accommodated the needs of the lower incomes weekly wage earners. These latter were usually submitted to seasonal earning fluctuations in some vital sectors, they had additional incomes even for extra hours due to the war effort (e.g. Sunday work) or they were married women bounded to return to work, whose earnings were devoured by income tax. The taxation on the current earning was perceived as a more reliable way to calculate the tax burden of the workers.

The enduring effort of the war economy required the transfer of domestic resources, and the ensuring of goods and services from abroad. In that regard, the financial policy dramatically turned both during the war and for the years to come. And the changes involved also the last bulwark of the orthodox economic ideology, the Treasury, which accepted some Keynesian principles. The *War Cabinet* co-opted

²⁷⁵ TNA, CAB/66/8/6, «War Cabinet. Excess Profits Tax. Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 28th May, 1940»; TNA, CAB/65/21/2, «War Cabinet. Excess Profits Tax. Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 13th January, 1941».

²⁷⁶ TNA, CAB/66/22/8, «War Cabinet. Effect of Income Tax on Weekly Wage-earner. Memorandum by the Minister of Labour and National Service, 13th February, 1942», p. 1.

²⁷⁷ The Treasury refused to accept this complaint, coming from the shipbuilding trade associations, as it was «[...] local and individual rather than general.», being thus a claim that did not involve the British organised labour as a whole. TNA, CAB/66/22/19, «War Cabinet. Incidence of Income Tax on Weekly Wage-earners. Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 17th February, 1942», p. 2.

²⁷⁸ A. Farnsworth, «"Pay As You Earn" – The Income Tax (Employments, etc.) Acts, 1943 and 1944», *The Modern Law Review*, n.3/1944, pp. 146-148.

economists and technicians to varying degrees related to Keynes, such as James Meade, Joan Robinson, Marcus Fleming. They served as civil officials within governmental structures, especially the *Economic Section*. Their contribution eventually reshaped the official view over key socio-economic issues, as for unemployment policy.²⁷⁹ The *Economic Section* primarily addressed the post-war economic recovery, considering social policy under the point of view of anti-inflationary measure. These economists also advised the Ministries on the macro-economic conduct of the *conflict*, especially for the allocation of scarce resources and manpower.²⁸⁰ Their impact should not be overestimated, but it was effective to eventually impose Keynesianism as the dominant economic discourse for British policy-makers.

The innovations in the 1941 war budget conveys the idea of the revolution in the making. The budgets of 1939 and 1940 were formed in a context still unaffected by “total war”, as the former was a pre-war budget, while the latter coincided with the “phoney war”, when the magnitude of the war mobilisation was not full yet. Both reflected a traditional approach: increasing of direct and indirect taxation and voluntary savings, regardless the rise of the inflation and its social consequences. The events of the war in 1940 compelled to reconsider this view. The resignation of Chamberlain Cabinet resulted from the perceived inadequacy of waging the war, also from the financial point of view. The 1940 budget was criticized by the most relevant economic opinion-makers, such as *The Economist*, which claimed for more incisive measures to mobilise for the war.²⁸¹ The new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Kingsley Wood, introduced supplementary budget measures, increasing war expenditure by a third for the current year. Alongside the financial interventions, a thorough reflection on the way to finance the war marked the organization of the budget for 1941. The first “Keynesian budget” was an instrument for regulating domestic

²⁷⁹ A. Booth, ““Keynesian Revolution” in Economic Policy-Making”, *The Economic History Review*, n. 1/1983, pp. 103-123.

²⁸⁰ Id., “Economic Advice at the Centre of British Government, 1939-1941”, *The Historical Journal*, n. 3/1986, pp. 655-675.

²⁸¹ R.S. Sayers, *Financial Policy, 1939-45*, pp. 23-57.

expenditure and controlling inflation. The historiographic debate tends nowadays to reduce the scope of this budget.²⁸² Historian Jim Tomlinson suggested that the regulation of macroeconomic data and the forecasting of economic aggregates was rather a measure dictated by necessity and pragmatism.²⁸³ However, this did not necessarily undermine its value as a statement of public finance principles. According to economist Richard Sidney Sayers, «the 1941 budget, the cornerstone of Britain's internal financial policy, was the manifestation in the financial sphere of the national change of heart that marked the summer of 1940.»²⁸⁴

The budget contained embryonic elements of political innovations, and even social reformism, although its primary goal was the price stabilisation. The Treasury had to incorporate some of the Keynesian arithmetic tools to estimate the necessary amount of taxation, e.g. for the calculation of the "inflationary gap", expected to be about £500 million. The 1941 budget was directed to stabilise prices and to prevent wage inflation due to war economy and full employment: the Chancellor Wood expected to fill the "inflationary gap" mainly thanks to additional taxation and compulsory savings. The income tax was more than quintupled in comparison with the beginning of the war, purchase tax was increased to 100%, in order to depress demand of consumer goods and to prevent the inflationary spiral. On the other side, the 1941 budget was incardinated to other measures of capital and credit control, to enlarge the volume of national savings and investments outlets and to enlarge the existing external financial relations.²⁸⁵ The 1942-5 budgets followed the blueprint of the 1941 budget speech. However, the Keynesian gradual penetration in public policies was not limited to the macroeconomic

²⁸² R.S. Sayers, «1941-The First Keynesian Budget», in Charles Feinstein (ed.), *The Managed Economy: Essays in British Economic Policy and Performance since 1929*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 107-117.

²⁸³ J. Tomlinson, *Employment Policy: The Crucial Years, 1939-1955*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1987.

²⁸⁴ R.S. Sayer, *Financial Policy, 1939-45*, p. 59.

²⁸⁵ The Government borrowings increased, from 130 million pounds in 1938, to almost 130.000 in 1943, mainly from private savings, half of which used for war loans. HMSO, *Statistics Relating to the War Effort of the United Kingdom*, pp. 33-40.

stabilization. Following the tides of war, after 1942 more attention was paid on how redirect the new fiscal leverages and policies to other goals. The debate gradually shifted from war economy to the reconstruction; and this last topic was inseparable from social policy. The financial tools and the swingeing taxation of the State was progressively oriented towards what Keynes defined as «*Social Policy Budget*».²⁸⁶ The budget policy since 1941 incorporated family allowances and food subsidies. They were originally accessory provision to keep the cost-of-living acceptable for the working class; the new budget policy, as a whole, achieved more equity in the structure of the taxation, to the extent that *The Economist* defined it one of the «social triumphs of the war».²⁸⁷ Initially, the direct taxation and the Excess Profits Tax absorbed purchasing power without hitting hardest specific categories. Later, the new configuration of the budget supported the reconstruction, from welfare policy to the economic recovery.

While Keynesianism seemed to gradually take over the fiscal policy, forms of public control extended on other aspects of national economics, even if the government successfully planned the mobilization and allocation of manpower without massive industrial concentration or nationalizations.²⁸⁸ Besides the “Keynesian” use of the national account from 1941 on, the overall extent of State’s control could be disputed. Some historical interpretations tended to put less emphasis on the new Keynesian policies, stressing the importance of British position in the international trade; the advantages of great imperial possessions, having the anchor currency in its imperial trade area; the world-wide facilities afforded by the British financial system; the technological and scientific superiority of Britain in comparison to the Axis Powers.²⁸⁹ Britain was part of a larger imperial and

²⁸⁶ Quoted in R.S. Sayer, *Financial Policy, 1939-45*, p. 97.

²⁸⁷ «The Burden of Taxation», *The Economist*, 24th October 1942, pp. 504-505.

²⁸⁸ S. Broadberry, P. Howlett, «The United Kingdom: “Victory at All Costs”», in Mark Harrison (ed.), *The Economics of World War II*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 42-80.

²⁸⁹ Id., «Blood, Sweat, and Tears: British Mobilization for World War II», in Roger Chickering, Stig Forster, Bernd Greiner (eds.), *A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the*

transatlantic market, which allowed the country to benefit of the American financial aid and trade, and to drain resources from the vast Dominions. The war did not transform British economy into something different than a capitalist economy, and the flow of goods, services, capital and people was not interrupted.

The British over-mobilisation did not result merely from more rational and State-driven allocations of resources. However, as Keynesian economic policies were a pillar of post-war British welfare state, also more critical interpretation of the “Keynesian Revolution” recognized that «by the late 1940s Keynesian economic theory had clearly become the dominant discourse of economic policy-making in official circles in Britain.»²⁹⁰ They eventually influenced also social policy, as for the proposals to use the budget to support employment. Alongside Beveridge’ proposals, the 1944 *White Paper* on employment policy presented echoes from Keynesian theory. As for the taxation, Keynes’ ideas, often revisited, were retained by post-war Labour government, to maintain high levels of taxation to finance public services, not last the welfare service.²⁹¹

2.1.3. War, planning, and reconstruction

The plans for social reforms were originally under the supervision of the *War Aims Committee* created in August 1940 and chaired by Clement Attlee. It was later transformed in the *Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction Problems*, directed by Greenwood, and disbanded by the very beginning of 1942.²⁹² In this year, the ideas elaborated in previous decades met “total war”, which created a favourable environment and public opinion towards reconstruction, planning, social reforms in Britain. These aspects were interwoven, and the collaboration between public authorities and sectional interests

Politics of Destruction, 1937-1945, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 157-176; W.F. Crick, *An Outline of War-Time Financial Control in the United Kingdom*, London, MacMillan, 1941, pp. 15-53; D. Edgerton, *Britain’s War Machine. Weapons, Resources and Experts in the Second World War*, London, Allen Lane, 2011

²⁹⁰ J. Tomlinson, «A “Keynesian Revolution” in Economic Policy-Making?», p. 258.

²⁹¹ M. Daunton, *The Politics of Taxation in Britain, 1914-1979*, pp. 194-230.

²⁹² P. Thane, *The Foundations of the Welfare State*, London, Longman, 1996.

fostered social reforms. The list of governmental committees, studies, and reports to be published or forthcoming between 1941 and 1942 is impressive: the *Uthwatt*, *Scott*, *Barlow*, *Beveridge Committees*, the Directorate of Post-War Building, the Consultative Panel on Reconstruction, the memoranda on Agricultural Education, Housing, Health, Education, Population, Trade, Shipping, problems, and the Study Committees on Post-War Relief, Food Supply, Surplus, just to mention the most relevant.²⁹³ The propitious environment for planning and reforms was laid down in the Thirties. Yet, only during WWII these topics became matter of public debates, meeting, and wide dissemination through the media.²⁹⁴

This was the case of the 1940 *Barlow Report*, or the 1942 *Scott Report* and *Uthwatt Report*.²⁹⁵ The *Barlow Report* resulted from the 1937 *Barlow Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population*, but was now framed in the plans for the “reconstruction”, the recurrent concept in British political lexicon at that time.²⁹⁶ The recommendations of the *Barlow*, *Scott*, and *Uthwatt Report* constituted a step towards a more centralized planning and control of the British industrial and agricultural productive system. The *Barlow Report* pointed out the imbalance in the geographical distribution of the key industrial areas, concentrated in the Greater London. This led to industrial congestion and higher costs of living in this area, and to the destruction of capital in the depressed areas of older industrial settlement, which became the pool of labour of London. This relocation brought about the decline of coal industries in the North-West, and the concentration of light industries and trade services in the South-West. The overdevelopment

²⁹³ TNA, INF/1/683, «Britain and Post-War Reconstruction. 10th July, 1942»

²⁹⁴ D. Hardy, *From Garden Cities to New Towns. Campaigning for Town and Country Planning*, cit., pp. 256-271; *Town and Country Planning*, London, Staples and Staples Limited, 1943.

²⁹⁵ HMSO, *Barlow Report. Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population. Report Presented to the Parliament by Command of His Majesty*, London, Cmd. 6153, 1940; HMSO, *Scott Report. Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas. Report Presented to the Parliament by Command of His Majesty*, London, Cmd. 6378; HMSO, *Uthwatt Report. Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment*, London, Cmd. 6386.

²⁹⁶ D. Hardy, *From Garden Cities to New Towns. Campaigning for Town and Country Planning, 1899-1946*, London, Chapman&Hall, 1991.

of London area entailed a set of productive, industrial, health and defence issues. These later were even more relevant during wartime, when German bombings particularly stroke the area of the Greater London and the industrialized cities of the South-West, such as Coventry. The report advanced regional policies coordinated by a central authority, a plan of decentralization of industrial activities and population from the South-West. The *Barlow Report* testified the increasing influence of the concept of “planning” in public policies, as well as the concerns on unemployment among British social reformers.²⁹⁷ The industrial regional planning, indeed, was supported the dispersal cities and industrial areas, in order to balance the employment throughout the country.

The 1942 *Scott* and *Uthwatt* reports, instead, dealt with the land and countryside inefficiencies. They were in the same wavelength of the *Barlow Report*, to such an extent that they are considered «a triad covering most aspects of the physical planning and reconstruction».²⁹⁸ The 1942 *Scott Report*, in particular, provided some similar solutions of the 1940 Royal Commission’s report, but focusing on the land utilisation in rural areas; the establishment of the *Central Planning Authority* to pursue five-years plans for the countryside and public interventions to foster agriculture, to provide public utility services, to prevent the depopulation of farm country and to preserve amenities. It handled some long-run features of the British industrial development, in the very context of the wartimes needs. The historical run down of the British food supply became a potentially disruptive shortage after the German submarine blockade. If, before the war, Britain depended on import for 70% of the total food consumption, then the war imposed a dramatic food rationing. The *Scott Report* was part of a wider campaign to boost farm production, to revitalize the countryside and to reduce the migration flows to the cities.²⁹⁹ The report also suggested the

²⁹⁷ A. Capet, *Le poids des années de guerre. Les classes dirigeantes britanniques et la réforme sociale 1931-1951*, Rouen, Publications de l’Université de Rouen, 1991, pp. 91-100.

²⁹⁸ L. Dudley Stamp, «The Scott Report», in *Geographical Journal*, n. 1/1943, pp. 16-20, p. 16.

²⁹⁹ The need to guarantee the food supply was by the way also part of the propaganda policies and manifestos. See the pamphlets and leaflet in TNA, INF/13/140; TNA, INF/13/141.

enactment of rational planning policy to stem the drift of labour from the land and to regulate the decentralisation or dispersal of industries and industrial manpower in the countryside. Its recommendations lapped the employment and agricultural policies, and somehow prefigured embryonic elements of an environmental policy, as «the Scott Committee has reached the conclusion that the continuation of *unregulated* constructional development following pre-war trends cannot be consistent with the maintenance of agriculture, the well-being of rival communities or the preservation of the beauty of the country-side, or indeed with the well-being of the nation as a whole.»³⁰⁰ The less known *Uthwatt Report*, instead, marked an important shift in the matter of ownership and economic efficiency, as it was impossible to keep: «the purely individualistic approach to land ownership. That was perhaps inevitable in early days of industrialization and limited facilities of communication, but it is no longer completely tenable in our present stage of development and it operates to prevent the proper and effective utilisation of our effective natural resources. Town and country planning is not an end in itself; it is the instrument by which to secure that the best use is made of the available land in the interest of the community as a whole.»³⁰¹ The *Uthwatt Report* dealt with the betterment in respect of land public control. The report laid down the basic points of a fair policy for the reconstruction and planning of the land use, grounded on the compensation of public acquisition to pre-war values, and the creation of the *Central Planning Authority* to control building and other developments.

These reports get the picture of the debate on the “economic planning” in Britain before and during the war, and of the importance of “planning” approaches in addressing old and new problems. They resulted from previous legislation, and to some extent – not unlike the report on social insurances and allied services – the war led to a systematization of the legislative actions and experiences of the 1930s. The *Barlow Report*, for instance, continued along the lines of the 1934

³⁰⁰ G.M. Young (ed.), *Country and Town. A summary of the Scott and Uthwatt Reports*, London, Penguin Books, 1943, p. 57.

³⁰¹ HMSO, *Uthwatt Report. Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment*, p.1.

and 1937 *Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Acts* that tried to attract industries in the areas with higher unemployment rates in Wales, Scotland and Northern England.³⁰² By 1939, these provisions did not work as expected, since the biggest part of business still gravitated around London, the Midlands, and the South-East. Similarly, the *Scott Report* and *Uthwatt Report* encountered the renewed interest for town and country planning in the 1930s. The three reports on industrial, town, and countryside planning matched with the most famous *Beveridge Report*. Altogether, they marked the extent of the British social reformism during wartime and of the projects related with postwar reconstruction; the modernization and regulation of the labour market, the land and town planning (related to the physical reconstruction of devastated cities) and the social policies were interlinked. The reports were regarded as important – and to some extent coherent – part of planning and coordination between central government and local authorities. The *Reconstruction Committee* recommended the government to pass legislation already during wartime, in order to handle the recovery with the administrative and technical tools to address efficiently the reconstruction:

«It would appear that the trend of post-war planning and development, so far as local authorities are concerned, depends upon what modifications of existing planning law the Government intend to make as a result of the recommendations of the three reports referred to above. Continued delay in acquainting interested bodies with the intentions of Government policy will, in the opinion of your Committee, tend unnecessarily to complicate the tasks of local authorities in the field of planning. If the new legislation promised by the Government does not reach the Statute Book within a reasonable time before the end of the war, it is clear that insufficient time will be available to allow adequate and co-ordinated schemes of planning to precede

³⁰² HMSO, *Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Act*, 1934, 25 Geo. V; HMSO, *Special Areas (Amendment) Act*, 1937, I Edw. VIII and Geo. VI.

actual development. This result would, in the considered view of your Committee, be extremely unfortunate.»³⁰³

The reconstruction problems tackled in these three committees differed from the issue of social security because they were considered unrelated to international set-up and conditions. They were a matter of internal regulation, but crossed the wartime conditions as for the demobilisation, the educational policy, the employment of disabled persons and the housing policy. The problems were therefore inherently intermingled. Especially the housing policy, which did not fall the specific tasks of these committees, was one of the reconstruction core areas. The housing programmes had wide consensus among parties because combined the recovery from war damages and the need to tackle longer-run social diseases in Britain. The nagging problem of housing was addressed by British social reformers in both economic and social terms. The demand for buildings could have prevent post-war slumps, raised the supply of consumption goods after years of war economy and possibly encouraged stable levels of employment. But there was also a problem of social fairness. The social reformers proposed various methods to relieve the burden of the rents on the lower-income families: subsidies paid by local authorities, the incorporation of house subsidies within the family allowances or the provision of houses «as a state service.»³⁰⁴ This last measure recalled the coeval Fascist proposals; one of the hobbyhorses of RSI social programme and narrative was the house owning to all the workers. Beveridge himself regarded at the housing programme as one of the priority in the struggle against the “Five Giants” on the road to social progress:

«First, variations in housing standards represent the greatest inequalities between different sections of the community and afford, therefore, the greatest scope for raising the standard

³⁰³ TNA, CAB/12, «Reconstruction Committee: Fifth Interim Report, 18th March, 1944», p. 467.

³⁰⁴ J. Madge, *The Rehousing of Britain*, London, The Pilot Press Ltd, 1945, p. 31.

of living. Second, expenditure of our energies and our money on getting good housing is the most practical immediate contribution that we can make towards winning full employment, by the radical route of social demand. [...] Third, good housing – far better housing than we have at present – is the indispensable foundation for health, efficiency and education. [...] We now have new materials and new methods of construction, new ideas on planning town and preserving country, new means of transport, new understanding of all that the State can do to place new homes [...] Squalor in Britain, no less than Want, is a needless scandal.»³⁰⁵

New Ministries and inter-departmental committees were set up to address all these problems remain unsolved. This was the case for the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. This would have been also the case of the Ministry of Social Insurance and of the inter-departmental *Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Service*, whose results were considered in 1942 «of fundamental importance.»³⁰⁶

2.2 *The birth of the social security: the Beveridge Report and the White Papers on social insurances*

2.2.1. *The Beveridge Report*

Also for the *Beveridge Report*, the war events triggered momentum for addressing long-run issues of British social insurances. In 1941, the *War Cabinet* established the *Inter-Departmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Service*. Its composition was rather heterogeneous for political orientations and competences. The governmental representatives rotated throughout the 44 meetings of the Committee between July 1941 and October 1942. They were technicians committed to governmental activities since the 1930s, and

³⁰⁵ W. Beveridge, «Foreword», in John Madge, *The Rehousing of Britain*, p.5.

³⁰⁶ TNA, CAB/127/177, «A note on Reconstruction, s.d.», p.7.

they came out of the British civil services, as Beveridge himself. During First World War, he was appointed member of the *Munitions of War Committee*, for the organization and recruitment of skilled labour in the armament industry. In the interwar period, he became director of the *London School of Economics*, becoming in the 1930s chairman of the *Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee*, the advisory authority dealing with unemployment.³⁰⁷ When he was appointed chairman for the social insurances reform, Beveridge had just presented the reports on the mobilization of manpower for the war, which had positive impact on public opinion.³⁰⁸ The report suggested massive women's employment, dispersal of factories in the areas with surplus labour, forced hiring of unskilled manpower and its training by the employees, and the expansion of weapons industries as more men were recalled for service in the armed. Nearly 3 million men were expected to be additionally employed in the army and in the war production every year; the outlook in 1940 was the expansion and steering of the civilian production mobilization for the war, including stringent wages policies, conscription of women, and extension of State control over production and labour mobility. These advices owed WWI experiences, but they were also the result of Beveridge's renewed approach. According to his biographer, José Harris, to the outbreak of the war he already was « increasingly committed to policies of radical social and economic change.»³⁰⁹, to such an extent that Cole and the Webbs considered him a "Socialist".

³⁰⁷ The creation of this authority was required by the *Unemployment Act, 1934*, which in many senses was the cornerstone of the British social policy between the two world wars. HMSO, *Unemployment Assistance Act 1934. Explanatory Memorandum on the Draft Unemployment Assistance*, London, Cmd. 6374.

³⁰⁸ Beveridge's report on the manpower got him wide popularity on the press. C. Fenby, «Beveridge, the Man-power Expert, is Being Wasted Himself», *Picture Post*, March 7th, 1942, pp. 22-23; «Britons, You Owe this Man a Lot!», *Manchester Evening News*, March 21st, 1942; B. Greig, «The Man No Government can Do Without», *Daily Mirror*, May 7th, 1942; J.M. Michaelson, «He Cures Government Headaches», *Answers*, July 18th 1942; more articles of the press on the Beveridge Committee on man-power, are collected in LSE, Beveridge/21, PC 9, June 1940-September 1941 on Man Power.

³⁰⁹ J. Harris, *William Beveridge. A Biography*, cit., p. 358.

The Ministries more involved in the activities of the Committee were the Labour and National Service and the Health Department, and the technicians of the economic Ministries. Later, the new-born Ministry of the Pensions also joined the Committee.³¹⁰ The drafting of the report overlapped many competencies; every authority joined the Committee since the administrations of the social benefits were dispersed through different Ministries: the Home Office controlled the Workmen's Compensations; the Ministry of Labour supervised unemployment benefits; the old-age pensions were administrated by two different Ministers depending on whether contributory or not; the health and accident insurances were also shared among different authorities and structures; the local institutions completed the framework of the highly fragmented British social services. Such intermingling was the result of the incremental stratification of the social legislation over the decades. The goals and scope of the committee were originally modest. The terms of reference were «to undertake, with special reference to the inter-relation of the schemes, a survey of the existing national schemes of social insurance and allied services, including workmen's compensation, and to make recommendations.»³¹¹ The further development of the *Beveridge Report* to more important outcomes was the result of the wartime sideslip; the favourable climate for social reforms, the enthusiastic reception by the public, and the political dynamics within the government made possible the qualitative leap.³¹²

³¹⁰ For the full records of the meetings of the Committee, see TNA, CAB 87/76, Social Insurance and Allied Service Series. Minutes and Memoranda of the Beveridge Report, 1941, «Meetings 1-6 and Papers 1-22»; TNA, CAB 87/77, Social Insurance and Allied Service Series. Minutes and Memoranda of the Beveridge Report, 1942, «Meetings 1-5»; TNA, CAB 76/66 (continued), Social Insurance and Allied Service Series. Minutes and Memoranda of the Beveridge Report, 1942, «Meetings 6-15»; TNA, CAB 87/78, Social Insurance and Allied Service Series. Minutes and Memoranda of the Beveridge Report, 1942, «Meetings 16-38».

³¹¹ HMSO, *Social Insurance and Allied Services. Report by Sir William Beveridge*, p.2.

³¹² The biographers of Beveridge stress out his key role in determining this shift in the outcomes of the committee. J. Harris, *William Beveridge. A Biography*, pp. 370-412; J. Beveridge, *Beveridge and His Plan*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1954, pp. 101-113. They key role played by Beveridge in the mobilization of the public opinion in favour of

The works of the Committee resulted in the bargaining of proposals and resolutions among different political and social actors in the public and private sectors. The drafts and the correspondence of Committee conveyed the weight of the political legacy in this field and the common effort to achieve a far-reaching reform of social security. Some of the stable members of the Committee were P.Y. Blundun, for the Ministry of Labour and National Service, Majory Cox for the Ministry of Pensions, Hamilton Farrell for the Ministry of Health, and B.K. White, who was instead the Registry of the Friendly Societies. In the drafting of the report, the Committee operated thus in close connection both with governmental bodies and with the organisations of the social and economic interests, and especially with the *Friendly Societies*, whose role in post-war social security was not cleared up. The reform went indeed to the hearth of established and vested interests; the Committee was cautioned to not disappoint them, by trying to integrate their representatives in the preliminary drafting and discussions. The same went for the TUC, which in different meetings and memoranda discussed key points, such as the proposals on the equal tripartite contribution, the unification of social insurances, the flat-rate benefits and contributions. In public imagination and in the historical narrative, the Committee became the “Beveridge Committee”. It was also the collective wartime effort of British sectional interests to contribute to the reformulation of the mechanisms of social security.³¹³

The *Beveridge Report* was eventually submitted on 20th November 1942 to the Paymaster General, Sir William Jowitt, and to the government, after more than one year of through studies. The report balanced technical survey and far-reaching reform proposals.

the social reforms has been however undeniable. A contemporary American commentator reported that: «next to Winston Churchill, the most popular figure in Britain.» was Beveridge. Quoted in Eric Wigham, *Strikes and the Government*, p. 95.

³¹³ The letters and memoranda sent to the *Committee* by representative of Trade Unions, Assurances, *Approved Societies*, *Friendly Societies* and other associations involved in the social insurances, public assistance and healthcare constituted one of the appendices of the report. HMSO, *Social Insurance and Allied Services. Memoranda from Organisation. Appendix G to Report by Sir William Beveridge*, London, 1942, Cmd. 6405.

This immediately caught the public opinion around some watchwords. The first part is probably the most ideologically relevant, while subsequently the report analysed the problems of the current system as well as advantages and limits of the universalistic turn. The *Report* tackled different issues: the reform of the social insurances as primary objective; the children's allowances, the establishment of a separate health service, and the policies to maintain the employment as corollaries to ensure the social progress in Britain. Employment policies fell within the plan for social security because of financial and moral reasons; how to fund the whole plan in a sustainable way, and how to prevent the protracted idleness with social benefits.³¹⁴ Later, employment policies hogged the debate in the last years of the war.

The report recognized that the guide-lines of the Committee eventually overcame the original goals and scope. Besides the re-organization of previous social benefit, what actually marked the qualitative leap of the *Beveridge Report* was the awareness to go through «a revolutionary moment in the world's history» which therefore was «a time for revolutions, not for patching.»³¹⁵ The way to accomplish what the report called the «British revolution»³¹⁶ was to promote an universalistic programme of social security with the collaboration between State and individual, covering all working categories. At the same time, the State guaranteed the national minimal income and encouraged also the voluntary action by individual to provide more than the vital income for him and his family. On the other side, the plan moved from an analysis of British society, which was successfully synthesized by Beveridge's "Five Giants": Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, and Idleness.³¹⁷ The report specifically focused on the "Freedom from Want", by proposing a double redistribution to prevent the loss of income and the fall below the subsistence level. The means

³¹⁴ HMSO, *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, cit., pp. 163-165.

³¹⁵ Ivi. p. 6.

³¹⁶ Ivi. p. 17.

³¹⁷ The dealing with the *Five Giants* was later extensively treated by Beveridge himself, in conferences, articles, pamphlets, and also the general propaganda adopted this definition as post-war aims. W. Beveridge, «New Britain. Address at Oxford, 6th December, 1942», in Id., *The Pillars of Security*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1943, pp. 80-97.

were the extension of the rates of benefit, and the use of social insurances and family allowances as autonomous and permanent ways to ensure the minimal income. The report mainly rearranged the previous British social insurances, taking into consideration interwar surveys; but the political content of social insurances dramatically changed.

The guidelines tended to the unification and simplification of the social schemes and the broadening of the recipients, without upper income limits. It broke with the purely insurance-based benefits, because covered all the citizens regardless their incomes, including state employees and better paid employments. The plan segmented the population in six classes, of which four covered the workers: employees, employers and self-employed, housewives, and the unoccupied/unemployed. The other two concerned the economically inactive citizens, the retired and the population below the working age. These two later categories received retirement pensions and family allowances, while the others fell into social insurance schemes. The unification was achieved by the single security contribution, varying according to every class; it was funded by the contributions of the workers, the employers and the State. The tripartite funding (paid in the Social Insurance Fund), now extended to all the risk categories, was a cardinal principle of the report. The one single contribution allowed all classes to enjoy pensions on retirement, health and medical treatment, as well as funeral expenses. Unemployment and disability benefits were subjected to changes according to the different categories. The housewives had lower benefits than the other categories, but could benefit of provisions for widowhood as survivors' pensions, and were entitled of generous maternity grants and allowances, regardless the contributions of their husbands. The *Beveridge Report* was still calibrated on the model of the "male breadwinner", providing the incomes for the family.³¹⁸ However, three members of the committee were women, and the plan effectively took into account the new economic conditions of married women; the income for working

³¹⁸ E. Abbott, K. Bompas, *The Woman Citizen and the Social Security*, London, Women's Freedom League, 1943.

women were secured in case of childbirth, to make possible to leave and return back to work as soon as possible. The plan balanced demographic concerns and equal treatment; the combined provision of maternity grants and social benefits allowed women to enjoy almost the same treatment of men, who were still nonetheless entitled of family allowances.

Another crucial innovation was the flat-rate benefit; for any benefit, the State provided the same rate, regardless the past earnings. This rate constituted the minimal income granted to every citizen in every moment of his life, to prevent him to the loss of income. The basic benefit could have been complemented by other supplementary benefits, e.g. for maternity. The weekly flat-rate quotas were indexed to the cost-of-living and inflation. The most significant innovation concerned the unemployed; the provisional rates were £40 per week for unemployed men and wife, who would receive allowances of £8 for each dependent child. This weekly benefit marked a consistent increase in comparison with the pre-war benefits. The plan proposed the amalgamation of the special schemes of unemployment provisions with the general scheme. The increases of the rates and their homologation concerned also the other risk categories, which overall had the same amount of the basic unemployment benefit. The total burden of the Social Security budget (including family allowances, and the health service) was estimated at nearly £700,000,000 in the first years, while the inflations and the adaptation of the expenditure headings would have only moderately increased its overall burden in the lapse of 20 years.

Other major changes concerned the means-tests, leftovers of the *Poor Laws*. The report proposed their abolition for all benefits, including disability and unemployment, which was subjected to the attendance to vocational training. In turn, some form of verification of the means of subsistence were retained for the cases falling into the *National Assistance*, outside the range of the contributory social schemes, even though was considered «an essential subsidiary method in the whole Plan for Social Security».³¹⁹ The plan proposed to reform the old age

³¹⁹ *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, cit., p. 12.

pensions, establishing the age of retirement at 65 and 60 years respectively for men and women, with increased rates if the retirement was postponed, or for particular cases, e.g. for widows of working age, whether with dependent children or not. All the measures of unification of the contributions and social services regarded the technical aspects of social security.

The rationalization, however, concerned also the administrative and the political management. The report recommended to create the Ministry of Social Security, with increased powers to supervise governmental authorities and to organize the local services. At central level, the most important agencies were transferred to the Ministry of the Social Security: the *Assistance Board*; the non-contributory pensions; all unemployment and cash benefits managed by the Ministry of Labour and by the *Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee* (transformed in *Social Insurance Statutory Committee*). It was also proposed to nationalize the business of the industrial assurances, transformed into the *Industrial Assurance Board* controlled by the Ministry of Social Security. As for the local social services, the report centralized the cash benefits while retaining their ramification. For instance, the *Local Social Offices* had the tasks of social benefits and of the assistance to specific categories, e.g. blind person. The new Ministry replaced the overlapping of different charges without excluding *Local Authorities* and voluntary associations; the aim was to simplify the stratification and superposition of the previous legislative processes. The report harked back to the heritage of the national social system, and started afresh with a modern organization of social security. The creation of the Ministry of National Health from scratch was easier, dealing with a complete new structure. On the overlying of function between the social security and the health service, however, the report delivered a transitional opinion, as many different solutions concerning the health service were still at stake. The standpoint was nonetheless the separation of the medical services from the insurance system of cash benefits, in favour of a universal medical service for all citizens,

and covering any form of disease, regardless insurance coverage and contributions paid.³²⁰

The simplification did not concern only the political management of the social insurances, but the administrative organization as well. The *National Insurance Fund* was expected to overcome the burden of the British mutual-aid associations and insurances. This applied for the *Friendly* and *Approved Societies* for the sickness benefit, and for the Trade Unions (which also had the functions of the *Friendly Societies*) and the Workmen's Compensations (replaced by the inclusion of the industrial accidents and disease within the social security). Their suppression pointed at equalizing the cash benefits; they were previously shared across the different societies, which applied separate schemes of compensation, different procedures of claims and insurance payments, and various contributory cards for illness, industrial accident and diseases. The national minimum income uniformed all these risk categories; the *Friendly Societies*, which actively participated to the drafting of the report, could then reduce the scope of the universalistic turn. The reform of social security was considered «a natural development from the past»;³²¹ consequently, the mutualist framework was proposed to be progressively amalgamated with the public social security. They were proposed to be retained as voluntary insurance, to which supplement the compulsory national schemes. One of the British oldest social institutions, the Workmen's Compensation, was incorporated within the industrial injuriess. The protection against the work-related accidents was no longer matter of reconciliation regulated by the labour legislation, but a compulsory social insurance. This limited the weight of *Friendly Societies* and Trade Unions, as it allowed all workers to join the benefit. While the Workmen's Compensation fixed compensations for the individual employer, the compulsory insurance against industrial accident secured the vital incomes for the assured. It was not grounded on the principle of

³²⁰ W. Beveridge, «Health and Security in Britain », in Joan S. Clarke (ed.), *Beveridge on Beveridge. Recent Speeches of Sir William Beveridge*, London, The Social Security League, 1943, pp.21-26.

³²¹ Ivi. p. 17.

individual employer's liability, but on the principle that the benefit for the accidents should have been equal, regardless the individual responsibilities.

The *Beveridge Report* established new political and administrative solutions. Its ideological scope was related to the war effort, and to the statement of principles endorsed by the British in the *Atlantic Charter*. This was particularly evident in the aims of the social security schemes, which for the first time explicitly pointed at freeing Britain "from Want". From the administrative point of view, instead, it had continuities with the previous legislation, which nonetheless was turned upside-down. The report carefully stressed out how it was the "natural" outcome of decades of British social legislation. In reality, the linchpins of the proposed reform dwelt on the centralization and nationalization of different schemes and authorities, the unification of the contributory basis of the social insurances, the rationalization of the funding, the universalism of the benefits to all the citizens, regardless their incomes and work category. Such innovations required a strong political and administrative effort, and faced many resistances from politics and vested interests.

The results of the Committee were delivered to the Minister of Reconstruction, Howitt. The report rose some issues, but the government endorsed the universalist setting for political and practical reasons: «first, the desirability of giving each person security appropriate to his circumstances by way of insurances, and, second, the desirability of avoiding as far as possible difficult questions of demarcation between one group and another and transfers between compulsory and excepted employment involving complicated arrangements for voluntary insurances.»³²² The first governmental reports welcomed the reorganization for classes and the moderate redistributive features of the report. The preliminary view of the ministerial offices gave a positive view on the plan, which «has impressed us with the fact that its proposals are closely inter-related, and that a decision with regard to any one of the major items must to a

³²² TNA, FO/954/22A/123/1, «War Cabinet. Committee on Reconstruction Problems – Official Committee on Beveridge Report. January 14th 1943», p.2.

large extent determine the fate of others.»³²³ On the other side, the government did not establish immediately the Ministry of the Social Security. As the prospected departmental re-organization depleted the staff of the Ministries, the pre-existing offices were charged of discussing the parts of the *Beveridge Report* within their competences.³²⁴ Every department, committee, technical office provided notes, whose remarks and suggestions were retained in the 1944 governmental *White Paper*. The amount of reports from numerous different departments conveys the idea of the scope and ambition of the reforms contained in the *Beveridge Report*. The government had to decide whether reject in all respects the innovations of the plan, or just provide minor adjustments in the same general lines of the *Beveridge Report*. That option involved the governmental committees in 1943, and covered all the main aspects in view of the publication of the *White Paper* on the social insurances. Eventually, the reform of social security would have moved on Beveridge's lines, while not all his proposals were retained.³²⁵ The commentaries sent to Howitt also suggested to prepare detailed policies in all main areas of social policy, grounded on some essential points: family allowances, the NHS, the abolition of the *Approved Societies* and of the older Workmen's Compensation, and finally the extension of the compulsory insurances to guarantee the minimal income to free people from want.

Also the Treasury presented the memorandum to the *Committee on Reconstruction Problems*. The Chancellor of the Exchequer listed four

³²³ TNA, FO/954/22A/123/1, «War Cabinet. Committee on Reconstruction Problems – Official Committee on Beveridge Report. January 14th 1943», p. 23.

³²⁴ TNA, PIN/8/6, «Procedure for Bringing the Social Security Plan into operation. 13rd April, 1943»; TNA, PIN/8/49, «Problems arising out of the proposed transfer to a Ministry of Social Insurance of the responsibility for the existing schemes of Health, Pensions and Unemployment Insurance. Memoranda by the Reconstruction Committee. 14th April, 1944»; other documents concerning the Ministry of Social Security in TNA, PIN/8/156.

³²⁵ The files concerning the analysis of the *Beveridge Report* (including the drafts submitted on 1st July, 1942 with annotations and correspondence), the weekly meetings of the government's departments, the monthly progress in the elaboration of the governmental view, are in the records of the Ministry of National Insurances, notably between TNA, PIN/8/1-11; TNA, PIN/8/87; TNA, PIN/8/57; TNA, PIN/8/60. See the reports of the *Official Committee on Beveridge Report*, TNA, PIN/8/115; TNA, PIN/8/122-3; TNA, PIN/8/144-9.

main issues for the financial sustainability of the plan: the expected high military expenditure due to the post-war commitments; the full restoration of trade and export as prerequisite for full employment; the balance of tax cuts with the funding of the plan; the role of social security in the plans for the reconstruction. The memorandum criticized the underestimation of the fiscal burden of the *Beveridge Report*.³²⁶ Treasury's estimated costs of such a plan exceeded the pre-war burden by £m265 every year, with consistent increase in general taxation for the NHS and for the social insurances contributory system. The Treasury raised the same doubts for the family allowances. The Treasury questioned their non-contributory system, as well as their extension regardless the income limits, since in this last case the universalism clashed against the need to provide no more than the minimal income.³²⁷

The criticisms of the Treasury concerned also the new classes of recipients, whose benefits were not proportionally linked with the contributions; the progressive overloading of the costs on the long-run, demanding a strong legislative and social pact, achievable during wartime but perhaps not in peacetimes; the faith without any basis in an enduring period of economic growth and full employment. The memorandum of the Chancellor – which did not argue against the political convenience or the principles of the report – proposed to rely on the contributory system rather than the general revenue. It remarked that, without the export-driven economic expansions and consolidation of the balance of payments, the universalistic social security scheme would have made the national budget explode. The Treasury observed how after the war, the government had to be cautious with too generous welfare provisions, matching them with austerity policies.

³²⁶«The broad impression left by the report on the ordinary reader is that in the author's view the general finance of the scheme can be carried without undue difficulty.» TNA, PREM4/89/1, «The Financial Aspects of the Social Security Plan. 1st January 1943», p. 3.

³²⁷ TNA, PIN/8/115, «Family Allowances. Memorandum by the Treasury. 31st March, 1943».

The *Beveridge Committee* was scrutinized from the political and financial point of view, in all its detailed provisions.³²⁸ To straighten these many issues, the *Reconstruction Committee* eventually endorsed the creation of the Ministry of the Social Insurances, to launch the new scheme. There was general mistrust to establish a new administrative machinery, but they considered its set-up a prerequisite to bring into operation the new scheme as soon as possible. According to the Minister Lord Woolton, this political move could also have a positive impact on the opinion on the intentions of the government, since «the appointment of a new Minister would have great political advantage as an earnest of the Government's intention to push on with this work as rapidly as possible.»³²⁹ The governmental committees in charge of the drafting of the *White Papers* also received notes by different sectors of the society, as for the lobbies of the voluntary hospitals or the feminist militants, who criticized the framework of the *Beveridge Report*, built around the male breadwinner, and unfair in the provisions for men and women.³³⁰ The debate on social security was part of a wider redefinition of the scope of social provisions, and of the harmonization of all social policy areas, which not always slavishly followed the report. For instance, the *Assistance Board* decided to raise non-contributory supplementary war pensions at higher rate than the social insurances. Eventually the government decided to approve the increase of the assistance grants, and to keep lower social insurances benefits. The Ministry for Labour and National Service invoked a principle that opposed to Beveridge's proposal on the correlation of the benefit with the cost of maintenance:

«it was not illogical that there should be disparities between the rates of assistance and the rates of benefit under the social insurance scheme; [...] there should be no difficulty in

³²⁸ See the files of the Prime Minister, TNA, PREM/4/89/3; TNA, PREM/4/89/7; TNA, PREM/4/89/8.

³²⁹ TNA, PREM/4/89/6, «Letter of Lord Woolton to the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, 21st April, 1944», p.2.

³³⁰ See different notes, articles, and proposals in TNA, PIN/8/48; TNA, PIN/8/65; TNA, PIN/8/79.

defending these disparities if the Government adhered firmly to the principle that, while the former were designed to cover the maintenance of persons with no other resources and were subject to a test of need, the latter were contractual benefits paid as of right in return for contributions. Benefits under a scheme of contributory insurance had even been designed to meet the needs of all contributors.»³³¹

Further memoranda discussed technical and financial improvements for war and retirement pensions, family allowances, the harmonization of the insurance benefits with assistance and health services, or the incorporation of the Workmen's Compensation within the sickness compulsory insurances, as proposed by Beveridge.³³² The previous system was in fact discriminatory (only the members of the TUC or *Approved Societies* could factually prosecute a claim), and moreover it was grounded on the employer's liability, encouraging strife and mistrust. The retail or suppression of the *Approved Societies* played a crucial role in the effectiveness of a genuinely universalistic reform.³³³ Beveridge proposed the abolition of the *Approved Societies* and their replacement with public *Security Offices* implanted on the territory. The *Industrial Life Offices*, gathering the Industrial and Life Assurance Companies, opposed the withdrawn of the Mutual Insurance Companies. Their claimed for administrative and economic dangers. The unification of contributes and social insurances under State schemes forwent competences and knowledge on the field of the healthcare insurances that the private *Approved Societies* acquired through the decades; furthermore, their replacement with public authorities would have increased costs, confusion in the competences, State control. The *Approved Societies* had to maintain «without damaging the framework of the Social Insurance Scheme and while it

³³¹ TNA, PREM/4/89/3, «Extract from W.M. (43) 156th Conclusions, 17.11.43.», p. 708.

³³² See the annexes to the Committee on Reconstruction on the Beveridge Report, TNA, FO/954/22A/123/3, «War Cabinet. Committee on Reconstruction Problems – Official Committee on Beveridge Report. 14th January 1943», pp. 25-34.

³³³ The *Approved Societies* were self-governing societies responsible for the administration of additional healthcare benefits, somehow complementary to the *Friendly Societies*.

would not be so “revolutionary” in its operation as Sir William desires, it would have the merit of being in harmony with British character which has always preferred elasticity and freedom to rigidity and State control.»³³⁴ Likewise memoranda were submitted to the government throughout the whole debate leading to the *White Papers* and beyond. In 1945 – when the main lines of social security were decided – different associations of *Friendly Societies* regretted the fewer room for voluntary schemes and the exclusion of private business to any joint administration of public insurances. The *Friendly Societies* never contested the need to the universalistic turn nor modifications in their juridical status, but they stood against the squeezing of the voluntary sector, which in Britain concerned about 8 million insured, and – they claimed – meant also suppression of expertise, self-government, pluralism, self-relief.³³⁵

Governmental bureaucracies and experts, as well as vested interests resisted to specific aspects of the universalistic turn, while endorsing their very general principles, or at least accepting them as unavoidable. Also the parties welcomed the *Beveridge Report* with a thorough debate. Both Conservatives and Labour were sceptical on the possibility to implement the plan as presented by Beveridge. The Conservatives were afraid of its financial burden and its political and social implications. But also the left-wing organizations were initially suspicious of the report. It came out of liberal milieu, it was inherently centralist and it advocated to the State many of the previous tasks of the working-class organizations.

2.2.2. *The White Papers on Social Insurance*

The British parties eventually agreed on Beveridge’s general guidelines and principles. The publication of the report set in motion the legislative action; in February 1943, the Home Secretary Herbert Morrison declared the government’s commitment to a preliminary

³³⁴ TNA, PREM/4/89/2, *The Beveridge Report. Preliminary Observations of the Industrial Life Offices*, London, 1942, p. 16.

³³⁵ See different memoranda, letters, and reports delivered from the *Friendly Societies* to the government in LSEA, Beveridge/8/51.

survey for the social reforms in the framework of reconstruction policies. After the presentation of the *Beveridge Report* to the Parliament, in 1944 the government presented the *White Paper on the Social Insurance*. This explicitly harked back to the 1942 report, and to the effort to rethink the social policy in the midst of the war:

«As far back as June, 1941, therefore, when – so far as could then be judged – the menace of heavy air attack and invasion had not yet been lifted the Government invited Sir William Beveridge to take charge of a comprehensive survey of existing schemes. In November 1942, he presented his Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services (Cmd. 6404). This was an outline plan, covering “all citizens without upper income limit... all-embracing in scope of persons and needs.” It did not purport to be a complete and final scheme, ready for immediate translation into legislative form. The detail had still to be worked out. Further, the plan was based on three assumptions; first the institution of a scheme of children’s allowances, second the framing of a comprehensive health service, and third the avoidance of mass unemployment. But they were assumptions only, and as they were not an integral part of the plan, Sir William Beveridge, naturally and properly, did not attempt in his Report to work out detailed proposals for implementing them. The Government, while accepting these assumptions as necessary prerequisites to an improved and comprehensive plan of social insurance, have had to examine them closely in order to be reasonably sure that they could be realised in practice.»³³⁶

The *Beveridge Report* proposed a global solution to the fragmentation of social insurances. The government published different *White Papers* on social insurances, national health service, employment

³³⁶ HMSO, *Social Insurance. Part 1*, London, 1944, Cmd. 6550, p.5.

policies. This did not derogate from the universalism of the report, but rather found specific solutions in each domain.

The *White Paper* on the social security had two parts: the first concerned the proposal for the reform of the social insurances, while the second part treated separately the industrial injury insurance.³³⁷ Family allowances were excluded, as the bill for their implementation already passed during wartime; the *White Paper* instead dealt with a more comprehensive social and economic policy for the reconstruction, which globally pointed at fostering economic growth and wealth, and preventing income loss in any change in life. The social benefits were no longer residual policy, but part of a renewed commitment of the State, as «the next aim of national policy must be to secure the general prosperity and happiness of the citizens.»³³⁸ This is why they were embedded into the reconstruction policies:

«Neither of these courses of action can be effective alone. In a community whose earning power was seriously impaired by its failure to use its people and resources effectively – that is to say, by unemployment or inefficiency – it would be impossible to avoid widespread individual poverty, whatever special measures were adopted. But it is also true that a nation with a high power of production would not have solved its problem if it included any appreciable section of people who were in want, whether through loss of individual earning power, due to ill-health, unemployment or old-age, or through inability to provide properly for their children. Only when this problem is also solved has a community achieved genuine social security.»³³⁹

The *White Paper* retained the main aspects of the *Beveridge Report*: the State's contribution in the funding of social security, family

³³⁷ HMSO, *Social Insurance. Part II. Workmen's Compensation. Proposals for an Industrial Injury Insurance Scheme*, London, 1944, Cmd. 6551.

³³⁸ HMSO, *Social Insurance. Part 1*, p.3.

³³⁹ *Ibidem*.

allowances and NHS; the flat-rate contribution; the reorganization of the categories in six classes, with the new risk categories (death grants and those for the married women); the rationalization of the schemes on the principle “one card, one stamp, all benefits”; the room left for the complementary pensions; the universalism and social solidarity. The standards rates for sickness and unemployment benefits did not overcome the threshold of 35£, with supplementary grants according to different conditions (married couples with children had an extension of family allowances to the eldest child, who normally could not qualify for the weekly 5£ allowance). The retiring age, as in the *Beveridge Report*, was 65 and 60 respectively for men and women, with increased benefits for those who did not leave work by that age. The married women’ grants, widows’ benefits and death grants might not be as relevant as unemployment, sickness and old-age benefits; however, they marked that shift of social policy to the system later called “from the cradle to the grave”.

The *White Paper* did not merely transpose Beveridge’ indications. Unemployment benefits were limited to 30 weeks in continuous periods, with further extension; the *Beveridge Report* recommended instead to make benefits for sickness and unemployment unlimited in time, but submitted respectively to behaviour conditions and vocational training. The government refused to accept such a proposal in order to prevent abuses of benefit. The old-age pensions underwent a similar simplification, considering the demographic trend, which would have doubled the recipients as the contributors would dropped. The flat-rate schemes matched social solidarity with fiscal sustainability. Last, the government tackled also the thorny issue of the *Approved Societies*. The *Beveridge Report* purposely did not grip the issue of their abolition concurrently with the birth of the NHS. The Government did not retain the *Approved Societies*; there was no room for independent and alternative financial units in a flat-rate, universalist, system. With the *National Insurance Funds*, no other responsible agent needed to exist, as the NHS was free and universalistic. Different was the approach towards *Friendly Societies* and

other private companies; compulsory and voluntary schemes might coexist, conditional upon the reform.

The social assistance was included in the social protection. The *National Assistance Board* unified the previous forms of assistance; before the reform proposed in the *White Paper*, there were four forms of assistance out of public moneys for persons whose own resources were insufficient for their maintenance. They were the outdoor relief under the *Poor Law* and the financial assistance for specific cases, such as supplementary pensions, blindness, war distresses. These schemes were managed both by the local authorities (especially for the *Poor Laws*) and by the *National Assistance Boards*. The government proposed the unification of the schemes under a single system of national assistance;³⁴⁰ it also extended the cases for the “disregarding” of other benefits to allow the access to the assistance (e.g. sickness or industrial injuries benefits), thus broadening the recipients. In that regard, the government did not accept the recommendations of the *National Assistance Board*, which suggested more caution.³⁴¹

In the second part of the *White Paper*, the government dealt with the special scheme for the industrial injuries, adjusting Beveridge’s proposals with political and financial considerations.³⁴² The industrial injury insurance replaced the Workmen’s Compensations, milestone of the “older” British social insurances. It was extended to *all* workers, and covered also certain industrial diseases. In many respects, the industrial injury insurance worked similarly as the war pensions’ schemes. It recognised a certain similarity between the soldier wounded on the battlefield and the worker injured during his productive activity for the community. From the private contract design of the older Workmen’s Compensations, the new insurance inferred that guaranteeing the worker’s health and his incomes concerned the whole community. It also reflected the changing

³⁴⁰ Ivi. pp. 35-36

³⁴¹ TNA, PIN/8/157, «National Assistance. Note of Conference held at the Ministry of Health on the subject of “Disregard of Resources”. 14th June, 1944»; TNA, PIN/8/157, «Note by the Assistance Board on the Treatment of Insurance Benefits. 15th June, 1944».

³⁴² HMSO, *Social Insurance. Part II. Workmen’s Compensation. Proposals for an Industrial Injury Insurance Scheme*.

perspective operated by the war; in the public discourses and perceptions, the national effort weakened the traditional social distinction and involved the workers in the national struggle. As for the veterans of the war, workers were entitled of pensions in case of loss in health, strength, power to fully enjoy life. These lifetime pensions could be extended also to the dependants of the insured, the benefits were flat-rate and non-contributory. The funding of industrial injury was autonomous from the national fund of the other social insurances, still being under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Insurances. The tripartite administration of the authority was granted; employers and workers' representative coupled the public officers. For this reason, the industrial injury insurance scheme was treated separately to the other insurances.

The previous Workmen's Compensation covered some 17 million workers, with important charges for public finances and employers. The industrial injury insurance affected the core of the British social legislation, and was considered an essential reform. The older system was defined in a Fabian report delivered to the government as «a formidable catalogue of injustice and hardships arising from it [...] can only be defined as scandalous.»³⁴³ There was no systematic provision to ensure the rehabilitation, the liability of the compensation was on the individual employer, the dispute was still settled by the tribunals and the compensations were relatively low. This 1940 report claimed for a radical change of the Workmen's Compensation in a wider reform: «Workmen's Compensation and the Social Services having grown up in a typically English, haphazard fashion, will not in the period of post-war reconstruction provide a golden opportunity for securing the advantages of uniformity and systematization in the Social Services as a whole? The task might well be one for another Royal Commission much smaller and much more powerful in personnel than the present Royal Commission on Workmen's Compensation.»³⁴⁴

³⁴³TNA, PIN/8/142, «Workmen's Compensation and the Social Services After the War. 16th August, 1940», p.1.

³⁴⁴ Ivi. p. 4.

This kind of considerations affected the works of the *Beveridge Committee*, which owed much to TUC concerns as well as to the *Royal Commission on Workmen's Compensation*.³⁴⁵ The final decision of the Government was to incorporate the industrial injury insurance within the social insurances, but as a separate scheme. Thus, the provisions for disablement or loss of life eventually became a public social service. As for the funding of the whole system of social security, the contributory tripartite funding was retained for social insurances like retirement pensions, unemployment, sickness and invalidity benefits, widows, maternity and death grants. Family allowances, the National Assistance, the industrial injury insurance, and the NHS instead were integrally paid by general taxation. These were the only four provisions *fully* universalistic, as financed by the whole community and accessible to all citizens regardless the contributions paid.

Alongside the proposals on the social insurance, within few months the Government published other two *White Papers*, respectively on the NHS and on full employment. The Government retained Beveridge's formulation on the action on three directions: social insurance, health service and full employment. The establishment of the free health service was prefigured in the *A National Health Service*, outlined by new-born Ministry of Health, directed by the liberal Ernest Brown.³⁴⁶ The healthcare reforms were defined in the *White Paper* as the "natural" outcome of the British history:

«The idea of a full health and medical service for the whole population is not a completely new one, arising only as part of post-war reconstruction. In the long and continuous process by which this country has been steadily evolving its health services the stage has been reached, in the Government's view, at which the single comprehensive service for all

³⁴⁵ TNA, PIN/8/143, «Memorandum. Workmen's Compensation. Points for amendment of the existing Scheme which have been raised by the Trade Union Congress in the last two years. 11th June, 1942»; TNA, PIN/8/143, «Letter from William Jowitt to Sir William Beveridge. 20th May, 1942».

³⁴⁶ Ministry of Health, *A National Health Service*, London, 1944, Cmd. 6502.

should be regarded as the natural next development. The end of the war will present the opportunity, and plans for post-war reconstruction provide a setting, but the proposal to set up a comprehensive service has to be seen against the past as well as the future and to be recognised as part of a general evolution of improved health services which has been going on in this country for generations. [...] The methods of organising it must be closely related to history and to past and present experience.»³⁴⁷

The fully universal and free features of the NHS was confirmed: free healthcare available to anyone, funding via general taxation; health coverage for minor accidents to major surgeries and illnesses, from maternity to tuberculosis. This latter was not tackled through the establishment of specific contributory insurances, like in Italy, but through its treatment in the free national service. The NHS did not treat only physical illness, but also mental diseases. In its first configuration, it was expected to cover also some specific healings, as for the dental care, which traditionally has never been included in the systems of social policy. The *White Paper* established an organization on three levels: the General Practitioners (the family doctor), the *Health Centres* that combined general treatments and social assistance services at a local level, and the public hospitals. The GPs were the basis of the healthcare service, as around their function gravitated the most important political concerns, and because the BMA and the voluntary hospitals represented important vested interests.³⁴⁸ New *Local Planning Authorities* were created to entrench in the territory the structures of the NHS, which was centrally directed by the Ministry of Health.

These *White Papers*, accessible to a wider audience, were discussed in the House of Commons. Jowitt, Ministry Without Portfolio and Ministry Designate of Social Insurances, presented the

³⁴⁷ Ivi. p.5.

³⁴⁸ The way to deal with these structures and to harmonize public and private system was matter of discussion within the Department of Health in the drafting the *White Paper*, see TNA, PIN/8/42.

governmental proposals in the Parliament before Beveridge. He defined it as «one of the greatest single advances which had ever been made either in this country or in any other country in the development of Social Insurance.»³⁴⁹ Beveridge's principles were retained except for the subsistence level of the benefits. It was not task, Jowitt argued, of social insurances to secure the vital income:

«It is not and does not pretend to be a scheme of social security. Social security can only be achieved by many and diverse methods. Economic justice, political justice, justice everywhere, full employment, organization of the health services, maintenance of a stable price level, a satisfactory house policy – these things and many others are all necessary ingredients in a policy of social security.»³⁵⁰

The governmental view on social policy did not apparently limit itself to the reform of social insurances, part of a wider project of social security. And the intervention of the conservative Minister of Education R.A.B. Butler confirmed the consistency of the governmental effort, introducing the *Education Act* as an important piece in the British social policy.³⁵¹ A thorough plan of social security required a coordinated ministerial action. This was for instance the case of family allowances. The helps in kind provided by the *Family Allowance Bill* fell also within the scope of public education, the social insurances and the healthcare, being the foundation of State's nutritional policy:

«The Government's policy of providing both cash allowances and free meals and milk in school as "combined operation" [...]. The Government plan is based on the belief that we are introducing in this system of help in kind a great new social

³⁴⁹ *Social Insurance and Industrial Injury Insurance. Debates on the Government White Papers in the House of Commons 2nd, 3rd, 8th, and 9th November 1944*, Conservative and Unionist Party Organization, 1944, p.1.

³⁵⁰ *Ivi.* p. 4.

³⁵¹ On the 1944 Education Act, see K. Jeffereys, «R.A. Butler, the Board of Education and the 1944 Education Act», *History*, n.68/1984, pp. 415-431.

reform which will have very desirable results in improving the children's health, and at the same time we are accepting the view that family allowances in themselves are a very fine measure of social advance.»³⁵²

Slightly different was the case of industrial accident, which usually had separate provisions and administration. The government retained a fully universalistic approach, rejecting special levy for hazardous industries and flat-rate contributory risk instead of industrial compensations based on earnings. The compensation was thus paid not only for the loss of income, but also for the physical loss. The government aimed at eradicating the litigation between workers and employers, typical of the older Workmen's Compensations. The compensations lost their juridical framework to become an administrative practice, with new means to settle the conflict; the consultation between employers and insurance companies were replaced by the public *Advisory Council* to reconcile. The Home Secretary Morrison, stated that «cumulatively this scheme represents a revolution.»³⁵³

Jowitt's speech was welcomed by the deputies. The more enthusiastic regarded the scheme as «a piece of administrative machinery which we can recommend to the rest of the world as a British product.»³⁵⁴ The most part of them endorsed the plan of social insurances and family allowances, with reservations for their financial boundaries, or for special provision for specific categories. The industrial injuries insurances reached an even larger consensus. The House of Common looked at them as the permanent abandonment of the outdated and unfair system, in favour of a modern concept of protection for workers, including non-industrial categories. For the first time, the State committed itself to provide a compulsory public insurance, almost doubling the benefits for the injured workers. Few

³⁵² *Social Insurance and Industrial Injury Insurance. Debates on the Government White Papers in the House of Commons 2nd, 3rd, 8th, and 9th November 1944*, p. 23.

³⁵³ Ivi. p. 24.

³⁵⁴ Ivi. p. 11.

voices raised against the universalism of the reforms, as for Sir Waldron Smithers, admirer of von Hayek and fierce anti-communist, who joined the anti-welfare frond within the *Tory* and assisted Mrs. Margaret Thatcher political beginnings. He considered the scheme unworkable from the financial point of view, and mostly «contrary to the natural law.»³⁵⁵ His position reflected old liberal positions; his concerns on the aftermaths on the budget were quite generic, but the ideological opposition was clearer: «the Government had not right to gamble and raise hopes which could not be realised. The scheme ought to be left over until the General Elections for the people to decide. The enactment of the proposal, which undermine creative energy, should be postponed until we knew better where we stood financially. The only thing the proposal did not insure against was laziness, and they indicated more and more State control.»³⁵⁶ These voices were minority in the Parliament and in the country. However, they constituted the core of a strain of thought that passed through the “Golden Age” to remerge with Thatcherism.

Greenwood and Beveridge were present to the debate in the House of Common. The former appreciated the holistic approach: the social insurances were closely interwoven with social services; the healthcare with social assistance, and strictly related to the sickness benefits; unemployment was considered a failure of the State to create jobs and economic growth. For the first time, these issues were not handled on a piecemeal approach, but as a whole. His main criticisms concerned the timing of the reform. With the exception of family allowances, the other reforms were not on the immediate agenda of the government. Greenwood directly linked the possibility to enact such an ambitious programme with the wartime conditions. Unlike the deputies opposing to social security, he claimed for a complete implementation of these reforms before the general elections and during the war:

³⁵⁵ Ivi. p. 12.

³⁵⁶ Ivi. p. 12.

«I do not believe that a party Government, on the peace-time model, could carry through a Bill like this without facing very grave perils. If this House, composed as it is now, makes up its mind, it can get this scheme. There will be attacks from vested interests. It is no good hiding the fact. The spate of protests grows from morning to morning, but my hon. Friends and I have no intention of bowing our heads to any vested interest. If the Government will stand firm in their proposals they will have our united backing. We cannot afford to have this scheme sabotaged or imperilled. There are people in this House who have a very uneasy feeling that we cannot afford it. We have got to afford it. We are not going to afford this scheme by whittling it down, or by introducing measures of so-called economy. We can afford this scheme if our people are enabled to work for their living, as the vast majority of them desire to do.»³⁵⁷

Beveridge welcomed what he defined – borrowing Churchill’s words – a “gigantic scheme”, which endorsed one of the major changes underpinning his report: «instead of having a scheme for employees only they had a scheme for all citizens, including housewives and persons working on their own account.»³⁵⁸ Beveridge feared major departures from the main principles of the report, as for the individual responsibility to abolish the want. He also claimed for a regulation of the *Friendly Societies* to prevent the overlapping of the schemes, and thus to produce unequal benefits for equal contributions. Beveridge also regarded favourably at the State monopoly for industrial assurances, through the *Industrial Assurance Board*. He assessed governmental proposal not as «a mere improvement of the social insurance but a first step towards a new Britain, a Britain without want.»³⁵⁹ For this reason, he wanted them implemented before the 1945 elections, in order to prevent controversies and the political auction of

³⁵⁷ Ivi. p.7.

³⁵⁸ Ivi. p. 16.

³⁵⁹ Ivi. p. 17.

the electoral campaigns, and to retain the exceptional strain and unity of British society and politics.

2.2.3. *The parties, the social security, and the limits of consensus*

Yet, social security became one of the core topics of the 1945 general elections. Beveridge himself got out with the Liberal Party, drawing on his popularity due to his report. In the official debates, the parties shared a general consensus on principles, basic administrative tools and the very general functioning of the social insurances. Major differences concerned the extent of social benefits and services. The debate crossed the whole spectrum of the British politics, including the Communist Party.³⁶⁰ It also involved different factions and areas within the same parties. This was particular true for the two major British parties.

Stiff resistances came from the right-wing of the *Tories*, which quickly gathered around some figures like Smithers and the *National League for Freedom*. In turn, a relevant trend of the party endorsed social security. The *Tory Reform Committee* was born within the parliamentary group, chaired by the Viscount Hinchinbrooke. They represented the political fraction of the party that fully backed the general guidelines and outcomes of the report, as well as other planning policies.³⁶¹ They proposed a wide set of reforms to recast British society and economy “from the right”, through the incorporation of social reforms, full employment and national planning in the political programme of the party. They wanted a strong collaboration with the TUC and employers’ representatives, in order to involve the organized interests and the national community, respectively, in the definition of public

³⁶⁰ Communist Party, *A National Health Service. Memorandum Issued by the Communist Party*, London, Communist Party, 1944.

³⁶¹ «The Committee was originally formed in February, 1943, with the object of encouraging the Government to take constructive action on the lines of the Beveridge Scheme. [...] We have been able to work together on such apparently distinct issues as the Beveridge Report, the Catering Bill, Post-War Reconstruction, Civil Aviation, War Pensions, Education, Agriculture, and Forestry.» *Tory Reform Committee, Forward by the Right! A Statement by the Tory Reform Committee*, Printed for private circulation, London, 1943, p. 1.

policies and in the funding of social security. The war was the moment to renew the spirit of British democratic institutions, as «the supreme test of parliamentary democracy will lie in its ability to reconcile planning for full employment with the liberty of the individual.»³⁶² The committee published nine bulletins on different reforms; the land, town and country planning, the budget, and, mostly, proposals on universalistic social insurances and employment policy.³⁶³ They also claimed for withdrawing the *Approved Societies*, and for resizing the *Friendly Societies* fields of action in voluntary sickness schemes. Part of the *Tories* joined the so-called “reluctant collectivists”, those liberals and conservatives that accepted a more important role of the State in the social and economic life.

This group devoted particular attention to social security, whose implementation required an important fiscal burden. An ambitious programme of social security worked only with stable economic growth, considerable attainable by British industry: «the time has come to concentrate upon increasing the national income in the cause of Social Progress by every means, and in particular by increased industrial efficiency.»³⁶⁴ By the very beginning of 1945, the drafts for the economic policies moved towards policies to boost production and promoted higher redistribution of wealth: «the national income must be restored and augmented by deliberately organising and expanding economy.»³⁶⁵ This goal was a cross-cutting policy, which defined two distinguished ideas of the post-war society: «there is today a clear-cut division between those who seek security through a policy of restriction and those who seek a rising standard of life through a policy of expansion. This cleavage cuts across party and class alignments, and

³⁶² *Ivi.* p. 8.

³⁶³ «The Tory Reform Committee was first brought together to secure the acceptance by the Government of the main features of the Beveridge Report. We therefore welcome the White Paper on Social Insurance which, as the Government record in expressing their gratitude to Sir William Beveridge, embodies so much of his plan in its proposals.» *Id.*, *Social Insurance. Bulletin No. 8 of the Tory Reform Committee*, London, 1944, p.1.

³⁶⁴ *Id.*, *What Shall We Use for Money? Bulletin No. 5 of the Tory Reform Committee*, London, 1944, p.16.

³⁶⁵ *Id.*, *Tools for the Next Job. A Policy of Progress through Productivity*, London, 1945, p.5.

corresponds with the mental outlook of individuals. [...] Tory reformers take their stand upon the side of expansion.»³⁶⁶ The need to increase the wealth was not a goal of social policy in itself, but was considered – at once – a political goal and the only way to make full employment and social security sustainable. What the Tory Committee claimed for was even an «an expansion upon a scale comparable to that which took place in this country and America during the industrial revolution.»³⁶⁷ For doing so, they admitted how «almost everything was wrong with our pre-war outlook and its legacy of out-of-date methods and equipment.»³⁶⁸

The hope of conservative reformers was to combine the tasks of the reconstruction with a policy of productivity and expansion led by the government, refusing the left-wing nationalisations as well as the rightist belief in the private enterprise. This “new centre” proposed some kind of Keynesian planning for the reconstruction, then applicable to regulate industrial and budget policies. Government should coordinate the economic and industrial actors, boost the export and use the budget leverages, such as public investments and money supply.³⁶⁹ Limited nationalizations were not driven by ideological assumptions, but on the very pragmatic acknowledgement – strengthened by the war effort – that State interventionism could boost the productivity. The challenge was to apply the tools of the war economy in peacetimes. Electoral considerations also stepped in; they alleged that social reformism was entrenched in the party’s traditional realism and pragmatism in representing, unlike the Labour, the *national* community and not the “sectional interests”, which were regarded unfavourably in the public discourse of the time.

The reform of the social insurances crossed the internal debate in the Labour Party, with some consequences in the post-war approach of Attlee’s Government. They became, alongside nationalizations, the

³⁶⁶ *Ibidem.*

³⁶⁷ *Ivi.* p. 11.

³⁶⁸ *Ibidem.*

³⁶⁹ «The first task in politics is to get rid of the obsolete issue of public versus private enterprise [...]» *Ivi.* p.54.

frontline between the left-wing and the centre in the party. Historian Stephen Brooke noticed that the former still wanted to accompany social reforms with wider planning of industrial production and socializations, while the latter focused on social security, full employment and demand management as “socialist measures” in themselves.³⁷⁰ By 1944, the Labour moved to a more consistent endorsement of social security in its programme, pushing nationalisation into the background. As the problems of the recovery entered in the debate, the party debate possible ways to steer from war economy without losing the grip over the economic system. The “revisionists” pragmatically proposed to nationalise only coal, transports and electricity; the Labour was vague on the possibility of socialist planning even without massive industrial socializations.³⁷¹ While Labour’s right-wing set a minimum definition of the “socialist policies”, the left-wing, led by the future Health Minister Aneurin Bevan, considered the nationalisation of the economic key-sectors the only way to improve British industrial productivity. The explicit reference on nationalisation differed the 1945 Labour electoral programme from Liberals and Conservatives, but did not solve fundamental ambiguities on the political direction of the party: «Labour’s victory in 1945 was one of triumph, but confusions and differences over the ends and means of socialism lay just below the surface.»³⁷²

Labour extensively discussed the main provisions related to social insurance and the NHS. The party generally welcomed the *White Papers*, which «in their scope and comprehensiveness represent a great step forward.»³⁷³ Labour looked favourably at all the major provisions, advocating to the very history of the working-class movement the

³⁷⁰ S. Brooke, «Revisionists and Fundamentalists: the Labour Party and Economic Policy during the Second World War», *The Historical Journal*, n. 1/1989, pp. 157-175.

³⁷¹ Labour Party, *Full Employment and Financial Policy*, Labour Party, London, 1944.

³⁷² S. Brooke, «Revisionists and Fundamentalists: the Labour Party and Economic Policy during the Second World War», p.175.

³⁷³ Labour Party, *Preliminary Observations on the Government White Papers on Social Insurances, Workmen’s Compensations, and a National Health Service*, London, Labour Party, 1944, p.1.

claims for these reforms, from its origins to the wartime legislations and reforms. Labour Party tried to present itself as a “national party”, as the *Tories* did, supporting the *White Paper*. However, they were critical on some aspects; on the levels of benefits, the Labour claimed for objectives subsistence parameters under which the incomes should not drop. This was a key point, as the governmental *White Papers* consistently differed from the *Beveridge Report*. The Labour then criticized other major departures from the *Beveridge Report*: the time limits for sickness benefits; the lower rates of old-age pensions with regard to unemployment benefits; the ineligibility of the mothers to be paid for family allowances; the low rates of the industrial injuries insurances, which Labour wanted accompanied by medical services. The Liberal Beveridge made similar criticisms in each of these points.

More problematic was the case for the NHS. As it represented the most relevant innovation from the previous health services, Labour frightened its watering down, due to resistances by vested interests. The party proposed to give great power to central Ministry to implement a planned-oriented reform, through the collaboration with the local and central *Joint Authorities*, in order to cover the whole territory. The major concern were the objection of the BMA and of the voluntary hospitals, which Labour proposed to include in the public schemes. The wartime experiments on planning might influence Labour proposals in that regard; the party backed the *White Paper* policy of “regional planning”, coordinated from the central government, to relieve congestion in “over-doctorate” areas and increase medical services in “under-doctorate” areas.³⁷⁴ Such proposals signalled the preference of the Labour for more planned and State-driven policies, as the doctors were compelled to exercise their profession into the public service. The struggle for making healthcare an universalistic and public service was a crucial one, because encompassed the “planning” momentum and the leftovers of the former system: «both these proposals are absolutely necessary in the public interest if the present limited supply of doctors is to go round. Both are bitterly opposed by the BMA as interference with the rights of

³⁷⁴ Ivi., p. 8.

individual.»³⁷⁵ The Labour went beyond some cautions of the *White Papers*, proposing the nationalisation of all kinds of medical services and treatments, making them free and available for all under the new NHS and the related health centres. Their 1943 report considered it the most relevant among all the social policies, and the prerequisite to deal with the reconstruction with unified approach:

«The aim of the nation's Health policy can be nothing less than the utmost possible fitness of body and mind for all the people. [...] for full health is the greatest asset of an individual, and a healthy population is the greatest asset of a nation. [...] We need social action to create the conditions under which the healthy needs of the whole people can be satisfied. In truth, there is hardly any activity of government which does not affect health, directly and indirectly. If, through a sound social and economic policy, we can master poverty, we shall thereby do much to eliminate ill-health; for poverty is still the greatest cause of ill-health. If, by good government, we secure for all good conditions of work, with full employment, and with ample possibilities for leisure and exercise; if, through our public services, the citizen can obtain well-built and well-placed houses with sanitation, water, clean and plentiful milk and other nourishing food, clean air and as much sunlight as possible, and freedom from injurious noise; then the health of the nation will benefit far more from these causes than from much doctoring.»³⁷⁶

Health policy encompassed other areas of public intervention; Labour claimed for the health service to combine curative and preventive cures. As party's document recognized, «the war has forced us to move in this direction.»³⁷⁷, as it promoted planning, assistance and food-rationing policies. This experiments could develop planned food,

³⁷⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁷⁶ Labour Party, *National Service for Health*, London, Labour Party, 1943, p. 2.

³⁷⁷ *Ivi*. p. 5.

preventive, housing and assistance policies to improve the life standards. Labour Party pushed for the NHS more consistently than the Conservatives, as they were «calling for something different in kind from an Insurance Scheme. *We want the whole nation to be the insurer, and the whole nation to be insured.* What we want does not involve a mass of paper work, or filling-in of forms, or competitive offers of this and that special benefit as the reward for an increased premium. What we want, in short, is a comprehensive service for the health of the whole nation, provided by the nation, for the nation.»³⁷⁸

The traditional view on British politics during WWII stressed the existence of a general “consensus” that war led among the parties and in the society.³⁷⁹ A second historiographic wave contested the extent of such agreement on social policy. In their view, the *War Cabinet*, where the *Tories* had the lead, watered down the most innovative aspects of the *Beveridge Report*, e.g. the national minimum income and the scope of the NHS, which were the linchpins of Labour’s propaganda. Kevin Jeffreys argued that the reforms prospected in the *White Papers* were rather the consolidation of the previous schemes, and that, if a “consensus” was to be found, it was rather in the early post-war period.³⁸⁰ In fact, the Conservatives were not immediately convinced of the workability of “integral” universalistic reforms, as more emphasis was put on tax break and as in the party resisted old-fashioned takes on the “individual responsibilities”.³⁸¹ Once the *Beveridge Report* was exploited in the wartime propaganda, however, the government could not back off. The success of the report compelled the parties to endorse its main principles. The *White Papers* seemed to have greater support by *Tories*, as it was more moderate in its extents (it talked about “national insurances” rather than “social security”) and in the social provisions, especially for unemployment and sickness.

³⁷⁸ Ivi. p. 13.

³⁷⁹ Maurice Bruce, *The Coming of Welfare State*, London, B.T. Batsford, 1961; Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War*, London, Cape, 1975.

³⁸⁰ K. Jeffreys, «British Politics and Social Policy during the Second World War», *The Historical Journal*, n.1/1987, pp. 123-144.

³⁸¹ H. Kopsch, *The Approach of the Conservative party to social policy during world war two*, London, Unpublished PhD Thesis, 1970, pp. 129-130.

Labour's full endorsement of the *White Paper* on the NHS resulted from its long-lasting claims in that regard.³⁸² While Conservatives partially backed the claims of BMA to retain older privileges and the voluntary hospitals, the Labour feared the downgrading of the reform to the mere strengthening of the health insurances for lower incomes, as the *Tories* had in fact suggested.³⁸³

These non-negligible differences resulted from the democratic dialectics that the war effort did not erase. The parties were preparing for the general elections once the war was over, and that led to a more vivid discussion on the social reforms; in fact, a very general consensus around the main setting of the *White Papers* was established. The extent of the reforms met the programmes of the two major parties. While Labour tried to appropriate of the historical and cultural background of these reforms, relevant sectors of the Conservatives fully endorsed the letter of the two *White Papers*. Differences laid behind the apparent consensus. While the groups of reluctant collectivists" among the *Tories* accepted the reforms proposed by the *War Cabinet*, the Labour claimed for a wider extent of the benefits, also demanding further and more radical economic reforms than those advocated by the Conservatives. But divergences crossed also within each party. As Cole ironically noted, consistent sectors of public opinion and politics still regarded the State's commitment in this field as a rollback of British tradition to Nazi or Soviet totalitarian solutions.³⁸⁴

2.3. *The ways to full employment in peacetime*

2.3.1. *The full employment and the policies for the reconstruction*

The proposals on unemployment fell into the debate on the reconstruction, quickly assimilated to the broader programme for social

³⁸² Just think about Fabian concern for the improvement of health policies since the very beginning of the century. S. Webb, B. Webb, *The State and the Doctor*, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1910; Id. *The Prevention of Destitution*, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1911.

³⁸³ K. Jeffreys, «British Politics and Social Policy during the Second World War», pp. 133-137.

³⁸⁴ G.D.H. Cole, *The Means to Full Employment*, London, Victor Gollanz Ltd, 1943, p.8.

security as designed in the *Beveridge Report*. They dated back to previous elaborations, but made a qualitative leap throughout the war. British policy-makers realized how disruptive the unemployment was for Western societies, since «unemployment was more than a great and unavoidable waste. It was symptomatic of the breakdown of a whole economic system and one of the propagators of Fascism and of the war we are now fighting.»³⁸⁵ The war changed the intellectual framework of many groups that in the Thirties claimed for planning policies or socialist solutions. The emergence of Keynesianism provided a theory to rethink economic policies; however, only during WWII the “Keynesian revolution” gathered intellectual and social consensus, even if its implementation as public policy was more difficult. Groups like the PEP, for instance, endorsed the universalistic social reforms and employment policies; the word “welfare” was now explicitly matched with social insurances, family allowances, health service, vital income and minimum wages, progressive taxation, food subsidies. Employment policies and redistribution of wealth were part of it: «and not only would such a policy be justified on moral grounds. It would also assist the elimination of unemployment by effecting some transfer of income from the well-off who tend to spend a lower part of their incomes to the less well-off who spend a comparatively large part of their incomes, so creating a greater demand for consumer, goods and, indirectly, for capital goods as well.»³⁸⁶ G.D.H. Cole, former supporter of industrial democracy and socialist plans, in 1943 backed up governmental policies for full employment, alongside industrial cooperation between trade unions and employers. War demonstrated how Nazi and Fascist models were not viable ways to solve unemployment, and the only way to avoid the overextensions of governmental power was to call social bodies and representative to collaborate.³⁸⁷

War represented therefore a Damascene conversion for a whole class of intellectuals, politicians, civil servants and economists to some

³⁸⁵ PEP, *Employment for All*, London, Europa Publications Limited, 1944, p. 1.

³⁸⁶ Ivi. p.2.

³⁸⁷ G.D.H. Cole, *The Means to Full Employment*.

sort of “Keynesianism”, regardless the effective adherence to Keynesian views. Beveridge was one of them; his initial lack of understanding of Keynesian theory was gradually dwindling off, and he eventually developed a close collaboration with Keynes himself in the drafting of his book on full employment, published in 1944.³⁸⁸ This was not a governmental report, yet the author designed it as a sequel of the 1942 *Allied and Social Service Report*. While the report on the social security tackled the Giant of Want, the work on full employment addressed the Idleness, another of the “Five Giants” on the road of prosperity and freedom. It proposed to intervene in the labour market in order to have always more job vacancies than unemployed. In doing so «it is concerned with the necessity, possibility and methods of achieving full employment in a free society, that is to say, subjected to the proviso that all essential citizen liberties are preserved. [...] The proviso excludes the totalitarian solution of full employment in a society completely planned and regimented by irremovable dictator.»³⁸⁹ The tasks of democratic societies to maintain full employment were complex, as it was impossible to guarantee political continuities and to impose coercive wage policies, to force placement of manpower and to regulate consumer goods market in democratic regimes. Beveridge opposed the retail of the emergency and coercive policies, which allowed full employment and quick steer of industrial production between 1939 and 1943. Nonetheless, the issue was still to provide wartime efficiency during peacetimes.

The whole report was in fact the attempt to retain free market society with economic tools to wage unemployment, unless experience showed otherwise. Beveridge borrowed many of the Keynesian assumptions. He proposed to act upon the budget in order to incorporate new elements in its calculation: private expenditures on consumption and private domestic investments; public expenditures

³⁸⁸ See J.M. Keynes, *Activities 1940-1946. Shaping the Post-war World: Employment and Commodities*, (ed.) Donald Moggridge, London, The Royal Economic Society, 1980, pp. 203-419.

³⁸⁹ W. Beveridge, *Full Employment in a Free Society*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1944, p. 21.

covered by taxes and other public revenue, and those covered by loans; balance of payments' equilibrium; the estimated value of the national production when achieved full employment. These were part of «the ultimate responsibility [...] to set up demand for all the labour seeking employment, must be taken by the State.»³⁹⁰ This responsibility did not exert leverage only on budget policies. Beveridge proposed also State control, and, in fact, foresaw the implementation of a “mixed economy”. In his view, the State should extend its control by programming public expenditures and by regulating private investments; nationalizing the Bank of England, and more generally harmonizing the whole bank system to the general State fiscal policy; planning the location of the industries, coordinating labour mobility, controlling the price of goods and managing foreign trade.³⁹¹ These were the leverages on which ground the policy of full employment, which demanded the stabilization of the total expenditure and the increase of consumptions. Such a task required a redefinition of the boundaries of the State:

«Full employment means ensuring that outlay in total is sufficient. Only the State can ensure that. Full employment at the rising standards of life made possible by technical progress means that the outlay is wisely directed. The State cannot escape ultimate responsibility for the general direction of outlay by reference to social priorities, however much it may be guided in its direction by the preferences expressed by citizens, in buying as well as in voting. The State cannot undertake the responsibility for full employment without full powers. It must adopt neither the consumption approach nor the investment approach exclusively, but must be free to adjust policy according to circumstances, over the whole range of possible subjects of spending.»³⁹²

³⁹⁰ Ivi. p. 135.

³⁹¹ Ivi. pp. 124-193.

³⁹² Ivi. p. 187.

War experience taught methods and set up mechanisms to boost the demand. The challenge after the war was to maintain the effectiveness of these policies, while restoring the liberties for which the British were fighting:

«It is in accord with the lesson of repeated experience of war that full employment is achieved, not by socialization of production which even in war is still left largely in private hands, but by socialization of effective demand, determined by a scale of priorities. That, with a different scale of priorities, to suit peace rather than war, with no limitless demand for war material requiring rationing and restrictions elsewhere, with a restoration of all essential citizen liberties, including free spending of personal incomes, is the essence of what is proposed here.»³⁹³

The proposals for full employment were expected to stabilize post-war societies also from the points of view of the domestic and international security. Beveridge recognized that «the policy outlined in the Report by-passes the socialist-capitalist controversy.»³⁹⁴ The plan for full employment could gather different views – just as Keynesianism made by the end of the Thirties – under some policies that proved to be efficient during wartime. But full employment could secure peace and prosperity also from the international point of view; Beveridge hoped the recasting of international trades under multilateral (or, at least, bilateral) agreements and regulations. In order to avoid uneven balances of trade, Beveridge recommended the opening up to free international trades only if all the countries would achieve full employment. In this scenario, all countries should adopt measures to maintain full employment, pillar of post-war security. Otherwise, the openness to international trades would have negatively

³⁹³ *Ivi.* p. 191.

³⁹⁴ *Ibidem.*

affected the balances of trade and the internal markets (and especially for a country like Britain).

The report on full employment, unlike the one on social security, was not sponsored by the *War Cabinet*. Governmental proposals departed from Beveridge recommendations, and in fact Beveridge's report on full employment had more impact to international opinion than on public policies. However, also within governmental bodies the issue of unemployment gained room. The "Keynesians" co-opted in the government were concerned to this topic since the very beginning of the war. They did not tackle this issue in the same political terms, as Beveridge did (after all, Keynes himself never considered the "moral" implications of unemployment). Meade, member of the *Economic Section*, even before the creation of the *Beveridge Committee* proposed to prevent general unemployment through income and wage policies, to avoid inflationary spiral after the war.³⁹⁵ This was the typical concern of the "Keynesians", who were keen of controlling the raise of inflation, unlike after WWI. Unemployment policies concerned – more than the other social provisions – both social and economic domains; the governmental proposals, thus, resulted as a compromise between the new ideas and the "Treasury View", which maintained more classical options. But if it is possible to speak about a "Keynesian revolution", this occurred during wartime, with the 1941 war's budget and with the employment policies culminated in the 1944 *White Paper on Employment Policy*, which developed autonomously from the second Beveridge's report, and was published before.

2.3.2. *The White Paper on the Employment Policy*

The *Economic Section's* concerns for preventing inflation resulted in proposals for a strict wage policy balanced by some

³⁹⁵ J. Meade, «The Prevention of general unemployment», in Susan Howson (ed.), *The Collected Papers of James Meade. Vol. I. Employment and Inflation*, London, Unwin Hyman, 1988, pp. 171-183.

measure of social security.³⁹⁶ These positions collided with the reservations of the Treasury, standing by other measures to stabilize the level of public investments.³⁹⁷ In the drafting of the 1944 *White Paper*, these visions clashed; the *Economic Section* was fully “Keynesian” in the detailed measures (e.g. the use of the budget to maintain full employment), while the Treasury only apparently opened up to limited provisions, as for public works as counter-cyclical measure. “Beveridge social reforms” as well as “Keynesian employment policies” came up against the Treasury; the proposals on social security eventually stuck together the measures of Meade and the *Economic Section*. A first convergence concerned the use of the social insurances as counter-cyclical measure in the event of a post-war cycle of inflation/deflation. Ultimately, the 1944 *White Paper* was a compromise between the “Keynesians” and the Treasury, and were restricted to the budget policies to prevent unemployment. While the *White Papers* were influenced by the new ideas, Treasury did not necessarily borrow Keynesian principles, accepted only later. On the other side, both Keynes and Meade were afraid of inflation and quite critical to Beveridge’s definition of full employment at 3%, as they considered 5% of unemployment the indicator of the structural unemployment.³⁹⁸ In that regard, they rather endorsed Treasury view than Beveridge coeval report.

Employment policies gradually merged with social and reconstruction policies. The last *White Paper*, published in May 1944, dealt with all this.³⁹⁹ The paper outlined the policy to maintain a stable and high level of employment after the war. It did not establish a projected legislation, but rather sought for the conditions to favour full employment: high demand of goods and services; expansive policy even in a period of expected shortage in the transition from war to peace economy. Internal and external demands were considered

³⁹⁶ TNA, CAB 87/55, «Internal Measures for the Prevention of General Unemployment. S.d.».

³⁹⁷ TNA, CAB 87/63, «The Maintenance of Employment, Prefatory Note by the Treasury. 16th October, 1943».

³⁹⁸ TNA, CAB 124/831.

³⁹⁹ HMSO, *Employment Policy*, London, 1944, Cmd. 6527.

equally important for the economic expansion; in that regard, also the *White Paper* claimed for the settlement of a new economic and political international order through institutions and agreements, as envisaged in the *Atlantic Charter*. Second important point was the retention of the total internal expenditure, in the recovery and in the longer-term.

The brief paper showed how unemployment policy was related to a new international order and to the achievement of social security in peacetimes. Britain was a country dependent from external trade for foodstuffs and raw materials, and had to keep under control the balance of payment and the export of goods and services. These conditions required international trade co-operation, stable rates of change, control of the swings in world commodity prices and international agreements to preserve the equilibrium in the balance of payments, in order to not upset the internal markets and consequently the international trade. Firstly, the paper recommended to implement a real international economic policy, renewing the economic relations with the Commonwealth. The second pillar was the increase of productive efficiency: «during the war British industry has amply demonstrated its power to improve the technique of its production, and this improvement must continue if we are to solve the problems of the post-war years.»⁴⁰⁰ Post-war policies included industrial research and the modernisation of industrial plants, machinery and building, as already started during the war. The third issue directly dealt with the wartime conditions. In the first quarter of 1944, unemployment dropped to only 75.000 individuals from more than 1 million at the very outbreak of the war; by the time the *Employment Policy* was published, 23 million of workers were directly employed in the Armed Forces, the Civil Defence and in the munitions industries. The government calculated that 80% of the employment in the manufacturing industries was under governmental control. These figures only accounted the sectors directly linked with the war effort, not counting the supply chains.

Such mobilization possibly endangered the transition from war to peace, shaking up the occupational trend. The most pressing

⁴⁰⁰ Ivi., p. 5.

question concerned the potential patches of unemployment in case the industrial system failed to adapt itself quickly to peacetime production in two ways: the inflationary spiral generated if the demand outran supply or if the consumers bought, while a shortage of good might be still present; the imbalance in the reallocation of the civilian production in relation with national needs or in the production of unessential goods in relation with the essentials. To prevent this dynamic, the government proposed a set of industrial and economic policies, which overall prefigured public support of the industrial system, if not a real intervention in the economic life.

The end of the war would not have withdrawn the wartime policies and controls. As the government converted the industries to the war production, it could similarly steer to civilian market. Many policies could be implemented in that regard: reallocation of the skilled manpower from the munitions to the civilian productions; arrangement of a large-scale plan of public works, firstly buildings; disposal of the surplus government stocks order to not prejudice the normal production and distribution of similar good; retail for a limited amount of time of the wartime rationing and price control; regulation of governmental factories – which constituted an important part of the overall British production – to secure a regulated restoration of employment.⁴⁰¹ Following Beveridge's recommendations on the need to pursuit the war's levels during peacetime, the government did not plan to abandon some measures of public management of the economy. They were directed to achieve a stable level of post-war employment, notably during the recovery. In the longer-run, the *White Paper* prefigured a far-sighted and balanced distribution of industry and labour. The budget should have taken into account the total expenditure of goods and services, the level of prices and wages and the balanced distribution of workers among the industrial sectors. Stabilization of the wages and total expenditure were tools to prevent the rise of unemployment, considering private consumptions, public expenditure on current services, as well as private and public investments.

⁴⁰¹ Ivi. pp. 20-28.

The stabilization of the five factors constituting the total national expenditure was treated quite carefully in the *White Paper*, even if the main concern were the restoration of export, given the weaknesses of British foreign balance, and the use of public investment in case of the fluctuations of the private investment. Even if Britain eventually failed in achieving the foreign balance equilibrium, these guidelines marked a turn in the economic policies, now enshrined to the aims of increasing national wealth and social security. The same went for the policies of labour mobility and the stabilization of wages and prices. These prefigured the post-war tripartite neo-corporatist practices that involved – even though to a lesser extent – also Britain.⁴⁰² While there was no explicit reference to Keynes, the *White Paper* had echoes from the debate in the 1930s, then fostered by the war, to eventually become public policy:

«The Government are prepared to accept in the future the responsibility for taking action at the earliest possible stage to arrest a threatened slump. This involves a new approach and a new responsibility for the State. It was at one time believed that every trade depression would automatically bring its own corrective, since prices and wages would fall, the fall in prices would bring about an increase in demand, and employment would thus be restored. Experience has shown, however, that under modern conditions this process of self-recovery, if effective at all, is likely to be extremely prolonged and to be accompanied by widespread distress, particularly in a complex industrial society like our own.»⁴⁰³

The government committed itself in the regular monitoring of the figures concerning employment, production, consumption, national income, foreign balance of payments, in order to control the volume of employment and the overall state of British economy. These statistics

⁴⁰² K. Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society: the Experience of the British System since 1911*, London, A. Deutsch, 1979.

⁴⁰³ *Employment Policy*, cit., p. 16.

became a tool of economic policy; the collection of data on the economic trends was fundamental in the compilation of the national budget for employment and total expenditure. The *White Paper* owed a lot to wartime experience: "Keynesian" accountability; industrial and territorial planning (as proposed in the *Utwatth* and *Scott Reports*); social security. All these aspects became political aims for post-war new policies:

«We can make a fresh approach, with better chances of success than ever before, to the task of maintaining a high and stable level of employment without sacrificing the essential liberties of a free society. [...] The Government therefore seek to achieve both work for all and a progressive increase in the economic efficiency of the nation, as joint elements in a growing national power to produce, to earn, and to enjoy the fruits of increased well-being.»⁴⁰⁴

However, Beveridge had mixed feelings towards the *White Paper*. He welcomed the new principles set up in the document, while criticized the detailed policy to pursue them. He remarked the the *Employment Policy* «is the practical proof that the central machinery of Government in Britain at last includes an organ capable of expert study of general economic problems as the basis of orderly foreseeing treatment of them» and, mainly, that «the Paper disposes finally and officially of the economic fallacy whose pious acceptance by the British Treasury in the past has stood firmly in the way of action by the State to maintain employment.»⁴⁰⁵ As a general agreement was reached on general principles, the doubts concerned the practical measures for managing the total expenditure. The *White Paper* recognized that employment depended on expenditure, the measures were too limited and stuck in the past orthodoxies.

⁴⁰⁴ Ivi. p.28.

⁴⁰⁵ W. Beveridge, «A Criticism of the Government's Employment Policy», in T.S.Newman, *Guide to the Government's Employment Policy*, London, Hearts of Oak Benefit Society, 1944, pp. 19-30, p. 19.

Exemplary is Beveridge's criticism on the trust put on public works rather than on the leverage over the private investments. For the government, the expansion of public works was a merely anti-cyclical measure to compensate the contraction in private investments. Other limits concerned the ways to finance employment, as the government proclaimed to not be willing to increase public deficit and national debt, restating «the old Treasury attitude with self-deception added.»⁴⁰⁶ The limited scope of these measures signalled how Treasury and governmental circles recognized that free market was not able to self-regulate, yet they still tackled employment policy with transitory, emergency measures. Beveridge argued that his report on full employment was beyond these older paradigms; unlike the governmental *White Paper*, his it did not consider the fluctuation of private investments unavoidable, nor believed that business investments could have been stabilized as long as the greater part of industry is in private hands. The *Full Employment in a Free Society* prefigured a long-lasting programme of expansive policies to boost the demand, the enlargement of the public sector and the stabilization of private investment through a national public authority. This would have carried out Keynesian policies to regulate loans and taxation policies. The government factually failed, according to Beveridge, to inextricably link employment policy with social security, demonstrating that:

«The Report, in place of accepting the inevitability of fluctuation and aiming merely at offsetting it, accepts the necessity of stability, not merely in total expenditure, but in each main section. [...] The Government's employment policy is a policy of public works planned five years at a time, and kept on tap to mitigate fluctuation. *It is an anti-cycle policy, not a policy of full employment.* The policy of the Report is a *policy of full employment defined as meaning always more vacant jobs than idle men.*»⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ Ivi. p.22.

⁴⁰⁷ Ivi. p. 27. [the italics is in the text]

Between the 1930s and 1940s Beveridge changed his take on how to deal with unemployment.⁴⁰⁸ During wartimes, Beveridge corresponded with Keynes, and the “Keynesians” of the *Economic Section*, notably Robbins and Meade, who also made contributions on social insurances.⁴⁰⁹ The correspondence between the economists showed how Keynes, in reality, participated to the definition of the post-war policies. He had interest in the financial aspects of Beveridge’s plan for social security; social security contributions, pensions rates, family allowances and the whole set of healthcare provisions could match his own budget and fiscal policy proposals.⁴¹⁰ Keynes endorsed the design of the *Beveridge Report*, regarding favourably at extending «benefits and contributions to the whole population.»⁴¹¹ The *Beveridge Report* was also in accordance with some of the 1939 Keynes’ proposals in *How to Pay for the War*, and notably on the need to compensate the post-war wage freezes with social benefits, family allowances and reduction of the prices of basic necessities. In that regard, forms of “Keynesian” managed economy could adapt to universalist social security.

In his speech draft to the Lords debate, he supported the amalgamation of social insurances, family allowances, and healthcare service in a single reform. Keynes considered it better than a piecemeal approach that equally burdened the budget, without providing the necessary rationalization of compulsory

⁴⁰⁸ See *infra*, pp. 64-65, n.190.

⁴⁰⁹ J.M. Keynes, *Activities 1940-1946: Shaping the Post War World. Employment and Commodities. The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, Cambridge-New York, The Royal Economic Society-Palgrave MacMillan, 1980, pp. 203-422.

⁴¹⁰ See particularly «The Beveridge Proposals. Lord Keynes to Sir Richard Hopkins, 20th July 1942»; «The Beveridge Plan for Social security. Lord Keynes to Sir Horace Wilson, 11th August 1942», in J.M. Keynes, *Activities 1940-1946: Shaping the Post War World. Employment and Commodities. The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, respectively pp. 229-234 and 234-239.

⁴¹¹ «Lord Keynes to Sir Richard Hopkins. Sir William Beveridge Proposals, 13th October 1942», in J.M. Keynes, *Activities 1940-1946: Shaping the Post War World. Employment and Commodities. The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, pp. 246-253, p. 252.

schemes. The plan could work even through post-war difficulties or without high rates of economic growth. Keynes expected the increase of the national income; in the worst case scenario he was confident that «British industry can scarcely be more inefficient than it was before the war.»⁴¹² His main concert was admittedly the budget position after the war, and in that regard, he remarked more than once how «I always thought, and it will be remembered, that the Beveridge scheme was by far the cheapest we have ever a hope of getting.»⁴¹³

On employment, Beveridge and Keynes had slightly different perspectives. Beveridge's 1944 work combined Keynesian postulates with his own ideas, which harked back to his 1909 text on unemployment. Beveridge "became" Keynesian; he supported the intervention on effective demand to regulate employment, and since he departed from his previous trust in free market self-regulation. But Beveridge also restated his proposals on national planning for the industrial resettlement and the labour exchange and mobility.⁴¹⁴ Beveridge's road to full employment combined budgetary leverage with "true" planning policy, as well as macro-economic analysis with supply-side microeconomic interventions. His full employment policy was meant to be structural, while Keynes was more concerned on how to counter cyclical unemployment after the war, and on how to stabilize unemployment between 5% and 3%.

In reality, Keynes seemed to receive favourably both the general lines and purposes of governmental *White Paper* and

⁴¹² «Draft for the House of Lords on 24 February 1943», in J.M. Keynes, *Activities 1940-1946: Shaping the Post War World. Employment and Commodities. The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, pp. 256-261, p. 259.

⁴¹³ «Lord Keynes to Sir Gilbert and Sir Hopkins, 15 May 1944», in J.M. Keynes, *Activities 1940-1946: Shaping the Post War World. Employment and Commodities. The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, pp. 261-263, p.263.

⁴¹⁴ Atsushi Komine, «Beveridge on a Welfare Society. *An Integration of His Trilogy*», in Roger Backhouse, Tamotsu Nishizawa, *No Wealth but Life. Welfare Economics and the Welfare State in Britain, 1880-1945*, pp. 207-219.

Beveridge's proposals.⁴¹⁵ Keynesian budget policy adapted to the universalistic postulates of social security, and the two key figures of these innovations agreed on some basic guidelines for further policies during wartimes. However, there is not a necessary link between Keynesian policies and post-war welfare state; Beveridge conceived full employment as pillar to ensure the contribution basis for social security, while minimizing the number of recipients of social aid.⁴¹⁶ Keynes was concerned to support the effective demand via deficit spending during economic slumps, and to secure a rate of unemployment as high and as stable as possible. Beveridge, instead, understood Keynesian economics as a tool to structurally intervene on employment. His aim was to make social security financially sustainable, and in the same time to ensure the socio-political integration of the citizens. In his view, the "social security" (he never used, nor liked, the expression "welfare state") was a social intervention to guarantee minimum incomes, and thus was related to the rights of citizenship. The subsequent identification of the British welfare state with Keynesianism was due to political expediencies resulting from the authoritativeness of the British economist, that allowed social democrats (and conservatives) to justify their economic policies related to welfare state.⁴¹⁷ In fact, after the war the European countries undertook other paths than Keynesianism to ensure economic growth, and the same "universalism" was variously declined by European policy-makers.

⁴¹⁵ «Lord Keynes to Sir Alan Barlow. White Paper on Employment Policy, 15th June, 1944»; «Lord Keynes to Sir William Beveridge, 16th December 1944», both in in J.M. Keynes, *Activities 1940-1946: Shaping the Post War World. Employment and Commodities. The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, pp. 375-379, and pp. 380-381.

⁴¹⁶ R. Backhouse, B. Bateman, «Keynes and the Welfare State», *History of Economic Thought and Policy*, n.1/2012, pp. 7-19.

⁴¹⁷ T. Judt, «What Is Living and What Is Dead in Social Democracy?», Id., *When the Facts Change. Essays 1995-2010*, London, Penguin, 2015, pp. 319-338.

2.4. From the wartime proposals to the post-war social security

The government was confident to pass the bill on social security in spring 1945 (the war was expected to end in winter 1944), and estimated that the insurance scheme could have brought into operation only in 1947, to become fully operative by 1948. The major difficulties concerned the reconfiguration of insured categories, the transitional arrangement from older to newer schemes and the establishment of the new public machinery in charge of social insurances, that also had to take over the records of more than 10 million of insured from the suppressed *Approved Societies*. The government had to balance the bureaucratic and administrative operationalization with the need to not disappoint public opinion's expectations to a quick and throughout implementation of social security, also fostered by the propaganda itself. The *War Cabinet* passed interim legislation comprehensive of family allowances, of benefits for sickness and unemployment (necessary in the transition from war to peace economy) and mainly of the new Ministry of Social Security. This Ministry could provide the first moves in the organization of social security, conveying the idea that the government did not break its promises.⁴¹⁸ The political urgency of these measures was remarked by the King's Speech for 1944; in the opening speeches drafts, the Minister for the Reconstruction suggested to include references to the future social legislation: «you will be invited to pass legislation establishing a Ministry of Social Insurance. Measures will be laid before you embodying My Government's proposals for a system of family allowances, for an enlarged and unified scheme of Social Insurance and for replacing the existing system of workmen's compensation by a new scheme of Industrial Injury Insurance.»⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ TNA, PIN/8/49, «War Cabinet. Reconstruction Committee. Social Insurance Legislation: Time-table and Machinery. Memorandum by the Minister of Reconstruction. 14th February, 1944»; TNA, PIN/8/49, «Note of discussion on the Time-Table for the Social Insurance Scheme. 16th February, 1944».

⁴¹⁹ TNA, PIN/8/80, «The King's Speeches on the Prorogation and Opening of Parliament. Draft. 14th October, 1944».

In that year, the Ministry of National Insurance was raised, appointed by Jowitt.⁴²⁰ It incorporated the functions of the Minister of Health and of the Secretary of State (with respect to national health insurance, old age pensions, widows', orphans' and old age contributory pensions and supplementary pensions, and workmen's compensation) and those of the Minister of Labour and National Service for unemployment insurance and assistance. It was the first step in the path to the administrative unification of the insurances. The bill on family allowances, instead, was passed in 1945.⁴²¹ The legislator linked to the global reform of social security the family allowances; the State took charge of their payment, as help to the parents for the full maintenance of each child. The benefit was granted regardless the income of the families; the allowances – legally payable to the father, had a flat-rate benefit of 5£ P/W to each child – were extended also to the firstborns for the lower incomes or for families of people on benefit, while the general scheme was designed for the large families, making social and demographic concerns live together. Their funding through the general taxation shifted the burden from the families to the State and the community as a whole. Family allowances were not limited to cash benefits, but also provided services in kind, notably free school meals and milk service. These provisions in kinds, fully universalistic as concerning every child, were granted by the Ministry of Education and were expected in the range of about £60 million p.a., to be added to the estimated £70 million of the cash benefits. Both were valid up to school leaving age. These two measures were in fact the only concrete pieces of legislation enabled during wartime.

The road was nonetheless marked; in the run-up to the general election of 5th July 1945, the social reforms had a crucial importance for the three major parties.⁴²² In all their programmes, the guidelines of

⁴²⁰ HMSO, *Ministry of National Insurance Act*, 1944, Ch. 46.

⁴²¹ Different drafts, readings, and copies of the 1945 Family Allowances bill are stored in TNA, PIN/3/63 and TNA, PIN/3/65.

⁴²² Labour Party, *Let Us Face The Future: A Declaration of Labour Policy for the Consideration of the Nation*, London: 1945 Labour Party Election Manifesto, 1945; Conservative Party. *Mr Churchill's Declaration of Policy to the Electors*, London: Conservative Party Election

social security moved towards social solidarity and universalism. Historian Henry Pelling considered Labour's greater credibility in fully carrying forward social reforms at the very basis of Attlee's landslide victory.⁴²³ After all, the "New Jerusalem" of Labour's propaganda was achieved through welfare reform and nationalizations. The wartime promises could not go back on that; between 1946 and 1947, the main reforms were passed: the *National Insurance Act*, the *National Industrial Injuries Insurance Act*, the *National Health Service Act*, and the *National Assistance Act*.⁴²⁴ Together, these acts gave birth to the system of social security called "from the cradle to the grave", marking the most dramatic break with the traditional British setting and policies on social legislation. On one hand, the Labour implemented a consistent transfer of national income, 50% higher than the previous period, thanks to family allowances, social benefits, and other welfare services. On the other, the government did not carry out a more penetrating redistribution within British society, because the working class itself financed the welfare state both directly and indirectly.⁴²⁵ In its general approach to the complex reforms of welfare, the Labour did not implement class policies. They rather sought to strengthen the social pact of citizenship, shared by the entire British population due to the benefits of insurance, to health and social services, free public education, equally benefitting both the working masses and the middle class. In this big picture, the NHS was – according to historian Keith Laybourn – the most "genuine" Labour support to the welfare state. The left-wing laborite Minister of Health, Bevan, opted for the prominence of the public system, entirely financed by general taxation

Manifesto, 1945; Liberal Party. *20 Points Manifesto of the Liberal Party*, London, Liberal Party Election Manifesto, 1945.

⁴²³H. Pelling, «The 1945 General Election Reconsidered», *The Historical Journal*, no.2/1980, pp. 399-414.

⁴²⁴ HMSO, *National Insurance Act*, 1946, c.67; HMSO, *National Industrial Injuries Insurance Act*, 1946, c.62; HMSO, *National Health Service Act*, 1946, c.81; HMSO, *National Assistance Act*, 1948, c.29.

⁴²⁵ R. Whiting, *The Labour Party and Taxation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 61-111.

and available to all, to other more compromise solutions with the private healthcare.⁴²⁶

Alongside the social reforms, the Labour Government implemented economic policies that met the macroeconomic needs and some of the TUC claims, as for the nationalizations.⁴²⁷ Labour did not immediately dismantle the war economy, except for the regimentation of the manpower, gradually shifting the emphasis from war production to planned recovery; the same demobilisation was achieved taking into account the fiscal and monetary control. The government also attempted to modernize the industrial structure and to ensure a more efficient productive system, accompanying these reforms with a “democratic planning”, which may be considered an element of neo-corporatism in Britain.⁴²⁸ Rather than a more rigorous budget, the expansionary economic policy resulted in a fiscal deficit. Labour included among its political targets an increase in social expenses rather than greater austerity in the economic management of post-war time. The commitment of a new “social pact” was no longer deferrable after WWII, the confrontation against Nazism, and the Great Depression of 1929. This political choice assumed the character of strategic repositioning. The “displacement” between the expansion of social spending and deficits in the balance of State budget was to some extent also endorsed by future Conservative governments, without this necessarily leading to a flattening of political divergences under the label of “consensus”.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁶ K. Laybourn, *The Evolution of British Social Policy and the Welfare State*, Keele, Keele University Press, 1995, pp. 226-235.

⁴²⁷ A. Cairncross, *Years of Recovery. British Economic Policy 1945-1951*, London, Eatwell, 1979, pp. 463-495.

⁴²⁸ J. Tomlinson, «Mr. Attlee's Supply-Side Socialism», *The Economic History Review*, n.1/1993, pp. 1-22.

⁴²⁹ See the contributions in H. Jones, M. Kandiah (eds.), *The Myth of Consensus: New Views on British History, 1945-64*, London, MacMillan, 1996, and particularly H. Jones, «A Bloodless Counter-Revolution: The Conservative Party and the Defence of Inequality, 1945-51», pp. 1-16; M. Kandiah, «Conservative Leaders, Strategy – and “Consensus”? 1945-65», 58-78.

Historiography disputed the effective scope of the “post-war consensus” after 1945 and even in the *War Cabinet*.⁴³⁰ However, it took place a certain convergence in British politics and among the social interests and organizations, not to mention the enthusiastic response of public opinion. It concerned the political and administrative principles of social security (universalism, rationalization, nationalization of the service). The governmental records of the *War Cabinet*, and the official documents produced by the parties and different organisations seem to confirm this tendency. The reform according to the Beveridge’s guiding principles (and not necessarily according to the *Beveridge Report* letter) gave expression to the needs of British society. The three *White Papers* handled the long-term issue of the unification of British social policy, which featured prominently already after WWI, and especially under the pressure of mass unemployment and international uncertainties in the 1930s. The Second World War gave momentum to address head-on some outstanding problems in Britain, under the label of the “reconstruction policies”. This formula pointed at featuring post-1945 British democracy with the State’s commitment to guarantee social security to all citizens, and to set full employment and material wealth as political goals. These aims, as we will see in the second part of the thesis, were not stranger to the Allied ideological statements, summarised in the 1941 *Atlantic Charter*. Nor were they free of considerations related to the post-war international order, the British projection over Europe, and the need to contain the Communist threat. Social policy did not deal only with internal prosperity, but was also matter of international security and balance of power.

⁴³⁰ See *infra* n. 101 ch.1; n. 320 ch. 2.

3. *The Vichy Regime: the social policy as collaboration*

The French military collapse within six weeks led to the end of the Third Republic. On 16th June 1940, Philippe Pétain replaced Paul Reynaud as *Président du Conseil*, and on 25th June France signed the Armistice with the Germans. The causes of the humiliating defeat of France were mainly military. However, the opinion that its cause was due to the decadence of the institutional system was a widespread feeling.⁴³¹ Already in September 1940, Marc Bloch ascribed the defeat to the incompetence of the High Command and of the inadequacy of the whole French ruling classes, which in turn shifted the responsibility to «the Parliamentary regime, the soldiers, the British, the fifth column.»⁴³² The Vichy regime was born in the myth of the betrayal and of the decadence of France, and grounded its ideology on the need to establish a renewed and hierarchical social collaboration among the bodies and categories of the nation, in the context of the State collaboration with Germany.

The Vichy Regime displayed the greatest political and ideological activity between 1940 and 1942, when the most consistent social and economic reforms were passed, and when the ideology of the *Révolution Nationale* gathered intellectuals and political forces. In this period, the Nazi occupant authorities let the regime relatively free to enact autonomous social projects, as long as they did not interfere with the priorities of the German war economy and production.⁴³³ Vichy social policy pointed at embedding France within the new European Order led by Nazi Germany, and this policy of collaboration encountered the German embryonic projects for the post-war settlement, where France had a role in the European economic

⁴³¹ S. Veil, *Ecrits de Londres et dernières lettres*, Paris, Gallimard, 1957.

⁴³² M. Bloch, «L'étrange défaite. Témoignage écrit en 1940», in Id., *L'Histoire, la Guerre, la Résistance*, Paris, Gallimard, 2006, pp. 519-653, p. 543.

⁴³³ R. Paxton, *La France de Vichy, 1940-1944*, Paris, Seuil, 1997, p. 186.

community that the Nazis wanted to create.⁴³⁴ The timing of the extent of Vichy social projects depended on the war events and on the different stages of the German policy to France. In April 1942 Pierre Laval was appointed chief of the government, under the pressure of the Occupiers, and in November 1942 the Nazis invaded also the territories under the control of Vichy Government. Vichy lost any residual autonomy, and also the momentum to reforms of the years 1940-2 ended. By that time, Belin, Secretary of Labour since July 1940, already resigned from the Secretariat of State to Labour. Other social reformers who contributed to the drafting of the *Charte du Travail* (the Labour Charter) no longer collaborated with the regime, many of them joining the Resistance.

In its second phase the regime abandoned the ambitions of social regeneration. By 1943 the dynamics of the “total war” took over and the German requests became increasingly more demanding. The issue of the forced manpower to send to Germany absorbed the tasks of the government, alienating also the last few sympathies from the sectors that endorsed the Labour Charter and the 1941-2 social reforms, when comprehensive reforms accompanied emergency measures. The launch of the Labour Charter by the end of 1941 concluded the main period of social reforms under the Vichy regime.

3.1. The Révolution Nationale: ideology and policies between authoritarianism and occupation

3.1.1. The search for an autonomous social doctrine?

⁴³⁴ In 1940, the Minister of Nazi Economy Walther Funk foreshadowed an “European economic community”, where also the defeated countries had relatively autonomous place. W. Funk, «Wirtschaftliche Neuordnung Europas. Rede am 25. July 1940 vor der in- und ausländische Presse». URL: <http://www.profit-over-life.org/books/books.php?book=37&pageID=12&expand=no>. Certainly, the Nazis had different projects for the Western Europe as against Eastern Europe; it is conceivable that Adolf Hitler and his circle did not share a common view on the future of France. See P. Schötter, *Du Rhin à la Manche. Frontières et relations franco-allemande au XXe siècle*, Tours, Presse Universitaire François-Rabelais de Tour, 2017; J.-P. Cointet, *Hitler et la France*, Paris, Perrin, 2014.

The ambitions of the newborn regime were not merely the establishment of a puppet regime. Since the very beginning, Vichy ruling classes elaborated new doctrines and political public discourse. The regime tried to take what was regarded as an opportunity; the effective success of the *Révolution Nationale* was strictly interlinked to the Nazi military successes. The regime hoped that France could play a role in the Nazi New European Order when, between 1940 and 1941, the victory of the Axis Powers seemed to be more than likely. In hindsight, it turned out to be an inherent weakness; the dependence from the German wishes undermined since the beginning the foundations of the new “pact” that the regime laid down under the trinomial *Travail, Famille, Patrie* (Labour, Family, Homeland). As historian Henry Rousso wrote, «National Revolution and State collaboration where two sides of the same political projects. The renewal at home was in fact totally conditional to the success of its “foreign” policy, the collaboration with the Reich.»⁴³⁵

It is not possible to analyse Vichy social policy and ideology outside the wartime context, the occupation and the State collaboration. However, the *Révolution Nationale* represented also the effort to gain autonomous space from Nazi Germany. With the New Order, the regime shared some ideological features with the other satellites of the Axis Power: anti-democratic and anti-liberal discourse; a “revolutionary” programme of socio-economic reforms; the struggle against capitalism and Bolshevism, searching for a social and economic “third way”.⁴³⁶ Through the folds of the State collaboration dwelt also the mobilization of the popular masses in the *Révolution Nationale*; alongside the collaboration/subordination of the regime to Germany, Vichy proclaimed also the need for a “social collaboration” among the different bodies of the society. In Vichy public discourse, the social and political collaboration were the pillars upon which recast the nation from the moral and material points of view. Its doctrine was rather heterogeneous; it did not borrow its watchword only from the far-right

⁴³⁵ H. Rousso, *Vichy. L'événement, la mémoire, l'histoire*, Paris, Gallimard, 1992, p. 56.

⁴³⁶ Y. Durand, «La collaboration à la française au miroir européen », in AA.VV., *La France sous Vichy. Autour de Robert O. Paxton*, Paris, Editions Complexe, 2004, pp. 75-90.

traditional Catholicism, generically anti-Republican and anti-democratic, as for the *Action Française*. Vichy gathered also the parafascist movements or leagues like the *Croix-de-Feu*, or the *Parti Populaire Français* of the former communist Jacques Doriot. These movements had little to do with the traditional monarchists, who actually never had the preeminence in the constituencies of the regime. Another important group was then represented by the former left-wing politicians and trade unionist, like Belin and his group, who – in the name of pacifism and anti-Communism – chose the collaboration with Germany.

Corporatism was the official social ideology of the regime. But also this concept was only apparently the heritage of the “traditionalists”; in the Thirties, the *non conformistes* and other modernizers reflected upon the role of the State and of the intermediate bodies in the coordination of the economy. Also many former *planistes*, who referred to Deat *néo-socialistes* and to Belin *Syndicats !* in the French trade unions, endorsed corporatism. In fact, nature and goals of Vichy corporatism was the bone of contention between “traditionalists” and “modernizers”, and between the right-wings and the former trade unionists. The *Révolution Nationale* merged also some representative of the *non conformiste* vague of the '30s; the disregard for democratic mechanisms and the communitarianism attracted the personnalists like Mounier.⁴³⁷ Highly qualified technocrats, they were usually placed at the ranks of the regime's new institutions; François Perroux directed for some time the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure des cadres d'Uriage*, which should have trained the frameworks of a new ruling class, filled with the ideals of the *Révolution Nationale*.⁴³⁸ A focal point of all these tendencies was the refusal of the social and economic individualism of the 19th century liberalism. In that regard, the policies of the regime (but not necessarily the “official” ideology) were closer to the elaborations

⁴³⁷ J. Hellman, «Communautaires, non-conformistes et la quête d'un « homme nouveau » dans la France de Vichy», in AA.VV., *La France sous Vichy. Autour de Robert O. Paxton*, pp. 105-119.

⁴³⁸ J. Bourdin, « Des intellectuels à la recherche d'un style de vie : l'Ecole nationale des cadres d'Uriage », *Revue française de science politique*, n.4/1959, pp, 1029-1045.

of the Thirties, to such an extent that Mounier, later opponent of the regime, proclaimed «the revolution against the individualism.»⁴³⁹ In fact, all the trends claiming for some sort of radical and overarching revolution were silenced by the further actions of the regime on economic and social matters.

The charismatic figure of Pétain hold together these different tendencies. The official formulation of Vichy social doctrine is due to his inner circle and the milieu that gravitated around the *Institut d'Etudes Sociales et Corporatives*; they represented the “traditionalist” approach to corporatism. The actual formulation of this doctrine was so vague that also the other trends of the regime could endorse it. Embryonic forms of the social doctrine and content of the *Révolution Nationale* were present since the very beginning. In a broadcast on 11th July 1940, Pétain accused socialism and capitalism for the defeat, and the sectional interests for the weakening of the nation, while promising to recast France on new social bases.⁴⁴⁰ The most important discourse of Pétain in that regard was the discourse of Saint Etienne on 1st March 1941, later reproduced in the main part of the propaganda materials on social policy. This discourse gave coherence to other previous official statements of the Chief of the State, and prefigured the launch of the Labour Charter to reorganize the industrial relations on corporative basis.

When the speech was pronounced, the different departments were still drafting and bargaining the various draft reforms of the Ministry of Industrial Production and Labour (MIP). There was agreement on some underlying principles of social policy, but not on the actual form to give to these principles; task of the *Révolution Nationale* was to regenerate the body of the nation, and the main goal was thus to make the social division and strife disappear. Saint Etienne’s discourse implicitly signaled that the regime was “modern” inasmuch as abandoned outdated visions of the poverty as individual

⁴³⁹ E. Mounier, «Programme pour le mouvement de jeunesse français», *Esprit*, n.96, January 1941, pp. 152-167.

⁴⁴⁰ P. Pétain, «Message du 11 Juillet 1940 », *Discours aux français*, (ed. by J.-C. Barbas), Paris, Albin Michel, 1989, pp. 63-66.

fault, and the charity-like approaches to the “social question”. He solemnly proclaimed that the unfair economic system generated misery, fear and social insecurity, and that regime wanted to improve the fate of workers through a comprehensive social policy. He made no reference to the social insurances or anti-employment measures, as the pillar was the reorganization of the labour relations, ensuring social concord: «in reality, the cause of the class struggle cannot be suppressed unless the proletariat that lives today overwhelmed by his isolationism will find in the working community, the conditions for a free and worthy life, as well as reason to live and hope. This community, is the enterprise. Only its transformation could lay the foundation of the organized profession, which is in itself the community of communities.»⁴⁴¹ Between 1940 and 1941, the regime tried to formulate a coherent social doctrine; in fact, this was defined in opposition to other ideas rather than as a systematic ideological corpus: «the Marshal himself tells us, even before proposing the new organization, what this will not be. It rejects Communism, Liberalism in itself and in all its nuances of capitalism and individualism, as well as class trade unionism. It refuses statism as well, both as collectivism and as a way to free the citizens to the personal effort, required to participate to the construction of the new France.»⁴⁴²

At the same time, the *Révolution Nationale* promoted a “culture of the authority” and of social hierarchy.⁴⁴³ It was rather a doctrine of obligations than rights: «the new regime will be a social hierarchy. It will no longer rely on the lie of the natural equality of men, but on the compelling idea of the equality of *opportunities* to all the French to prove their aptitude to serve.»⁴⁴⁴ In spite of the proclamations of equality of opportunity and classless society, the main concern was to get rid of the class struggle, with a never faded social paternalism, since «the real issue is to abolish the proletarian condition» through

⁴⁴¹ Id., « Discours du 1^{er} Mars 1941 », *Discours aux français*, pp.110-114, p.111.

⁴⁴² M. Bouvier-Ajam, *L'Etat français sera corporatif*, Paris, Publications de l'Office Central d'Organisation Corporative, 1943, p.6.

⁴⁴³ M. Serra, *Una cultura dell'autorità. La Francia di Vichy*, Roma-Bari, Laterza Editori, 1980.

⁴⁴⁴ Extract of the discourses of Marshal Pétain in M. Bouvier-Ajam, *L'Etat français sera corporatif*, p. 16.

«teaching them a fair concept of national community, starting to embed the proletarians to the Nation.»⁴⁴⁵ The *Révolution Nationale* was not a detailed programme, but provided ideological guidelines for public policies, based on the anti-individualist re-evaluation of the basic social units of the society which pre-existed the State, such as family, Church, trade corporations. While not directly linked to the collaboration with Germany, the regime ambiguously related its own social policy to the adherence to the Nazi European Order. Pétain identified Vichy's ideology with «the national-socialist idea of the primacy of the Labour», since the new order's social ideology was «part of our classical heritage.»⁴⁴⁶.

The public narrative of the regime relentlessly stressed the features of the *Révolution Nationale*. Paul Marion, General Secretary to the Information and Propaganda, clarified the relation between “National Revolution” and “Social Revolution”:

«In fact, National Revolution and Social Revolution are not only complementary ideas, but they represent nowadays two sides of the same problems, our resurrection as people and as nation. How could we by the way even imagine a social revolution without nation? A saturnalia of slaves who, as in Russia, break their chains just to get shorter and thicker ones. How could a national revolution keep the social inequalities, other than being reaction, conservatism, a deception to strengthen privileges?»⁴⁴⁷

The regime aimed at overcoming the traditional divisions between left and right, addressing social issues neither in the “materialistic” terms of the socialists nor in those of the paternalists, who always had a sectional view over the “social question”. As for the

⁴⁴⁵ C.-G. Gignoux, M. Felgines, M. Bouvier-Ajam, *Le corporatisme français*, Paris, Publications de l'Office Central d'Organisation Corporative, 1943, p. 13.

⁴⁴⁶ P. Pétain, *La politique sociale de la France*, Clermont, Editions Fernand Sorlot, 1941, p. 19.

⁴⁴⁷ P. Marion, *Discours prononcé à Toulouse le 25 Janvier 1942*, p.3.

Fascists, Marion stressed the function of the workers in the renewed national and social hierarchy, and called into question the “moral” proletarian subordination in the capitalistic regime. Not really stranger from paternalistic features, his speech underlined that the whole social policy of the regime created a new hierarchy at every level, forging new mentalities and social relations, as well as a “new man”.⁴⁴⁸ In Vichy as in Fascist Italy, social policy was not disengaged by the idea that the social order and the economic relations had to be structurally changed, in this sense underestimating social protection as autonomous area of social enhancement:

«Probably, a good salary and its increase, as long as the prosperity of the enterprise grows, depend first and foremost on an efficient social legislation. [...] And probably as well, the fight against unemployment requires [...] some legislative measures for a better allocation of the available jobs, and for the aid of the corporative associations to those that the economic crisis deprived of the livelihood. Nevertheless, fair salaries and job security required first and foremost a far-sighted and rational organization of our industries, as the social reforms are a lure if they do not ground on a prosperous economy. Now, a prosperous economy demands that the capital investments do not depend on the current sectorial interests, that the wealth is not accumulated on one side, and missed somewhere else; that prices are not established only by maximum personal gain, without any regard for the consumers, for the family, for the farmers, for the middle classes, for our colonial productions, for what is going on abroad. Thus, there is no economic growth without organization and public management of the economy, taking into the due

⁴⁴⁸ «As a society could not live if the men that compose it are not united and voluntarily-like disciplined from a similar conception of life, of its goals, and obligations. In turn, a revolutionary government has to act with regard to France, as a sculpture with regard to clay, as a creator.»Ivi. p. 11.

consideration at once the free play of the appropriate individual entrepreneurship and the need of the control, the drive of the State, which represents the collective interests of the national community.»⁴⁴⁹

Social policy was interlinked to the reorganization of the French economic life, claiming for a *lien* (a link) between social and economic realms.⁴⁵⁰ Yet, the terms of this intersection were vague, and as a last resort they relied on political shibboleths rather than valuable alternative options. According to different positions in the regime, they ranged among, “trade union State”, “State corporatism”, *dirigisme*. The lowest-common-denominators of the official social doctrine were the rejection of political and social liberalism, and the rediscovering of communitarian forms of social relations. Its legislative carryover did not affect so much the social insurances, but rather the socio-economic organization. In reality, the main social reforms were primarily dictated by economic conjunctures, and secondarily by specific political goals; between late 1940 and early 1941, the major issue was the abnormal level of unemployment that compelled the MIP to put in place income support measures and the restructuration of economic and industrial policies. In this last policy-area, the *Révolution Nationale* encountered its main limits. The “formal” corporatists of all tendencies lacked of ideological firmness, and even of a clear vision of the policies to implement. The governmental technocracy disengaged the economic reforms from the ideological claims of the regime. The major constraints, however, came from the German occupant, which submitted industrial policies to their war needs. The *Révolution Nationale*, although claiming for an autonomous political project, survived in fact as long as Nazis allowed the regime to keep power.

⁴⁴⁹ Ivi. pp. 7-8.

⁴⁵⁰ The link between economic and social institutions, although frequently evoked by the intellectuals and representatives of the regime, remained an unclear concept. See J.-P. Le Crom, «Comités d’organisation et Comités Sociaux ou l’introuvable interpénétration de l’économie et du social», Caen, 2003. URL : <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00256587/document>.

3.1.2. *The Révolution Nationale and its constraints: the Nazi occupation and the modernization*

The Vichy social doctrine tried to favor collaboration, to create consensus and to legitimize the regime. Between 1940 and 1942, the regime hoped that the collaboration could result in a “win-win” relationship. From Autumn 1942, it shifted on the ground of the complete economic subordination and participation to the German war economy.⁴⁵¹ The *Révolution Nationale* was the attempt to mark a major break with the IIIrd Republic policies and practices. Under the surface of the ruptures in the ideological discourse, the Vichy regime had in fact many continuities in the public policies with the former period. The most important concerned the technical and administrative personnel, as the regime upgraded public and private elites, giving them political accountability in the economic departments.⁴⁵² This choice guaranteed the technical competences and the stability in the direction of the State after the institutional turmoil of the defeat.

The role of the technocrats was particularly prominent between February 1941 and April 1942, when the Admiral Darlan ruled the Vichy Government. Yves Bouthillier at the Treasury, Jean Berthelot at the Communications, Pierre Caziot at the Agriculture, Pierre Pucheu at the Industrial Production, then at Minister of Interior; they were some of the «many “outsiders” that regarded at the collapse of the IIIrd Republic as an unexpected opportunity.»⁴⁵³ But high-ranking officials and industrialists held also governmental bureaucracy and governmental committees. The appointment of big business’ representatives clarifies the real orientation of the regime, which, in turn, on the propaganda against the trusts tried to build much of its consensus over the workers.⁴⁵⁴ In fact, the intermingling between

⁴⁵¹ J.-P. Azéma, *Vichy-Paris. Les collaborations*, Paris, André Versaille Editeur, 2012.

⁴⁵² M. Margairaz, *op.cit.*, p. 501.

⁴⁵³ R. Kuisel, *Le capitalisme et l’Etat en France. Modernisation et dirigisme au XXe siècle*, Paris, Gallimard, 1984, p. 233.

⁴⁵⁴ The takeover of the governmental levers by this group of technocrats fueled the fire of the *synarchique* myth, that is, of a plot against the *Révolution Nationale* led by financial and capitalist circles. See O. Dard, *La Synarchie. Le mythe du complot permanent*, Paris, Perrin, 2012 ; see different take in A. Lacroix-Riz, *Les élites françaises entre 1940 et 1944. De la*

political and economic interests sharpened opposing visions of social and economic policies between different groups and departments. In the same time, the German demands required the State management of resources, manpower and industrial production. This eventually favored State-driven *dirigisme* rather than the “formal” corporatism. While the various supporters of corporatism dreamed about contradictory forms of non-statist organization of the professions, the economic departments of the government strengthened the role of the State: coordination of economic, financial and industrial departmental offices; embryonic middle-term investment and infrastructural plans; reorganization of the French industrial production according to the German model, implementing *de facto* forms of corporatism, which had less to do with the ideas of trade-unionists or “traditionalists”.

Minister Bouthillier managed to centralize the fiscal policies, the foreign trade and the price control. He coordinated all the domains of the French economic life, through the *Comité Economique Interministériel* (CEI, Interdepartmental Economic Committee), which gathered the five economic Ministries, as well as the departments on the infrastructures and the delegate to the Franco-German economic relations. Such organism was not completely new, as already in 1935 a similar body was appointed. It dissolved in the subsequent steps of the occupation, but represented the attempt to harmonize from the center the different sectors of national economy. The CEI was only one of the different governmental arrangements set up by Bouthillier, especially in the years 1940–2, to create an efficient economic apparatus to straighten and stabilize the French production.⁴⁵⁵ The CEI was expected to have advisory and supervising functions on basically every economic aspect; yet, its main tasks eventually concerned the allocation of resources for the industries, and the pricing and wage policy. While it was meant to give impetus to economic State-driven *dirigisme*, it

collaboration avec l'Allemagne à l'alliance américaine, Paris, Armand Colin, 2016, particularly pp. 4-217.

⁴⁵⁵ On Bouthillier's activity under Vichy, besides the work of Margairaz, there is only the voluminous and self-absolutory autobiographical memories of that time, Y. Bouthillier, *Le drame de Vichy*. 2 Voll., Paris, Plon, 1951.

never came up with economic plans, even if the CEI met on almost weekly basis. Organisms like the CEI, or the other co-joint board, the *Conseil d'Études économiques* (CEE) – which had tasks of current economic surveys and collection of data, and was the transmission belt with the private business – were not completely new, neither in the history of the French public administration, nor with regard to similar structures set up elsewhere in the 1930s. However, they signaled the political will to put in place a coordinated and stable State *dirigisme*, that could have survived the juncture of the war.

Parallel to the CEI, the *Délégation générale à l'équipement nationale* (DGEN, General delegation to national infrastructures) was directed by François Lehideux. It produced the first French economic ten-year plan, which esteemed credit, raw materials and manpower required for the infrastructures and the recovery. According to historian Richard Kuisel, «the goals of the plan were not limited to economic modernization; Vichy planning was fueled by wide social, cultural, and even moral designs, expression of the traditionalism of the regime. Equally [the plan] celebrated the family, the social solidarity, the countryside values [...] it envisaged the improvement of the housing, of healthcare, of medicine [...]. The ten years plan tried to satisfy two opposite visions of the future of France. Imparting the economic and technologic “adjustment”, it lashed out the social conservatism of the official Vichy ideology.»⁴⁵⁶ The DGEN did not merely propose counter-cyclical measures, but the State-directed modernization of different aspects of French public life. The concerns for social protection, economic restructuring, and a new moral and social order grounded on labour were addressed through the redefinition of the role of the State as “planner” also outside economy, not unlike the coeval projects elaborated by the Resistance.⁴⁵⁷ The ideological vagueness and political weakness of the Vichy regime, and the constraints of the war, made this plan unenforceable. In 1940-1942 the regime had to meet the demands of the German occupation and to face the economic conjuncture; in the same time, it tried to implement

⁴⁵⁶ R. Kuisel, *op. cit.*, pp. 259-260.

⁴⁵⁷ Ivi. cfr. pp. 227-314.

far-reaching tools of State's economic management.⁴⁵⁸ As a last resort, its actions left a heritage: investments and infrastructural plans, governmental coordination, public boards for the study, the collection of economic data, the integration in the administrative structures of the private business. In that regard, Vichy created corporatist co-participation, which – regardless the effective success of the ideology underpinning the Labour Charter – had a carryover in post-war France.

The conjuncture eventually affected the choices of the regime in the day-to-day economic policies; the government faced shortages, forms of requisition, exploitation of goods and manpower. From the compelling emergency resulted a renewed way to wage the relation between government and industry. The burden of the Nazi occupation was overwhelming. The collaboration drained French wealth to finance the German war. From 1940 to 1944, France had to pay 631.866.000.000 of francs, more than 50% of the French GDP in this lapse of time, plus other payments related to the occupation. The franc was devaluated in function of the German needs, and the German capitals penetrated the French enterprises. As for the foodstuffs, raw materials and infrastructures, the Nazis plundered the French market and industry, which basically worked for Germany.⁴⁵⁹ As a result of the Sauckel plans, which aimed at raking 8 million workers in Europe, France had to pay a heavy toll. Between 1942 and 1944, four *Sauckel-Aktionen* required the forced enlistment of manpower to deport to Germany. In 1943 the Vichy regime created the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (STO, Service of Forced Labour), which subjected all men and women between 20 and 29 years to the service in Germany or in France.⁴⁶⁰ The *Sauckel-Aktionen* required approximately 1 million workers between 1942 and 1944, but only 600.000 workers were transferred to Germany. The measure encountered harsh opposition from the population, eventually swelling the ranks of the Resistance, and the regime had to

⁴⁵⁸ M. Margairaz, *op. cit.*, pp. 541-590.

⁴⁵⁹ The figures in R. Paxton, *op.cit.*, pp. 187-188.

⁴⁶⁰ «Loi du 16 février 1943 portant institution du Service du Travail Obligatoire», *JO*, 17 février 1943.

pick the workers from the *Chantiers de la Jeunesse Française*, which substituted the military service.⁴⁶¹

The STO represented the only case, in occupied Europe, of a country that deliberately implemented a legislative and regulatory framework for the transfer of manpower in Nazi Germany. The regime relied on both coercive and persuasive measures. The *Milice Française* of Joseph Darnand, and the paramilitary structures of the *Parti Populaire Français* took the task to stop the draft dodgers.⁴⁶² The regime used also the propaganda to convince the workers, e.g. with the promise to join the “more advanced” German system of social insurances and provisions.⁴⁶³ By mid-1943, both the Germans and the French tried to redefine this matter. In Germany, the Ministry of Armament and War Production, Albert Speer, abandoned the mere “plundering model” of Fritz Sauckel. He wanted France to boost the production of consumer goods, in order to enhance the war production in Germany. On the other side, the new Minister of Industrial Production, Bichelonne, wanted to revive the economy after the underproduction and underemployment of the biennial 1940–1, by restoring the French manufacturing industry. He also came out of the *Ecole Polytechnique*, and, alongside Lehideux and Pucheu, represented the trend of the modernizers within the government. They thought that the collaboration was not merely propaganda but a policy for integrating the French productive system within the wider “rational” division of the European economic space led by Germany; they hoped that war set in motion a long-lasting process of modernization of French economy.⁴⁶⁴ The Speer-Bichelonne agreement made the large French

⁴⁶¹ P. Arnaud, *Les STO : Histoire des Français requis en Allemagne*, Paris, CNRS Editions, 2010.

⁴⁶² On the *Milice Français*, see J.-P. Azéma, «La Milice», *Vingtième Siècle*, n.1/1990, pp. 83-106.

⁴⁶³ See the brochures and leaflets in BDIC, FΔrés 741/1, «Travailleurs français en Allemagne»; R. Guerdan, *Travailleur qui pars pour l'Allemagne*, Aubenas, Editions Habauzit-Le Gonidec, 1942.

⁴⁶⁴ A. Milward, «French Labour and the German Economy, 1942-1945: An Essay on the Nature of the Fascist New Order», *The Economic History Review*, n.2/1970, pp. 336-351, see particularly pp. 342-350.

industrial plants *Speer-Betriebe*, that is, free from the “Sauckel Actions”, and increased employment on the German contracts, especially in the coal and steel industries. On the other side, the agreement enforced the creation of privileged industrial sectors. Far beyond the impending dissolution of the regime’s structures, the German compelling demands, therefore, contributed to set in motion structural changes in French industry and in the approach to economic matters.⁴⁶⁵

The reorganization of French industry was preeminent. The most important acts to drive French economy were passed within the first few months of the regime, while the social laws were submitted to a long bargaining within the government. The *Comités Professionnelles* (CO, Professional Committees) and the *Office Central de Répartition des Produits Industriels* (OCRPI, Office for the Allocation of the Industrial Products) reshaped the French industrial organization for economic branches, quite similarly to German economic structure. At first, the CO were a compromise between the German directives and the preservation of some autonomy in policy-making for the French. They should ease the incorporation of French industries within the German economic area in subaltern position. On the other side, this reorganization also responded to domestic goals; the CO were expected to put in practice the principles of the *Révolution Nationale* against class struggle, liberalism and sectional interests, and they favoured industrial concentration and rationalization of the French industrial production. The two goals designed a policy of “State corporatism” that quickly turned out to be *dirigisme*.⁴⁶⁶

The CO were charged of productive regulation, allocation of resources, sell/purchase and repartition of raw materials, statistics and industrial surveys. They were mostly composed by technical frameworks while the industrial trades had right to representation. Hierarchically organised, they gathered the industries for productive

⁴⁶⁵ R. Kuisel, *op.cit.*, pp.252-253 and 315-361.

⁴⁶⁶ A. Radtke-Delacor, «La position des comités d’organisation face aux autorités d’occupation : la pomme de discorde des commandes allemandes en 1940-1941», Joly Hervé (ed.), *Les comités d’organisation et l’économie dirigée de Vichy. Acte du colloque internationale, 3-4 avril 2001*, pp.63-71.

branches, and they were placed under the authority of government-appointed technocrats. Headed by Bichelonne, the creation of the OCRPI just after the formation of the first OC made even clearer the *dirigiste* shift that the regime undertook. The MIP could exert leverage over the whole industrial production, as the OCRPI allocated industrial resources on national scale among the different CO, which redistributed them to the enterprises of their branches.⁴⁶⁷ As a result, Vichy's "true" corporations resulted in the industrial repartition, useful for State-planned policies, as «the direction of the industry works through some *new State structures* to ensure an *authoritarian reallocation*. This machinery copies with conjunctural constraints due to shortages, burdened by German needs. But it was also conceived by the experts/rulers to ease the *French industrial renovation within the New Europe*, inevitably dominated by German economy.»⁴⁶⁸ On the other side, the CO eased the concentration of the industries, vertically framed in public organisms that coordinated private business, and placed under the management of the MIP. Vichy economic policies strengthened the industrial trusts, and intermingled governmental structures with big business.⁴⁶⁹

The Vichy elites took the emergency as an opportunity to put in place structural reforms. However, since the very beginning they had different view on how to recast French economy. The rifts crossed both the "traditionalists" and the "modernizers", lumped together by the distrust in the *laissez-faire* economy, but divided on the ways to overcome it. Two main hypotheses were at stake: *dirigisme* and "formal" corporatism. These views found room in the different departments of the government. Due to this political conflict, Vichy economic policies probably never had coherence; they combined elements of *dirigisme*, as for some of the abovementioned inter-

⁴⁶⁷ J. Hervé, «Les comités d'organisation : un ensemble vaste et disparate», in Joly Hervé (ed.), *Les comités d'organisation et l'économie dirigée de Vichy. Acte du colloque internationale, 3-4 avril 2001*, Caen, Centre de Recherche Quantitative, 2004, pp. 83-94.

⁴⁶⁸ M. Margairaz, *op. cit.*, p. 590.

⁴⁶⁹ A. Lacroix-Riz, «Les comités d'organisation et l'Allemagne: tentative d'évaluation», in Joly. Hervé (ed.), *Les comités d'organisation et l'économie dirigée de Vichy. Acte du colloque internationale, 3-4 avril 2001*, pp. 49-62.

departmental structures and plans, with a corporatist framework. Furthermore, the CO would have later overlapped the launch of the Labour Charter and newer “industrial families”. In that regard, economist Charles Rist spoke about an “integral confusionism” with regard to Vichy economic policy.⁴⁷⁰ In reality, external conditions (the German demands, the economic slump and unemployment after the defeat), and the political dialectic within Vichy help to explain the regime’s *economic* policies, and how they crossed the *social* policies. Margairaz and Rouso defined Vichy’s economy neither corporatist nor *dirigiste*, but rather “administrated economy”.⁴⁷¹ Their evolution followed the stages of the German war economy, and also industrial modernization concerned mainly the industrial branches more related to war production. Without decisively opting for neither of the models, Vichy achieved forms of corporative coordination with the industrial branches, through the CO. These co-joint committees, nonetheless, for the main part excluded workers’ representatives, reducing the “corporative” collaboration to a bargain between State and employers. On the other side, the State increased functions and controls, e.g. with the first embryonic supply-side plans of selective investments. As I will argue in the second part of the chapter, a similar uncertainty affected also the implementation of the major social reforms; also in this case the “confusionism” was due to opposite visions with regard to the social and political organization of new State. And also in this case, the cleavage concerned the overhaul of the social solidarity along “corporative” or “State-administrated” lines.

The epicentre of this conflicting projects was the MIP. The Ministry passed from the representatives of the trade-unions to the technocrats. Under the direction of the State Secretary of Labour Belin, the MIP tried to integrate the workers within the CO, which he considered half a step in the achievement of a real corporatism, as they were «conceived to face urgent needs, but showed to be incomplete

⁴⁷⁰ Mentioned in Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 154

⁴⁷¹ M. Margairaz, H. Rouso, «Vichy, la guerre et les entreprises», *Histoire, économie & société*, n.11/1992, pp. 337-367.

and flawed [...] it has necessarily to lean on organized professional groups [...] and also gets an extension on the social plan [...] it has to be integrated with a coherent professional organization, a real corporative organization.»⁴⁷² Belin's corporatist view in reality never took form, and this accompanied his fall from grace. With the direction of Bichelonne from 1942 to 1944, the MIP was more concerned to coordinate policy of higher production and manpower. The "formal" corporatism as social collaboration «constitutes a perspective rather than a reality.»⁴⁷³ It was the very pillar of Vichy's social propaganda, but the regime was could not put into effect the *Révolution Nationale*, not even in the agricultural sectors.⁴⁷⁴ The economic collaboration between State and enterprises was nonetheless implemented. The form of corporatism enforced in France configured a sort of "State corporatism"; the OCRPI centrally managed the production of the different industrial branches, which did not correspond to the 22 "professional families" of the Labour Charter. The mechanism of coordination/conciliation involved big business and finance, which from the economic collaboration had everything to gain, and crushed the resilience of the workers, formally excluded from the CO.⁴⁷⁵ Vichy's "corporatism" was neither the romantic ideal of the "traditionalist", nor the trade-unions' State; it was pursued as long as it was functional to the German war economy, and it was carried out by the French collaborationist elite (whether wholeheartedly or not), well reflected by

⁴⁷² AN, F/12/10157, «Rapport de René Belin au Maréchal Pétain sur l'activité du MPI et du Travail du 15 juillet au 15 novembre 1940, 17 novembre 1940», mentioned in M. Margairaz, *op. cit.*, p.564.

⁴⁷³ H. Rouso, « Les paradoxes de Vichy et de l'Occupation. Contraintes, archaïsmes et modernités », in Patrick Fridenson and André Straus (eds.), *Le capitalisme français 19^{ème} et 20^{ème} siècles. Blocages et dynamismes d'une croissance*, Paris, Fayard, 1987, pp. 67-82, p 70.

⁴⁷⁴ Isabelle Boussard, *Vichy et la Corporation paysanne*, Paris, Presse de la Fondation nationale de Sciences Politiques, 1980.

⁴⁷⁵ According to the interpretation of Annie Lacroix-Riz, the interests block of industrialists and grand commis d'état (the *synarchie*) not only actively participated to "economic collaboration" with the Nazis, to the pillage of the Jewish assets and to the deprivation of the workers' rights, but they also paved the way to collapse of the III^{re} Republic legitimacy and institutions during the 1930s, see A. Lacroix-Riz, *Industriels et banquiers français sous l'occupation*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2013.

Bichelonne, who had a close personal relationship with his German counterpart Speer.⁴⁷⁶

The regime reconsidered the industrial production on national basis: coordination the strategic industrial sectors, allocation of investments and resources and collection of data on the national economy. The conjunctural policies and the war constrain led to the extension of governmental offices and paved the way to post-war plans. The policies enacted did not replace the system of private industries, but fastened industrial reconstruction, modernized the productive processes, supported the industrial sectors. technocratic establishment. The economic policies of the Vichy regime partially fell outside the assumptions of the *Révolution Nationale*. The many faceted technocratic milieu shared with the regime the fear of the class struggle, and imposed its own vision of the State, in accordance to the German needs. They seized the opportunity of the defeat to carry out in substantive terms the ideas raised during the 1930s. The institutional offices in charge of the economic management, the corporatist structures of coordination and the research centres and think tanks operating with governmental departments were formally dismantled or purged of the more compromised collaborators. But the “legacies” of Vichy went beyond the regime’s four years political experience and its own ideology. As François Denord and Paul-André Rosental underlined, they were related to a longer-run change started in the 1930s and culminated in the 1950s, which «started with the institutionalization of the social and economic interests’ representation with the State. It had been strengthened under Vichy with the introduction wide-ranging technocratic management tools. It reached its apogee under the Fourth Republic, and notably through the “structural reforms” adopted by the Liberation.»⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁶ L.Yagil, Jean Bichelonne, 1904-1944. *Un polytechnicien sous Vichy. Entre memoire et histoire*, Paris, SPM, 2015.

⁴⁷⁷ F. Denord, P.A. Rosental, «Comment lier l’économie et le social ? Une analyse structurelle des lieux d’expertise sous le régime de Vichy», *Gouvernement et action publique*, n. 2/2013, pp. 183-219, p. 217.

The reforms of the social insurances had a similar trend, combining the influence of the debates in the 1930s, the contrasting ideological goals of the regime and the needs to face the conjuncture. Part of the social legislation survived to the regime, because it was disengaged from the social doctrine of the regime, dealing rather with the rationalization and expansion of social protection, which during wartime was enhanced from the administrative point of view.

3.2. *The social insurances between attempts at reform and continuities*

3.2.1. *The Secretary of Labour and the attempts to a global reform*

The Vichy regime never officially promote a coherent plan on social insurances; at least, not in the same terms of the British reports and *White Papers*. Ideological reasons might explain this lack of political initiative. The social policy was another field where the cleavage between the ideological discourse of the *Révolution Nationale* and the incremental administrative policies were clear. While the regime tended to identify social policy with corporatism, social insurances developed autonomously from the Labour Charter. However, from 1940 to 1942 the major promoter of both was the trade unionist milieu. Belin, the former leader of the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT, the French Trade Unions), brought some of its members to the *Révolution Nationale* to collaborate with the regime.⁴⁷⁸ Belin's Minister corresponded to the major legislative effort in social policies and to the attempt to effectively link economic with social policy, as the former trade unionist milieu relentlessly claimed.⁴⁷⁹ Belin tried to combine the reorganization of the labour market in "vertical" structures, as prefigured in the Labour Charter, with the extensions of the social protection and provisions for the workers. This policy would have actually resulted in increased powers for the employers, while the

⁴⁷⁸ R. Belin, *Du secrétariat de la C.G.T. au gouvernement de Vichy, mémoires 1933-1942*, Paris, Éditions de l'Albatros, 1978; « Syndicalismes sous Vichy », numéro spécial de la revue *Le mouvement social*, Jean-Louis Robert (ed.), n.158/1992.

⁴⁷⁹ See the revues *Au Travail !*, and *L'Atelier* both published from 1940 and 1944, the former in the Unoccupied territories, the latter in the area under Nazi administration.

workers (deprived of the trade unions) were expected to be placated with more social benefits. Belin found in the *État français* the possibility to put in place the overcoming of the class struggle, finding the “third way” between capitalism and the hated Marxist doctrines and parties.

In the first months of his office, Belin tackled on its own initiative the global reform of social insurances, due to the war upheavals and the French administrative conditions after the armistice. The difficult economic and social conditions after the defeat and the German occupation worsened the social and health needs of the population. The administrative fracture between Occupied and Unoccupied Zone affected the functioning of the mutualist framework of the French social insurances. They made more difficult to provide benefits and created differences between various funds. Moreover, left-wing organizations managed many mutualist funds, and the repression often cut the granting of the benefits.⁴⁸⁰ The regime deployed a set of policies that met the conjuncture issues and more structural innovations, moving towards the strengthening of public social insurances and assistance.

On 1st September 1940, Belin presented with Laroque and Alexandre Parodi – the two fathers of the post-war social security – a thorough reform projects, covering social insurances, family allowances, and paid leaves. The draft extended the repartition to all the social insurances, taking over good part of the financial tasks from the private sector and strengthening the inter-generational social solidarity inherent to the repartition.⁴⁸¹ Belin handled the social protection through the «modification of the collection of the contributions and of the administrative organisation of the funds, which will lead to relevant savings in the administrative budget of the social insurance authorities. [...] the contributions for the social insurances, the family allowances, and the paid leaves will be subject to

⁴⁸⁰ M. Dreyfus, et al., *Se protéger, être protégé. Une histoire des Assurances sociales en France*, pp. 235-238.

⁴⁸¹ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/1 «Le Ministre Secrétaire d'Etat à la Production Industrielle et au Travail à Monsieur le Ministre Secrétaire d'état aux Finances (Rapport présenté par René Belin). 1 septembre 1940».

a single lump sum.»⁴⁸² The proposals innovated the French system, because recommended the unification of the different insurances in one single contribution, with their centralization and the partial nationalization. The reform also changed the mechanism of collection of the employers' contributions and the functioning of the local authorities in charge of the benefits.

However, the project can hardly be compared to the British plan of two years later. The draft retained the different contributory rates according to each category; farmers and industrial workers, for instance, contributed respectively for the 3% and the 5% of their salaries, and the State's contribution did not concern industrial workers. There was no shift towards flat-rate universal benefits, nor the framework of a tripartite equal contributions. It did not even foresee any public healthcare service, even if the contributory burden for the sickness benefits decreased and the invalidity benefits were increasingly assimilated to the healthcare insurances. The project provided a wider access to medical treatments and preventive measures. After five years, the insured had the right to enjoy the old-age pensions in case of permanent disability. As for family allowances, paid leaves, and the benefits for maternity, death, and diseases, the reform operated an important simplification of the voluntary societies, whose functions were taken over by the *Caisses départementales de solidarité* (Local funds of solidarity), gathered in a national federation that coordinated at a central level the management of these benefits.

The attached draft decree complaint the inefficiency, fragmentation and costs of the current social protection. The report recognised that the French social protection lacked of homogeneous principles: sickness, maternity, invalidity, old-age felt into compulsory insurance paid by employers and workers, combined with social assistance in charge of the State; self-employed and other categories had no public schemes; industrial injuries insurance relied on employers' liability and were in fact contracted via private assurances; family allowances had no consistent public schemes, and unemployment was tackled with assistance measure. The report

⁴⁸² Ivi, p.1.

proposed to «overhaul it in a simple, clear, efficient and integrated system.»⁴⁸³, and mostly to establish a basic common principle, that is, «the idea of a bond of solidarity among all the workers against all the social risks. [...] The insurance should not be individual, but collective, and should be the relief of all the workers for all the workers. And workers does not mean exclusively the salaried, but also all the “low-incomes”, all those who, both salaried and self-employed, make their primary livelihood from their daily work.»⁴⁸⁴ This solidarity had little to do with the 1942 British universal principles, equally encompassing all the *citizens* as national community. The goal was to ensure social protection for all workers (as a right of the workers and *not* as a right of citizenship), but unlike the British reforms they tried to achieve it via occupational social insurances rather than the contributions of the whole community. More than on national basis, social solidarity deployed “in concentric circles” and was exercised per territorial and professional sectors:

«It seems particularly needed to give a professional basis to protection against the social risks, still retaining, of course, inter-professional and national solidarity through doable mechanisms of compensation. The goal to achieve is to develop, in the framework of the corporation, an integrated system able to ensure via the contribution and collaboration of workers, employers, self-employed, the protection of all the lower incomes against all the social risks, the unemployment as well as the sickness, the old-age as well as the industrial injuries.»⁴⁸⁵

The report linked the establishment of a thorough system of social protection with corporatism, considered the necessary precondition for the implementation of the new social insurances. That

⁴⁸³ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/3, «Ministère de la Production Industrielle et du Travail. Rapport à Monsieur le Maréchal de France, Chef de l’Etat Français. 21 septembre 1940», p.2.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ivi.* p.3.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibidem.*

is the reason why the report distrusted solutions defined «too over-hasty», which « risk to create confusion and even to delay the put in place of the new mechanisms. The professional organization is still to embryonic to incorporate within also the social insurances.»⁴⁸⁶ The refusal to move forward global solutions was motivated by the need to enact progressive piece-by-piece reforms that could be progressively integrated within the corporative system. The project introduced only the first step in such a framework, which had the triple goal to simplify the administration of the social insurances, to shift a major burden to the employer in its financing, and to enlarge the provisions for the workers.

Belin wanted to dismiss the older mutualist and voluntary institutions, to be replaced by a single local authority (the *Caisse de Solidarité Unique*, which had in the board representatives of the employers and the insured designated by the Ministry of Labour) in charge of the unified management of social insurances, family allowances, death grants, paid leaves, and maternity benefits. Old-age pensions and invalidity benefits were managed by a national public authority, the *Caisse Générale de Pensions*. The employers had thus to pay only one contribution for all risk categories, and the workers had no longer to affiliate to different schemes. This was a major reform in the framework of the French social protection, but was not universalistic; the contributions were neither flat-rate nor calculated on the national minimal income, but their uniformity was related to each enterprise. In addition, the State contributed as third part only for the farming professions, and without providing an equal tripartite contribution (the fiscal burden moved to the employers and the State paid the equivalent of 3/4 of workers' contribution).⁴⁸⁷ The period of sickness was postponed beyond the six months and its scope was extended. Sickness benefits covered all the treatments, including surgeries and dental cure, for the worker and his family, and the rate of

⁴⁸⁶ Ivi. p. 4.

⁴⁸⁷ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/3, «Projet de Loi portant réforme des législations sur les Assurances Sociales, les allocations familiales, et les congés payés», p.3.

the refund for the cures was established by the State.⁴⁸⁸ The same went for unemployment benefits; the law proposed six-months benefits at the rate of 3.000 francs for the workers registered to the Employment Office, but did not establish compulsory insurances.⁴⁸⁹ With the exclusion of unemployment benefits, however, the reform marked a clear distinction between social insurances and social assistance, as the recipients of social benefits could not apply for the same benefits via public social aid. The draft project devoted the greatest importance to the national old-age pensions for all salaried workers, also for those who did not fulfil the regular contributions, with an increase of the rates from 3.000 to 4.500 francs to the retirement age, at 60 years old. It was a measure of solidarity, because the whole community paid social pensions for the lower incomes in order to guarantee the subsistence level. It was also to a greater extent a universalistic provision, as all the salaried had the right to enjoy it. But not even this proposal marked any turn towards full universalism, as the self-employed and other categories were not originally concerned, even if further extensions both in the rates and for the recipients were prefigured in case of economic slumps. The major concern underlying this reformulation were demographic and counter-cyclical; as the French population aged, the government had to guarantee healthy old-ages to lower incomes, which could also be retrained for specific minor jobs, allowing the younger, constituting the contribution base, to be normally employed in industrial and agricultural sectors.⁴⁹⁰

The draft passed under the offices of the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations* (CDC, Deposits and Consignments Fund, in charge of the financing of the social insurances), which formulated different reports.⁴⁹¹ The various administrative sections of the social insurances

⁴⁸⁸ *Ivi.* p. 5.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ivi.* p.4.

⁴⁹⁰ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/3, «Ministère de la Production Industrielle et du Travail. Rapport à Monsieur le Maréchal de France, Chef de l'Etat Français. 21 septembre 1940», pp. 4-9.

⁴⁹¹ The CDC is a public financial institution, in charge of the funding of many provisions, such as at that time social housing and social insurances. The CDC, one of the key French institutions since 1816, had a controversial role in the Vichy regime, especially with reference to the pillaging of the Jewish goods and properties. On the CDC during the

(old-age, sickness, industrial injuries, etc.) agreed on the general principles underpinning the project: reduction of the funds and their coordination under national and public authority; unification of the social insurances under similar funding mechanism (splitting between risk categories for repartition and capitalisation); integration of industrial injuries, family allowances, and paid leaves in the general compulsory social insurances; clear-cut division between assistance measures and social insurances; establishment of “moderate” social solidarity towards specific categories, e.g. old-age pensions. The French social protection was considered defective in many regards. The CDC recommended to create a single fund for each risk category and funding mechanism: «the freedom of choice of the insurance [...] resulted in a great number of funds, and this plurality caused at once the dispersion of the organizational efforts, issues in the interpretation of the rule, overlapping of in the attributions of the funds, oversupply of the payments.»⁴⁹²

The regime-change seemed to be the right time to overcome the fragmentation of the social protection. The context was quite different from Britain, but the aims were similar; addressing the incremental stratification of the social legislation through overarching reforms, unitary and centralized actions, rationalization. Social insurances, family allowances and paid leaves grew with «various institution, and nothing, mostly the logic, justify the flowering of these different authorities.»⁴⁹³ The CDC was in favour of a public unified fund, to «coordinate the fragmented efforts of activities to a common goal.»⁴⁹⁴ The scattered voluntary funds led to dispersion of benefits and

Second World War, see A. Aglan, M. Margairaz, P. Verheyde, *La Caisse des dépôts et consignations, la Seconde Guerre mondiale et le XXe siècle*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2003, and particularly Margairaz’s overview on the topic, M. Margairaz, «La Caisse des dépôts, les spoliations et la collaboration d’État», pp. 447-475.

⁴⁹² CDC, 33/3-4, 17/3 «Division des Assurances Sociales. Note pour le Directeur Général. 29 aout 1940 », p.1.

⁴⁹³ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/3 «Division des Assurances Sociales. Note pour le Directeur Général. 12 septembre 1940», p.1.

⁴⁹⁴ Ivi. p. 3.

growing expenditures. Facing increasing burdens, the only viable way was to address the reform with an holistic view:

«The effort of rationalization represented by the project here sketched out is only the first step in the achievement of a wider feat of the overall reorganisation of the social legislation. The paid leave and the family allowances did not consistently differ from the social insurances covered by the repartition system. [...] We conceive for this analogy the possibility to merge these two insurances in one fund. In place of the various institutions now existing, we could create only one authority, a wide Repartition National Fund, gathering all the services of social assistance and insurance. This rationalizing centralization will not exclude by the way the needed direct contact with the recipients, as this National Fund will branch in the departments in local authorities that provide the payment of the benefits to the insured. By doing so, the worker will deal with only one institution for every event or accident of his life. On his side, the employer will find in this institution a simplification of his tasks, because with just one contribution he will get rid off all his obligations as far as the social insurances are concerned.»⁴⁹⁵

The hustle of the first months are due to the great reforms in the pipeline at the MIP; every reform of the social protection was conditional to the reforms of the industrial relation. The CDC recommended «to totally and completely overhaul the guidelines on which the law on the Social Insurances was formulated»,⁴⁹⁶ that was inadequate from organizational and financial points of view. Any minor adjustment was ineffective in a system that had a liberal setting, and indeed, «if this reform had to be studied from now, it will not be operational unless some other foundation will be laid down, as [*the*

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibidem.* pp. 3-4.

⁴⁹⁶ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/3 «4^{ème} Division 2^{ème} Bureau. Note au Directeur Général. 19 Novembre 1940», p.1.

reform n.d.a.] is conditional to another reform, that is, the reform of the labour system. Only when the new juridical framework of the labour organization will be clearer, we can redefine how the worker will be ensured against all risks.»⁴⁹⁷

Notwithstanding the agreement on the lacks of the French social system, the CDC and the Treasury rose administrative and financial doubts. Precisely because the Labour Charter was still a draft, the reform was judged too hasty for the management of the funds, the fiscal burden for the employers, the calculation of the contributory years. The immediate expenditure from the employers/workers contributions was estimated in 4 billion francs, worsened with the expected tightening of contributory base. Belin presented the reform as an occupational, intergenerational and national pact of solidarity, but other reports remarked that it resulted in the transfer of income from the workers to the retired. The “national solidarity” was limited to the categories of salaried workers, and did not involve the whole of citizens, especially in the financing mechanisms. The reform was defined as fee paid by the salaried to finance the pensions, while all the non-salaried categories in fact were exempted from it.⁴⁹⁸ The critical reports also showed outdated views on social policy, as for the “individual liability”. They feared that the transfer of resources without contribution records resulted in the overlapping of insurance and assistance, discouraging self-initiative and upward mobility, as the better paid categories had the heaviest fiscal burden.

The case with industrial injury insurances is illustrative. In Britain, their integration in the compulsory scheme was one of the key innovations. The Vichy regime refused this proposal, due to the shifting financial burden to the whole community, the contribution on national basis without considering the specific risks for different industrial branches, and the contributory-based system that replaced the previous system of compensations. The reports agreed on the fact that the current conditions did not allow the implementation of a global

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibidem.*

⁴⁹⁸ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/3, «Note pour le Directeur Général. 12 octobre 1940», pp. 3-4.

and all-inclusive reform.⁴⁹⁹ Unlike Britain, in the France submitted to Nazi Germany and to economic and fiscal constraint, they suggested considered “progressive” and “gradual” steps.⁵⁰⁰ Also the Treasury’s accounting offices recommended to implement single pieces of legislation, and notably those long overdue, such as the old-age pensions, and to wait for the Labour Charter before passing any reform of social insurances.⁵⁰¹ The Ministry of Finance prepared alternative reforms, more limited in the benefits for the pensions, with a lesser impact on the longer-run on the budget. It was less generous for the parameters to join the pensions, for the years of contributions and the regulations of the entry into force of the new scheme.⁵⁰² The counterproposals between the two Ministries – defined in a note of the CDC both «rather vague and sometimes obscure in place»⁵⁰³ – led to minor rehashes of the original project of the MIP, which did not change its setting.⁵⁰⁴ Belin regretted the opposition that he considered due to ideology rather than to economic evaluations. The economic departments frightened the burdens and the objective difficulties to put in place such ambitious project in a country ruled by two administrations.⁵⁰⁵ But the harshest criticisms came from the vested interests. They opposed any “state-controlled centralism” in the management of social insurances, resulting in a unnecessary

⁴⁹⁹ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/3, «2^{ème} Division. Note pour Monsieur le Secrétaire Général. 2 octobre 1940» ; CDC, 33/3-4, 17/3, « 4^{ème} Division, 2^{ème} Bureau, Note au Directeur Général. 9 novembre 1940 » ; CDC, 33/3-4, 17/3, « Division des Assurances Sociale, Réforme de la Loi sur les Assurances Sociales. 8 novembre 1940 ».

⁵⁰⁰ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/3, «2^{ème} Division. 3^{ème} Bureau. Note pour le Directeur Général. 2 octobre 1940».

⁵⁰¹ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/4, «Cabinet du Directeur Général. Note pour la Commission de Surveillance (non présentée)».

⁵⁰² CDC, 33/3-4, 17/5, « Projet de Loi du Ministère des Finances portant réforme de législation sociale sur les Assurances Sociales. 29 octobre 1940».

⁵⁰³ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/5, «4^{ème} Division, 2^{ème} Bureau, Note pour le Directeur Général. 31 octobre 1940», p.1.

⁵⁰⁴ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/5, «Nouveau texte du Ministère de la Production Industrielle et du Travail de la loi portant réforme de la législation sur les Assurances Sociales. 29 octobre 1940».

⁵⁰⁵ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/5, «7^{ème} Division. Note pour Monsieur le Secrétaire Général. 26 février 1941», p.4.

bureaucratic burden without any social benefit. They were supported by the Minister of Finances Bouthillier, who feared the implementation of a new administrative apparatus, which in his view recalled “collectivist regimes”.⁵⁰⁶

The barrages from political circles and from social actors induced Belin to withdraw (or to put it on hold) the original project. The Vichy regime could not prevail over vested interests and lacked of popular support to all-inclusive social reforms, unlike the mobilization and fully support of British public opinion to the 1942 social security plan. In the same year, Belin proposed a new reform on the functioning of the mutual and local funds. Between January and March 1942, the Secretary of Labour unilaterally proposed a comprehensive reform encompassing social pensions, change in the funding social insurances from capitalisation to the “pay-as-you-go”, compulsory insurances against unemployment, and regulation of the employment of married women.⁵⁰⁷ Unlike the British interdepartmental joint-committees, the Secretary of Labour tried to mount a takeover to pass the reform. The other departments criticized timings and methods of a reform which they considered as «following the ideas of certain officers of a single Ministry, without even taking into account the collective interests and the general doctrine which the other administrations represent.»⁵⁰⁸

The new draft legislation adapted the 1940 proposals to the new embryonic forms of corporative organizations created with the 1941 Labour Charter. Some administrative simplifications reneged; the territorial overhaul of the authorities in charge of social insurances and family allowances, as well as the health insurance companies, overlapped *Caisses territoriales* (the local insurance funds, which by

⁵⁰⁶ M. Dreyfus, «La Caisse des dépôts et les Assurances sociales durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale», in Alya Aglan, Michel Margairaz, Philippe Verheyde, *La Caisse des dépôts et consignations, la Seconde Guerre mondiale et le XXe siècle*, pp. 162-177.

⁵⁰⁷ The legislative drafts followed the «Loi du 6 janvier 1942 portant su recouvrement des cotisations», JO, 15 Janvier 1942, which simplified the mechanisms of the calculation of the contributions and payment of the benefits for the salaried workers.

⁵⁰⁸ AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C., «Sécretariat Général à la Famille et à la Santé. Note sur la pratique suivie par le Ministère du Travail pour réaliser ses projets des réforme actuellement en cours. S.d.», p.1.

nature are inter-professional) and *Caisses professionnelles* (the occupational insurance funds, broken down by category). The workers had to affiliate to the *Caisses professionnelles*, while those who did not belong to any professional branch (or “family”, in Vichy corporatist lexicon) had to join the unique *Caisse territoriale* in each district. The project affiliated all the salaried workers of the same factory/branch to the same social insurance fund, and the local occupational insurance funds complied with the new corporative industrial organization.⁵⁰⁹ The previous factory mutual funds were retained, since «it would be unusual, in the moment when we are trying to create solid business communities to eliminate the same funds that allow to partially achieve them [*the business communities n.d.a*] even before the Labour Charter.»⁵¹⁰

The retention of occupational funds did not necessarily clash against the unification and rationalization of the administration of the social insurances authorities. Belin’s plan responded to the same needs of simplification that were felt in Britain. The legislation drafts before March 1942 tried to be more consistent to this aim; the opt out prefigured in the first proposal disappeared, proposing to unify the different insurances: «the insured persons are affiliated for sickness benefits, maternity allowances and death grants to the Fund in the circumscription where they work. Only one social Fund is allowed to operate in each territorial circumscription. [...] The circumscription of the Funds is established by the Secretary of State to the Labour.»⁵¹¹ While the British projects relied on the nationalization of the compulsory insurances, Belin wanted to interwoven the social insurances with the corporative professional organization. In his view, the State’s extended coordination did not contradict Vichy’s corporative institutions, which actually rooted on the mutualist framework of the French social insurances: «the essential arrangements of the text we hereby present for your signature, and which deals with

⁵⁰⁹ AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C., «Note sur les modifications qu’il paraît opportun d’apporter au texte proposé à la signature du Chef de l’état, s.d.»

⁵¹⁰ *Ivi.* pp. 4-5.

⁵¹¹ AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C., «Secrétariat d’Etat au Travail. Loi relative à l’organisation des Caisses d’Assurances sociales, s.d.», see also the previous drafts of the legislation in the same record.

the structure itself of the social insurances authorities, address similar concerns. In the moment when, under your highest authority, the Labour Charter comes into force, this reform aims mostly at affirming, in the realm of the management of the social protection institution, a coherent principle of social action.»⁵¹² While in Britain the reforms of the social insurances broadened the rights of citizenship, Belin's reform owed a lot to French traditions and the rhetoric of the *Révolution Nationale*. The mutualist pluralism was the heritage of previous sectionalist environment, while the new political climate rearranged the occupational schemes in coherently corporatist institutions:

«Nowadays, the National Unity that you achieved put an end to the rule of parties, and the Public Powers are no longer reduced to compromise solutions. These multiple institutions created without any comprehensive plan must therefore give way to a coherent network that supports the main social actions that you encourage. This regrouping – in line with the most current concerns – implies a simpler and more rational administrative structure. In that regard, the creation of the *Caisses territoriales* constitutes to us the less expensive solution, the one that fit the most to the needs of the insured, and the most favourable to social reconciliation. The *Caisses territoriales* will now work within the framework of the Labour Charter, since their administration will be entrusted to the representatives of the employers and of the workers from the Social Committees. Furthermore, it seems necessary to complete this reform by strengthening in the same time the powers of the Secretary of Labour on the management of the new funds.»⁵¹³

In 1940, such reform of social insurances was mostly drafted under the urge of the defeat. It addressed primarily the issue of

⁵¹² AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C., «René Belin. Rapport au Maréchal de France, Chef de l'État français. 28 Février 1942», p.1.

⁵¹³ Ivi, p.2.

unemployment, and the Labour Charter was not drafted yet. In 1942 the context was different, as it was about to make the “social revolution” effective. The management of social insurances passed to the representative of the corporative bodies, under the supervision of the central Secretary, which prompted the directives of the social policy.

Also this draft reform encountered criticisms. The commentaries delivered to Pétain’s Cabinet opposed two views, grounded on criteria which are enlightening of the divergences between the British approach and the continental solutions. The reports recommended to retain the occupational setting, as adopted in Germany and in the USSR, as well as to not indulge in any *étatisme*, since «in France, we live under a regime of freedom, and of private insurance companies, which sometimes already are and, in any case, might be organized under occupational schemes.»⁵¹⁴ Belin tried to make “State-centred” administration and corporatism live together, but the reports remarked how a stronger public management of the social insurance stood against Vichy’s doctrine. Behind the ideological screen emerged the traditional anti-statism: corporatism and individualism (declined in the terms of “self-relief”) were two sides of the same coin. The reform was criticized because it levelled contributions and benefits regardless the incomes and professional categories; all the workers were «placed on an equal footing by the standard desks of the public administration.»⁵¹⁵ This outcome – at the very core of the British reforms – was unacceptable for the regime, which promoted the “equality of opportunities” framed in a corporative hierarchy of competences and role. In that regard, the “corporative” criticisms had some similarities with the supporters of *laissez-faire* individualism in Britain. They feared the «suppression of the intermediate institutions, organized within the framework of the natural business communities and of the professional families, managed by the insured themselves with the freedom, the responsibility, the diversification that this implies

⁵¹⁴ AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Nouvelle note sur le projet de loi relatif aux assurances sociales, 16 mars 1942», p.1.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

when the management is still fit for the human realities, for the specific needs and uses of every profession.»⁵¹⁶

The nationalization of social insurances was regarded as a “totalitarian” solution, stranger to the French traditions. The necessary simplification should have not led to the “individualization” of the relationship of the insured with the State:

«in the moment when the Marshal made it clear the centrality of the natural intermediate communities between the State and the individual, the project [of *Belin*, *n.d.a.*] speeds up the suppression the institutions, which already correspond to this aim. It replaces a monstrous bureaucratic and uniform public machinery to the voluntary companies where, freely, the salaried are gathered according their occupation. Under the sway of this public organization, the salaried will be left alone before the State and they will be no longer part of the workers’ natural communities, which have to be in the same time the framework of their activities and the shield that, interposing between them and the State, secure their freedom.»⁵¹⁷

The legacy of the previous social policy affected marked the divergence between universalist and occupational approaches. The governmental circles did not support the complete unification of the social insurances; they related to very framework of the 1928-30 reforms as sufficient means to create a pluralist (in their words, “corporatist”) «climate of solidarity and social reconciliation.»⁵¹⁸ The centralization of the service was considered opposite to corporatism, as «this unification will lead to the most regrettable duality: for the same working population, two institutions are now working without any tie to each other: the former (the Social Insurances) rigorously State-driven

⁵¹⁶ Ivi. p.2.

⁵¹⁷ AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Note sur la loi relative à l’organisation des caisses d’assurances sociales, 14 mars 1942», p.4.

⁵¹⁸ Ivi. p.2.

and unitary; the latter, designed on a corporative basis (the social institutions related to the Labour Charter.»⁵¹⁹

The circles of the Secretary of Labour did not see incongruences between the reorganization/unification of the local and mutual funds, and the implementation of the Labour Charter. They stressed the coherence between corporatism and greater uniformity in the management of the insurances. The reform interwoven the Social Committees and the single-territorial authorities, coordinated by the State but managed by the representatives of workers, employers and technical frameworks.⁵²⁰ In reality, the reform did not deal with the specific ideology of the *Révolution Nationale*, but rather with a logic of administrative and political simplification. In that regard, the principles underpinning Belin's prospected reform did not differ from those stated by the *Beveridge Report* nor from the path undertaken by Fascist social legislation, and culminated in 1944:

«At present, even if the administrative services have some uniformity at regional levels, the authorities that manage the risks have been created without any general plan; primarily concerned about gathering the insured claiming under the same [*occupational n.d.a.*] affinity, they freely developed their bases in the same territorial circumscription, where their services overlap and duplicate, while everything should be put in place to ensure which only one institution, which has to be of public order, could take forward the best possible cooperation of the policies according to the same method and uniformity. This must be the rationale of the reorganisation of the different authorities and funds that currently manage the social risk, which this project tends. From now onwards, a single authority will take in charge the insurance-related business within the same territorial area. The social insured will no longer be the object of requests from private

⁵¹⁹ *Ibidem.*

⁵²⁰ AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Analyse de la loi sur l'organisation des Caisses d'Assurances sociales, s.d.», p. 2.

companies that manage similar and overlapping functions.»⁵²¹

Neither this note, nor the draft of legislation is explicit on the nature of this “reorganization”, whether through the creation of a single national (or regional) public authority, or through the simple coordination of mutual and private funds. The opponents to the reform, nonetheless accused the project to «suppress al the existing social insurance funds, and create in their place a new network of territorial funds which, de facto, if not even de jure, are public authorities.»⁵²² Also this draft reform did not have legislative carryovers. Proposed few months before Belin’s resignations, the double failure of his project marked the end of the most important attempts to reform social insurances under Vichy.

3.2.2. A piecemeal approach between emergency and broader reforms

The failure in implementing a coherent reform did not prevent to pass limited provisions. The most part of the administrative and legislative measures from 1939 to 1944 were concentrated in the first years: the extensions and simplification of compulsory schemes; the reform of the insurance local authorities; the coordination among separate funds, with the exception of agricultural insurances; industrial injuries; family allowances; the population under Nazi administration; the workers in Germany; the mutual organizations.⁵²³ Directly related to the need to secure the pursuit of the benefits were the law to grant the benefits for the workers called to army or for those who could no longer receive them due to the war, or the social benefits for the families of war prisoners.⁵²⁴

⁵²¹ Ivi. Pp.1-2.

⁵²² AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Note sur la loi relative à l’organisation des caisses d’assurances sociales, 14 mars 1942», p. 1.

⁵²³ AN, 72/AJ/13, «Ministère du Travail et de la Sécurité Sociale. L’œuvre législative et réglementaire concernant la sécurité sociale pendant la période 1939-1945. S.d.».

⁵²⁴ «Loi du 12 septembre 1940 tendant à faciliter l’attribution des prestations aux assurés sociaux qui ont interrompu le travail, en raison de la guerre», JO, 14 septembre 1940 ;

In the first two months the regime passed regulations on the redefinition of the districts of competence of the local authorities.⁵²⁵ The occupation, the huge number of dispersed and prisoners, the administrative displacements, and the loss of insurance cards and dossiers imposed to reconfigure the administrative geography of the local funds. All these provisions were no longer related to working activities, but became assistance benefits for the subsistence of the families during wartime. The criteria of affiliation to the local funds changed; the benefits were no longer paid according to the place of employment (as many workers were prisoners, dispersed, or relocated to Germany) but to the place of residence of the family. The 1945 reforms of the *sécurité sociale* under Republican regime retained this new configuration of the benefits.⁵²⁶ Other laws operated in continuity with the last IIIrd Republic projects. The insurances for farm workers, whose local funds were separated from the general compulsory schemes, passed under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture in 1941.⁵²⁷ The separate schemes in the trade and in special sectors of the industry were instead amalgamated to compulsory schemes; the Decree of 17th July 1941 operationalised the Decree-Law of 1935 in this

«Loi du 23 janvier 1941 tendant à faciliter l'attribution des prestations d'assurances sociales aux assurés sociaux qui n'ont pu cotiser du fait des hostilités ou des conséquences de celles-ci», *JO*, 4 février 1941 ; «Loi du 27 septembre améliorant les prestations des assurances sociales en ce qui concerne la famille du prisonnier», *JO*, 16 janvier 1942 ; «Loi du 12 avril 1942 appliquant aux militaires au congé d'armistice le régime général des assurances sociales», *JO*, 17 avril 1942 ; «Loi du 14 mars 1944 facilitant aux assurés sociaux, anciennes prisonniers de guerre, l'attribution des prestations maternité à leur retour de captivité», *JO*, 13 juin 1944.

⁵²⁵ «Arrêté du 19 aout 1940 modifiant les circonscriptions des services régionaux des assurances sociales», *JO*, 20 aout 1940; «Arrêté du 19 aout 1940 concernant le paiement des prestations par les Caisses d'assurances sociales et les nouvelles circonscriptions des services régionaux», *JO*, 20 aout 1940.

⁵²⁶ J.-P. Hesse, «Les assurances sociales», in Philippe-Jean Hesse, Jean-Pierre LeCrom (eds.), *La protection sociale sous le régime de Vichy*, Rennes, Presse Universitaire de Rennes, 2001, pp. 31-84, p. 38.

⁵²⁷ «Loi du 5 avril relative au fonctionnement des lois sociales et familiales en agriculture (gestion des assurances agricoles)», *JO*, 18 avril 1941.

domain.⁵²⁸ The administrative changes set in motion by the war also improved the pre-war legislation, which tended to the unification of the schemes. After the failure of the global reforms of social insurances, between 1941 and 1942 specific insurances were improved without, however, unitary vision. The regime intervened in all the risk categories (sickness, disease, old-age pensions, industrial injuries, unemployment), but the reforms hardly were interrelated as they would have been a few months later in Britain, and they faced resistance in the mutualist frame of the French insurances.

The *loi du 6 janvier 1942* was a step to greater uniformity of the sickness benefits.⁵²⁹ The benefits covered all the workers, regardless their employment and type of remuneration. The “simplification of the contribution”, as declared by the law, affected the mutualist system, as the link between benefits and contributions was weakened. The benefits were now related to the status of worker, and not to that of *insured* worker. By the end of the same year, the benefits included the foreigner miners and the soldiers in this provision, and moving towards “universal” coverages.⁵³⁰ Anyway, this reform had less to do with citizenship-based social rights. The new recipients were rather “assisted-insured”, because enjoyed sickness benefits regardless their contributions.⁵³¹ The extension to wider categories recalled the *National Assistance* in Britain, where the needy and the poor unable to pay for their own security received social benefits. This was an effective policy of social solidarity, even if the French reform retained differences between contributory categories, and did not establish minimal vital income, thus lacking of real universalistic features. More than on

⁵²⁸ «Décret du 17 juillet 1941 relatif à la coordination entre le régime général des assurances sociales et les régimes spéciaux d'assurance», *JO*, 10 août 1941.

⁵²⁹ «Loi du 6 janvier 1942 simplifiant le fonctionnement des assurances sociales», *JO*, 15 janvier 1942.

⁵³⁰ «Loi du 18 novembre 1942 étendant aux étrangers en surnombre dans l'économie nationale le bénéfice des assurances sociales, des allocations familiales, des accidents du travail et des congés payés», *JO*, 19 décembre 1942. On the foreign workers in France during Vichy, see also P. Geida, *Le groupement des travailleurs étrangers (GTE) sous le régime de Vichy*, Paris, LULU, 2017.

⁵³¹ «Assistés-Assurés» J.-P. Hesse, «Les assurances sociales», p. 53.

“political” intent, the extensions of sickness benefit lied on emergency conjunctures.

This dynamic affected good part of Vichy social policy, as for industrial injuries and unemployment, fields where traditionally the French social protection relied on assistance measures rather than contributory insurances.⁵³² As seen, the regime did not reform the industrial injuries insurance, as the regime had rather to combine cash benefits with daily priorities and advantages.⁵³³ War brought about the major innovations; for the industrial injuries due to war events, the government set up special compulsory funds, which were effectively flat-rate, paid by the State and the employers through a National Fund of Solidarity for the wartime risks.⁵³⁴ More complicated was the situation in the areas under German administration. For the French workers applied the German legislation (as in Alsace and Lorraine, or for the French labour in Germany), agreement between France and Germany (as for the Occupied Territory), or even specific contracts (as for the Todt organization). The government tried – without success – to overcome the resistance of the private assurances for more uniformity and centralization of the industrial insurances for the workers in France, while the workers in Germany fell into the German social legislation.

The absence of compulsory insurances against unemployment in France led to specific approaches to this risk. The regime improved the previous setting which lapped the public assistance, as a national public agency provided the funding to the local authorities. The government addressed unemployment policy in function of the current conditions, and relying on public works and coercive measures to meet the needs of the occupants and tried to increase productivity. In 1940, the regime tackled the rise of unemployment after the military defeat (more than 1 million units, mostly in the Occupied Zone) monitoring

⁵³² D. Renard, «Assistance et assurance dans la constitution du système de protection sociale française», *Genèses*, n.1/1995, pp. 30-46.

⁵³³ «Loi du 15 février 1942 Créant une carte de priorité en faveur de certains invalides du travail», *JO*, 5 mars 1942.

⁵³⁴ Y. Le Gall, «Les accidents du travail», in Philippe-Jean Hesse, Jean-Pierre LeCrom, *La protection sociale sous le régime de Vichy*, pp. 121-162, see pp. 131-132.

the labour market: public works, banning of multiple jobs, regulation of female labour, and unification under the same authority of job placements and unemployment agencies.⁵³⁵ This latter was particularly important as reformed the mechanisms of unemployment provisions; the former local and central authorities were replaced by State-managed local bodies, in charge of benefits and allocation of manpower, later called *Services régionaux et départementaux de la main-d'oeuvre* (Regional and departmental services for the manpower).⁵³⁶ The enjoyment of the benefits was conditional to the acceptance of the job. Overall, these measures constituted an important and coherent piece of legislation; altogether, they became laws on 11th October 1940, probably scheduled to connect with one of the major Pétain's speeches, where he solemnly proclaimed that:

«All the Frenchmen have the same right to work. One can imagine that, in order to ensure the exercise of this right and the sanction of this duty, a deep revolution is needed in all our outdate industrial vehicle. After a transitional period, during which the capital works have to be developed and spread above the territory, we will be able, in an organized economy, create sustainable industrial plants where

⁵³⁵ «Loi du 11 octobre 1940 Simplification des procédures d'expropriation pour l'exécution d'urgence des travaux destinés à lutter contre le chômage», *JO*, 25 octobre 1940; «Loi du 11 octobre 1940 relative à l'attribution de prêts aux collectivités pour le financement des travaux entrepris pour lutter contre le chômage», *JO*, 25 octobre 1940; «Décret du 11 octobre 1940 concernant les allocations de chômage», *JO*, 27 octobre 1940; «Loi du 11 octobre 1940 relative à l'interdiction du recrutement des femmes mariées dans l'administration», *JO*, 27 octobre 1940; «Loi du 11 octobre 1940 sur les cumuls d'emplois», *JO*, 27 octobre 1940.

⁵³⁶ «Loi du 11 octobre 1940 relative au placement des travailleurs et à l'aide aux travailleurs sans emploi», *JO*, 27 octobre 1940; «Loi du 11 octobre 1940 Institution des Offices de Travail pour l'utilisation des travailleurs sans emploi», *JO*, 27 octobre 1940; the departmental offices were established by the «Ordonnance du 3 juillet 1944 Organisation provisoire des Services départementaux et régionaux du travail et de la main d'oeuvre», *JO*, 30 aout 1944.

everybody will find his role and fair salaries according to his skills.»⁵³⁷

Vichy primarily intervened on the labour market and the local reallocation of manpower, rather than compulsory schemes. Unemployment concerned mainly the Occupied Territories, but the *Commissariat à la lutte contre le chômage* (Committee on unemployment), advocated by Belin and directed by the former *non conformiste* Henri Maux, operated since 1941 over the whole country. The Committee adopted two different approaches, functional to the different places in the German war economy; in the North, under the supervision of Leihdeux, they relied on public works and infrastructures, while in the South operated a wide programme of re-training unskilled workers on the territory.⁵³⁸ By the end of 1943, this Committee merged with the *Commissariat à la main-d'oeuvre française en Allemagne* (Commission on the French manpower in Germany), with the STO, and with the Direction of the manpower.⁵³⁹ The establishment of a national authority in charge of the French manpower, at home and in Germany, accompanied the progressive integration of the French industries in the German area and the strengthening of State *dirigisme* after 1942.⁵⁴⁰ The measures for the reallocation of the manpower in Germany, such as the job re-training for unskilled labour and the social assistance for French workers, resulted from bilateral agreements.⁵⁴¹ These policies

⁵³⁷P. Pétain, *Discours radiodiffusé de Pétain du 11 Octobre 1940 : l'Ordre Nouveau*, p.1. URL : <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/cel-01493582/document>.

⁵³⁸ M.-A. Maux-Robert, «Le Commissariat à la lutte contre le chômage», *Guerres Mondiales et conflits contemporains*, n.2/2002, pp. 121-146.

⁵³⁹ «Loi du 16 novembre 1943 Renforcement des pouvoirs du Commissariat chargé de la répartition de la main d'œuvre et rattachement au Secrétariat d'Etat au Travail», *JO*, 17 novembre 1943.

⁵⁴⁰ This was the case with the *Commissariat Interministériel à la main-d'oeuvre* (Interdepartmental Commission on the manpower), which was the correspondent of the CEI for the labour affairs. See «Loi du 18 août 1943 Création d'un Commissariat Général Interministériel chargé temporairement de la répartition e de l'affectation de la main d'oeuvre», *JO*, 20 août 1943.

⁵⁴¹ «Loi du 6 février 1943 Création du Commissariat Général à la main-d'œuvre française en Allemagne», *JO*, 7 février 1943 ; «Loi du 1 janvier 1944 Création du Commissariat

contributed to mitigate unemployment, which was however absorbed with the integration of the French industries in the German “total war”. The regime tried to give coherence to its action against unemployment, using local structures (which had also a role in monitoring the population), and central authorities, which elaborated national planning policies.

Between 1940 and 1942, without abandoning the idea of a global reform, the MIP proposed projects on specific target-areas:⁵⁴² old-age pensions, family allowances, paid leave, and *allocations de salaire unique*. The public pensions for lower income workers and old-age unemployed originally concerned all unemployed and insured aged 60 or plus, and over 70 y.o. non-insured. The cost of the reform varied according to the number of workers involved in the plan and to the contingency of the economic recovery; in the first ten years it was expected to range between 1,5 and 2 milliards, which required the financing of the scheme through the contributed capital of the fund, and the shift to the repartition.⁵⁴³ The project aimed at «first and foremost fighting unemployment and at completing the trilogy of the projects that were drafted at the same regard (allocation of the unemployed – female labour – accumulation of jobs).»⁵⁴⁴ In subsequent drafting, this goal progressively watered down, encouraging the skilled workers over 60 y.o. to keep working. This signalled the shift in the aims of the reform, which came to tend to genuinely guarantee the means of subsistence for lower incomes.⁵⁴⁵

Général à l'action sociale pour les français travaillant en Allemagne, rattaché au Secrétariat d'Etat au Travail», *JO*, 12 janvier 1944.

⁵⁴² 33/3-4, 17/5 «Note d'observation de la CDC, Projet de loi sur la Retraite des Vieux Travailleurs. 9 novembre 1940», p. 4.

⁵⁴³ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/5 «Ministère de la Production Industrielle et du Travail. Cout de la réforme de la législation sur les Assurances Sociales concernant la retraite des Vieux Travailleurs. 4 novembre 1940».

⁵⁴⁴ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/5 «Ministère de la Production Industrielle et du Travail. Note sur l'extension du nombre des bénéficiaires de la réforme des assurances sociales. 4 novembre 1940», p.2.

⁵⁴⁵ See the different projets and notes in CDC, 33/3-4, 17/5 «Projets de textes successifs relatifs à l'allocation aux vieux travailleurs salariés »

Such reform was a matter of dispute for long time during the IIIrd Republic; Pétain could with good reason state that his government “keep its promises, also those of the others”. This piece of legislation took up previous haphazard measures of social solidarity towards on old-age pensions, whose reorganization was made necessary by current needs. The 1928-30 reform of the social insurances did not originally include complementary public pensions for lower incomes, who often fell into the public assistance. In the 1930s complementary insurances were proposed via the *Fonds de Majoration et Solidarité*, charged of the management of the social insurances.⁵⁴⁶ Right before the outbreak of the war, different proposals by mutualist organizations and by the Parliament recommended to integrate the contributory pensions with compulsory insurances, or to combine new compulsory pension insurances for wage earners and self-employed with benefits in kind and assistance measures.⁵⁴⁷ The 1941 reform of the *Allocation aux Vieux Travailleurs Salariés* (AVTS, Old-age pensions) took up from the pre-Vichy era: it dealt with solidarity quests, with the ageing population, with the composition of the labour market, and with the financial mechanism of the social protection. These four aspects of the reform were in fact interrelated, as the social pensions were submitted to demographic and economic trends that might affect their financial sustainability. In addition, the different sectors of the social protection were now more systematically tied, as the social insurances grew in importance:

«What is the future of the Social Insurances? It will be related to the demographic situation. We assume that the pension beneficiaries will increase as the contributors will decrease. [...] But there is an important point, that is, the absolute (if not relative) increase in the number of number of old people.

⁵⁴⁶ See the notes and reports by the Ministry of Labour and by the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations* in CDC, L.19/5: *Retraite des Vieux Travailleurs*, *Projet de Loi 1930*.

⁵⁴⁷ CDC, 31/2, 17/1, «Projet de retraite des Vieux Travailleurs par la Mutualité, 15 juin 1939»; CDC, 31/2, 17/1, «Rapport fait au nom de la Commission de l'hygiène, de l'assistance, de l'assurance et de la prévoyance sociale par M. Le Gorgeu. N. 447. Procès-verbal de la séance du 15 juin 1939».

The Government pursues, at once, a family policy which will undoubtedly allow to increase the birth-rate, and later of the workers, and other social and health policies to eliminate diseases: [...] The sickness benefits it would be futile to develop the sickness insurance is now coordinated, it is no longer limited to ensure relief in case of interruption of work, but it is also preventive. [...] it would be futile to develop sickness benefits, to try to eliminate diseases, to tend to provide a better old-age for workers if we do not provide, on the other side, the possibilities to enjoy their retirement at its fullest.»⁵⁴⁸

With the AVTS, the French system shifted from the capitalisation of the funds to the repartition of the contributions. Unlike Britain, the French reform of the old-age pensions was not achieved in the framework of the global restructuring of social insurances, nor via the complete unification and centralization of the insurances, but through a different mechanism of financing. From the investments incomes, the workers could enjoy social benefits through the contributions of the gainfully employed. Different funding mechanisms had important political implications, which concerned also the British reforms.⁵⁴⁹ The capitalisation constituted the very framework of voluntary insurances, favouring private business and mutualism; this system implied the “moral self-education” and the “personal saving” of the insured. On the other side, it required monetary stability, while in 1941 the Franc lost 65% of its value in comparison to 1936, devouring wages, pensions and personal savings. Lower pensions became inadequate, also facing the shortages. The long-overdue shift to repartition, supported by Belin and his collaborators Francis Letter and Laroque, was meant to be a fairer measure, as partially secured

⁵⁴⁸ CDC, 30/4, 17/3, «G. Taillefer, Note pour le directeur général. S.d.», pp.4-5.

⁵⁴⁹ J. Harris, «Le cas de la Grande Bretagne», in AA.VV., *Un siècle de protection social en Europe. Colloque tenu au Sénat les 24, 25, 26 octobre 1996 à l'occasion du cinquantenaire de la Sécurité sociale*, Paris, Association pour l'étude de l'histoire de la sécurité sociale, 2001, pp. 19-26, p. 20-21.

pensions from inflation and centralized the management of the pensions to State authorities: «in a nutshell, the regime of repartition allows an highly sustainable and unified financial action, and the achievement of a thorough simplification that, from the administrative point of view as well as for the insured, will give to the law an applicative flexibility that was lacking in the old regime.»⁵⁵⁰ After seven drafts, the law on the AVTS resulted from a compromise: reduction of 1/3 of the beneficiaries, raising retirement age from 60 to 65 years, and increase of social contributions.⁵⁵¹ The reform concerned the workers over 65 y.o. regardless their affiliation to compulsory insurances, to separate funds, and even the non-insured, since the State contributed in the funding. These latter were eligible if they paid contributions for at least 5 years and if they have not adequate economic resources. The measure encompassed also disabled people and unemployed who fell into the social assistance.

The AVTS only concerned social pensions for salaried workers, but Belin tried to generalize the funding by repartition and to make the benefits available to all the workers. In accordance with the CDC, the MIP drafted a decree to suppress and centralize all the 115 departmental capitalisation funds in a single repartition fund.⁵⁵² The decree extended the repartition and the unification of the funds to all the insurances, but could not overcome the resistances of private business and the same government.⁵⁵³ Eventually, only the AVTS were financed via repartition. In 1942, the MIP tried to include also the non-salaried and self-employed within the AVTS. However, the Ministry of Finances opposed its financial burden and the difficulties to move

⁵⁵⁰ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/5« Le Directeur Général de la Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations à Monsieur le Ministre, Secrétaire d'Etat, à l'Economie Nationale et aux Finances. 12 avril 1941 », p.2. Similar evaluations in CDC, 33/3-4, 17/5«Note. 12 avril 1941».

⁵⁵¹ CDC, 33/3-4, 17/5 « Note d'observation de la CDC. Projet de loi sur la retraite des vieux travailleurs. 26 février 1941 ».

⁵⁵² CDC, 33/3-4, 17/5« Le Secrétaire Général de la Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations à Monsieur le Ministre Secrétaire d'Etat à l'Economie Nationale et aux Finances. 29 mai 1941 », see also the draft of legislation attached « Projet de Décret ».

⁵⁵³ J.-P. Hesse, «Les assurances sociales», pp. 66-69.

towards a fully “universalistic” system of old-age pensions.⁵⁵⁴ The AVTS was not the forerunner of post-war social security. It was limited to the old-age pensions and it was due to emergency circumstances rather than a thorough plan of global reform, even if it came directly from the 1940 draft project on the social insurances. It was expected to favour the early retirement of 1,5 million of farm and industrial workers of which only 1/3 actually paid the due contributions. These low incomes competed with younger workers for job places and assistance services.

In the subsidiary, it fulfilled the propaganda aims of the regime, and, as recognised in governmental reports, «the law of 14th mars 1941, which institutes the old-age pensions, has the features of the social assistance to the greatest extent as the benefits are granted to beneficiaries who never joined the general compulsory schemes.»⁵⁵⁵ The AVTS had the recurrent features of Vichy’s social legislation; it combined emergency measures and longer-term issues of the French social protection, it lied somewhere between social protection and public assistance, and it tackled the social reforms in piecemeal approach.

3.2.3. *Family and healthcare policies: traditionalism and modernization*

Four goals moved the action of the regime in the health, family and assistance policy: dealing with the emergency, achieving progressive administrative centralization, strengthening the regime’s consensus, and establishing some ideological guidelines. The social assistance had a particular place in the regime propaganda. France experienced food and goods’ shortages, and the difficult recovery from war’s material aftermaths. An efficient assistance safety net was crucial for the regime.

The circumstances of the occupation had a key role in some sectors of the assistance and health. The German invasion caused in

⁵⁵⁴ See the drafts of the report and the view of the Finance in CDC, 33/3, 17/1, «Projet d’extension de la loi sur le vieux travailleurs à d’autres catégories de salaires. Projet écarté par les Finances – Novembre 1942».

⁵⁵⁵ CDC, 30/4, 17/4, «Note sur le déficit des Assurances Sociales. 23 avril 1943», p. 4.

May and June 1940 the displacement of nearly 8 million people in total, mainly French citizens, including 2 million Parisians, and refugees from Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The internally displaced people moved from the North to the South, with many organisational problems for public structures already overstretched by the war. In June 1940, subsequent waves of civilians crossed the country to reach the rural departments and the big cities of the South-West, while nearly 2 million soldiers were captured and transferred to Germany.⁵⁵⁶ The major concern of the regime in 1940-1 was nevertheless the rise of unemployment. As seen, it underpinned Belin's reform drafts and the AVTS; but unemployment affected also the family and healthcare actions. The stopping production of the army industry caused the rise of unemployment to 1 million in the North in few weeks. They were 2 million in all the country; as there was no compulsory scheme against unemployment, they usually fell into assistance programmes. As for the records of the departmental funds, the defeat caused organisational upheaval in the health structures. Besides the damages to the hospital facilities, the civilian and military medical staff was decimated. The health structures lacked of the staff facing the emergency, as only 5.000 general practitioners were available in 1940 out of the 20.000 in 1939.

The administrative split did not ease the task of regaining control of the situation. The regime had to deploy quickly a set of emergency policies. These were not merely limited to sudden short-term initiatives, but had wider-ranging goals. For the relief to the internally displaced people, the poor families, the needy, and the sick or injured persons were strengthened both the assistance and social insurances. In favour of war victims, dislocated, people affected by war disasters, kids of bombed cities, the State granted subsidies for the accommodation and utilities, foods and supplies, or cash benefits calibrated in function of the dependants of the recipients. These allocations were conditional to controls on the "social behaviour" or to the acceptance of the job proposed. The provisions were progressively

⁵⁵⁶ D. Veillon, *Vivre et survivre en France (1939-1947)*, Paris, Aubier, 1980, pp. 43-100 ; J. Vidalenc, *L'Exode*, Paris, PUF, 1957.

enlarged for the benefits and categories, but, in many cases, they were temporary benefits granted for six months.⁵⁵⁷

The regime intervened more vigorously in the reorganization of the humanitarianism, exploiting the pre-existing organizations for the propaganda, relating social assistance to the consensus. Vichy encouraged the creation of different humanitarian organizations, whose the most important were the *Secours National*, direct expression of the official doctrine, and the *Croix Rouge Française*. Both were integrated in the regime, and worked alongside other associations close to the French far-right, as for the associations of the *Croix-de-Feu* or the *Comité ouvrier de secours immediate*. The regime could never completely control these organizations, but set in motion the “nationalization” of assistance reliefs, which previously was rather matter of local authorities or philanthropic private charity. The regime never institutionalized “State humanitarian aid”, but infiltrated in their structures and administrations, mainly composed by public officers. The intermingling between private and public structures widened the tasks of social assistance and politicized their action, as they became the vectors of the social doctrine of the regime.⁵⁵⁸ The social action served to tie assistance relief and benefits up with consensus and loyalty to the regime.

Family and healthcare policies were also buckled to ideological goals. The regime favoured birth-rates and promote the family as one of the three cornerstones of the *Révolution Nationale*, as «the new regime politicize the familial by making of this question the embodiment of its own social and political philosophy, at the same time organicist and corporatist, anti-republican and pre-revolutionary.»⁵⁵⁹ Vichy wanted to recast the communitarian moral values that it considered destroyed by the III Republic, creating a new moral order through a precise family model. Concretely, also in this policy area the regime resumed the tools

⁵⁵⁷ J.-P. Le Crom, «L’assistance publique», in Philippe-Jean Hesse, Jean-Pierre LeCrom, *La protection sociale sous le régime de Vichy*, pp. 166-169.

⁵⁵⁸ Id., *Au secours Maréchal ! L’instrumentalisation de l’humanitaire (1940-1944)*, Paris, PUF, 2013.

⁵⁵⁹ C. Capuano, *Vichy et la Famille. Réalités et faux-semblants d’une politique publique*, Rennes, Presse Universitaire de Rennes, 2009, p. 39.

of the Republican regime.⁵⁶⁰ Vichy combined family allowances with complementary assistance and even criminal-law measures, such as the death penalty against the abortion, which was now considered «a crime against the society, the race, the State».⁵⁶¹ The regime put in place at once birth-rate and moralistic family policy, both concerns that crossed the familyist and natalist movements in the interwar France.⁵⁶² Family policy was conceived as an autonomous policy area: «*Vichy privileged the family approach to social policy*. Vichy, that is, mainly the pétainistes and the Catholics (especially the social Catholics), the theorists of the National Revolution that considered “The Family” the political subject par excellence, the only possible field for politics between 1940 and 1942.»⁵⁶³ Altogether, it followed four guidelines: the benefits for the family were increasingly unrelated to contributions and to the incomes and the work of the beneficiaries; the “national” (racial) basis of this policy (not so evident in other fields of the social insurances); the clear-cut gender division of labour; the attempt to calibrate the legislation in accordance with the extraordinary conditions of the years 1940-4.

The government passed legislation on the family allowances between 1940 and 1943.⁵⁶⁴ No coherent and unitary projects lied behind this legislation, but the regime had to regularize the legislation in accordance with special conditions, as for the measures enacted to contrast unemployment, which required the reallocation of male

⁵⁶⁰ M. Bordeaux, *La victoire de la famille dans la France défaite : Vichy 1940-1944*, Paris, Flammarion, 2002.

⁵⁶¹ « Loi du 15 février 1942 relative au durcissement de la répression de l’avortement », *JO*, 7 mars 1942.

⁵⁶² P.-A. Rosental, « Politique familiale et natalité en France : un siècle de mutations d’une question sociétale », *Santé, Société, et Solidarité*, n. 2/2010, pp. 17-25.

⁵⁶³ M. Bordeaux, « Le soutien économique aux familles : entre séduction et contrainte », in Philippe-Jean Hesse, Jean-Pierre LeCrom, *La protection sociale sous le régime de Vichy*, pp. 85-120, p. 86.

⁵⁶⁴ The most important laws and provisions on the family allowances are reported in *Allocations familiales. Abrégé de la législation concernant les Caisses de Compensation*, Paris, Edition Sociale Française, 1942.

workers.⁵⁶⁵ The recalculation of the allowance rates according to the workplace instead of the place of residence was no stranger to the need to provide «an incentive to relieve congestion from the big cities, and to return to the agricultural life.»⁵⁶⁶ Family allowances were thus granted also disabled, injured, unemployed, prisoners and the French workers in the German firms, and it was also proposed to index family allowances to the current average wages. All these provisions, being no longer contributory-related, required an extra burden by the State.⁵⁶⁷ The government got over financial constraints, unlike for social insurances, as family allowances served to strengthen social fabric in exceptionally harsh times: «if they [*the family allowances* *nda*] do not ensure the subsistence of the children and of the woman, these latter are compelled to work and to leave alone the children, or else the breadwinner is bound, to support his family, to withdraw a consistent part of his minimum vital income, which in turn becomes too low to provide to his essential needs, food, accommodation, clothing, and else.»⁵⁶⁸

In 1941, the *Allocation de Salaire Unique* (ASU, allowance for single earnings) was a complementary benefit granted by the State to the young couples until the second year of marriage, where only one

⁵⁶⁵ AN, F/22/1510, «Ministère de la Production Industrielle et du Travail. Circulaire aux Messieurs les Directeurs des Caisses de Compensation d'allocations familiales. 18 janvier 1941».

⁵⁶⁶ BDIC, Q pièce 4.995, «Comité d'études pour la France. Complément à l'étude n.9. Amélioration du régime des allocations familiales. 10 septembre 1941», p.1.

⁵⁶⁷ AN, F/22/1510, «Secrétariat d'Etat au Travail. Circulaire à Mm. les Présidents des Conseils d'Administration des Caisses de Compensation et des Services Particuliers d'Allocations familiales. 11 avril 1941» ; AN, F/22/1510, «Secrétariat d'Etat au Travail. Circulaire à Mm. les Inspecteurs Divisionnaires du Travail et de la Main d'œuvre. 16 avril 1941» ; AN, F/22/1510, «Secrétariat d'Etat au Travail. Circulaire à Mm. les Présidents des Conseils d'Administration des Caisses de Compensation d'Allocations familiales. 29 mai 1941».

⁵⁶⁸ AN, F/22/1511, «Secrétariat d'Etat au Travail. Les salaires moyens départementaux redeviennent inexacts au lendemain de leur révision. 13 janvier 1942», p.8. See also the draft projects for the increase of the benefits, AN, F/22/1511, «Secrétariat d'Etat au Travail. Projet proportionnant les allocations familiales professionnelles des travailleurs salariés à leur traitement ou salaire. 29 décembre 1941».

earned salary.⁵⁶⁹ The ASU took over the previous benefits for the housewives, but additionally granted progressive benefits related to the number of children, with a bonus of 5% for each legitimate son.⁵⁷⁰ As for the nuptial grants in Fascist Italy, this measure was expected to change family behaviours, encourage birth-rates and retain women at home. Benefits and recipients of family allowances and other grants for natality were generally increased according to each specific situation.⁵⁷¹ In this field, the regime could effectively carry out its ideological assumptions, shifting the focus of the allocations from individuals to families as “social communities”.

The projects for family wages for the public servants were grounded on demographic statistic and changed according to the number of children in charge of the breadwinner: «the regulation establishes deduction of the provisions for the public servants that should have, given their age, numerous children and that have less than 2, and provides increases for those that have three or more.»⁵⁷² The public servants aged more than 35 with 1 or 2 children had their wages cut respectively of 15% and 5%, while those who had more than 3 could enjoy an increase of 15% and 10% more for any child over the third; only the legitimate sons were taken into account for establishing the provision. This project tried to change the parameters of remuneration of work; from the individual salary it regulated salaries according to the “family unit”. The wages were no longer due and determined by the work, but by the “social function” and obligations that the citizens had before the Nation; to some similar trends was moving in those years also the Italian family legislation. Besides the family wages for

⁵⁶⁹ « Loi du 29 mars 1941 Création de l'allocation de salaire unique », *JO*, 11 avril 1941. See also J. Martin, «Politique familiale et travail des femmes mariées en France : perspective historiques 1942-1982», *Population*, n.6/1998, pp. 1119-1153.

⁵⁷⁰ AN, F/22/1510, «Secrétariat d'Etat au Travail. Circulaire à Mm. les Présidents des Conseils d'Administration des Caisses de Compensation d'Allocations familiales. 30 mai 1941», p.5.

⁵⁷¹ « L'allocation de salaire unique », *Les documents français*, n.6/1941, p.8.

⁵⁷² AN, F/22/1511, «F. Bouverat, Ancien Vice-Président du Conseil Supérieur de la Natalité à Monsieur le Secrétaire d'Etat. Statut des fonctionnaires, projet de modification concernant le titre 4 (rémunération du travail). 1 décembre 1941», p.1.

the public servants, the regime improved from previous legislation other collateral social provisions: bonus at first birth, aid for the accommodation, nursing mother's allowances, health provisions for mothers and for the early childhood, coordination of the special insurances for mothers and children with the compulsory social insurances for old-age and survivors' pensions, subsidies for basic necessities or clothes, incentives for the families that set up in rural areas.⁵⁷³ All these measures were granted to the legitimate sons, whether the parents were insured or not.

The projects for the family social policy of the regime were oriented towards the discrimination of unmarried and other "non-canonical" situations (e.g. the childless widows), who had to support increasing fiscal burden for the promotion of the traditional family communities. The national "social solidarity" resulted in the transfer of incomes from the "unproductive" and infertile elements of the society to the fruitful groups, the traditional French families. This mind-set was pushed over paroxysm by the familyist supporters, but was deep-seated in the mentality of that time.⁵⁷⁴ The social division considered task of men to work and provide the economic support to the families, while women had the national social function to raise children (and as many children as possible), and educate them to the traditional values that the *Révolution Nationale* wanted to inculcate. In a different ideological framework, similar goals were shared even in some Resistance milieus. For instance, in the departmental reports transmitted to the *Conseil National de la Résistance* (CNR, the National Council of the Resistance) in 1947, for the reform of the French social security. Frequently, these reports remarked that the role of family

⁵⁷³ An overview of the main family social provisions in Délégation Régionale à la Famille, *Guide des œuvres et des institutions sociales et familiales*, Lyon, 1942 ; « Loi du 30 mai 1941 sur le pécule de retour à la terre », *JO*, 31 mai 1941.

⁵⁷⁴ P. Guignabaudet, *Lois de l'économie nouvelle. Doctrine du capitalisme sociale*, Paris, Plon, 1942.

allowances was to allow women to return at home, and play their educational role of the children.⁵⁷⁵

Health policy addressed urgent needs, rather than political commitment to far-sighted social reforms. Although not as coordinated and comprehensive as the British one, the regime tried nonetheless to create national organisms dealing with preventive medicine and occupational health. The departments of the MIP and the Ministry of Health coordinated their actions to enforce safety at work. In 1941, the government passed three distinguished laws, which overall compelled the enterprises to guarantee safety measures and extended the central control on this matter; in every enterprise, the *Comités de Sécurité et Hygiène* monitored the working conditions and trained workers to prevent occupational risks, while a new central office coordinated the labour inspectors, under the administrative control of the central *Direction du Travail*.⁵⁷⁶

In the same year, the reform of hospitals was, in hindsight, one of the first moves towards the nationalisation and extension of the service. The law opened-up the right to access to medical treatment to all the population whether insured or not, and established three different daily tariffs for the hospitalization.⁵⁷⁷ The laws of 21st December 1941 and the decree of 17th April 1943 enabled administrative changes that were retained after the war.⁵⁷⁸ The law concerned the

⁵⁷⁵ CHS, 89/3-CNR-2C2-38, « Orne, Rapport de la Commission du Progrès Social »; CHS, 88/3-CNR-2C2-13, « Corrèze, Progrès Social »; CHS, 88/3-CNR-2C2-16, « Drôme »; CHS, 89/3-CNR-2C2-39, « Pas de Calais, Progrès Social ».

⁵⁷⁶ «Loi du 4 aout 1941 Comités d'hygiène et de sécurité», *JO*, 10 aout 1941; «Loi du 31 octobre 1941 portant sur la réorganisation de l'inspection du travail et de la main d'oeuvre», *JO*, 19 novembre 1941; «Loi du 31 octobre 1941 relative à la protection médicale du travail», *JO*, 20 novembre 1941.

⁵⁷⁷ Previously, the public hospitals were some sort of workhouses for the poor, the indigents and the insured from industrial injuries. For an history of the hospitals in France, see J.-P. Domin, *Une histoire économique de l'hôpital, XIXe-XXe siècles. Vol. I (1803-1945)*, Paris, Association pour l'étude de l'histoire de la sécurité sociale, 2008.

⁵⁷⁸ «Loi du 21 décembre 1941 portant sur la réorganisation des hôpitaux et des hospices civils», *JO*, 30 décembre 1941; «Décret du 17 avril 1943 portant règlement d'administration publique pour l'application de la loi du 21 décembre 1941 relative aux hôpitaux et hospices publics», *JO*, 27 avril 1943.

departmental organisation of the hospitals, leading to their greater centralisation and nationalisation. The whole of the hospitals (excluding psychiatric hospitals) were placed under the control of the *Commission du plan de l'organisation hospitalière* (Committee for the planning of the hospitals), a governmental authority that had uniformed payloads, obligations and services. The heads of the hospital became public officers appointed by the prefects, and no longer by local authorities, passing from assistance measures to contrast pauperism to more articulated national public policies. This first major reform of public health did not have the same scope of the coeval projects for the NHS in Britain; while these latter built from the scratch a completely free and national health service, Vichy enacted administrative reforms to coordinate the system. Moreover, while the British NHS was free and available as right to health for all the citizens, the French hospitals were opened to all the citizens who, except for the poor and the insured, could afford it. Yet, these reforms were a turn in the approach to public health, which departed from the residual approach of the IIIrd Republic and marked the progressive penetration of the State in the health sector. In the opening-up to all the paying citizens, the hospitals shifted from to the assistance mind-set to the prevention and the medical treatment.

However, the mutualist setting linked to social insurances persisted; the most important national organism in charge of the social and health action was the *Institut National d'action sanitaire des Assurances Sociales* (INASAS, National Institute of the Social Insurances for the Health Action). Funded by the social insurances, it planned on national basis the public health both with preventive and informative campaigns, and with the training of doctors, nursery and social workers. The INASAS coped with the plethora of figures related to social assistance, still close to private philanthropy and self-relief, with a limited intervention of public assistance organisms. Its action dwelt at the crossroad of public health policies, work-related matter (it had also some tasks in coordinating the works of the labour inspectors),

assistance policy and the social insurances.⁵⁷⁹ The INASAS had some embryonic elements of “universalism”, as the possible transition from the healthcare for the insured to a wider audience of recipients was debated.⁵⁸⁰

In the report that introduce the draft legislation, the goals were more limited; coordinating the action of the local funds, modernizing the healthcare services, especially with reference to the tuberculosis. For doing so, the INASAS «is provided with important resources, but to take into account the origin and the mandatory social purposes of these funds, its functioning is under the strict control of the Public Powers.»⁵⁸¹ The INASAS was closer to the ongoing proposals of coordination of the mutual sickness funds in Italy, rather than the British NHS, being also expressly directed against the work-related diseases and those affecting the lower strata of the population. Yet, even this limited solution faced political resistances. The notes delivered to the Cabinet of Pétain were critical to the INASAS; it was perceived contradictory with regard to the corporative order, as it:

«Highlights a class distinction in the realm of the healthcare, by creating a high authority in charge of supervising the health only of the salaried workers, in the same moment when all the efforts are oriented towards the union, if not the fusion of all the classes [...]. Considered on the plan of the coordination of the social insurances, the project questions the principles of the doctrine of the Marshal Pétain. In fact: a) it “nationalizes” even more some institutions which were already regarded as already too much controlled by the State, and which the professions claim as their own sphere of action. b) it opposes to the corporative organization, since it takes one of its more important functions and since it gives a

⁵⁷⁹ AN, 2/AG/499/C.C.80, «Projet de loi portant création d'un Institut National d'Action Sanitaire des Assurances Sociales, 31 Octobre 1941».

⁵⁸⁰ AN, 2/AG/499/C.C.80, «Lettre du Maître des Requêtes au Conseil d'État, Chef du Cabinet Civil au Directeur des Assurances Sociales, 14 Novembre 1941».

⁵⁸¹ AN, 2/AG/499/C.C.80, «Rapport de René Belin à la loi portant création d'un Institut National d'Action Sanitaire des Assurances Sociales, 31 Octobre 1941», p.3.

class-related meaning to an institution which, as for everything that is related to the work, should have a corporative feature.»⁵⁸²

Also this project was subjected to the cross-fire between the opposing visions of the Secretary of Labour and other departments. The circles closer to Pétain accused Belin to be a “socializer”, whose aims were to increase the role of the State in the management of social policy which were previously matter of the professional funds: «on the one side, co-joint management of social policy by the different professional actors: employers, employees and workers, on the other the pro-socialist tendency to control at a national level the most important insurances, by excluding the insured, purveyors of the funds, from the management of them, and at the expense of the creation of other functionaries.»⁵⁸³ The same division undermined not only the attempts to the reform the social insurances, but the Labour Charter in itself. The draft project on the INASAS, however, showed that policy-makers pressed forward the coordination of sickness benefits under the supervision of the State, in line with the coeval Italian proposals. The British case differed consistently in its scope, but rested on the same need to provide a State service. In the same years, important European countries were developing projects and debates on public, universal, healthcare policy.

3.3. Corporatism and the myth of the social collaboration

3.3.1. The Labour Charter

The regime linked the social insurance reforms to the launch of the corporative system, considered the major measure of social policy. This aim was firstly pursued by Belin and his entourage. They probably found in the new regime the opportunity to implement the ideas that

⁵⁸² AN, 2/AG/499/C.C.80, «Projet de loi sur l'Institut National d'action sanitaire des assurances sociales, s.d.», p.1.

⁵⁸³ AN, 2/AG/499/C.C.80, «Note de R. Perrin pour Monsieur le Maréchal, 19 Novembre 1941», p.1.

flourished in the Thirties simultaneously to the crisis of liberalism.⁵⁸⁴ The two branches of Vichy social policy, in reality, followed two completely different trajectories to achieve similar goals: for the social insurances, via the strengthening of the State in contrast to organized interests; for corporatism, through the devolution of labour organization to the different industrial branches.

The draft legislation of October 1940 wanted to introduce «a complete, ordered, coherent text on the professional organisation.»⁵⁸⁵ The draft was split in three parts: the establishment of the professional branches; the socio-economic reorganization according to corporations; the industrial relations in the professional groups. Each corporation had two national federations that represented employers and salaried workers. The corporations had regulatory tasks in economic and social matters, through the establishments of the *Comité Economique* (Economic Commission) and the *Comité Social* (Social Commission). This latter was in charge of collective agreements, working conditions and other «social matters.»⁵⁸⁶ The previous institutions of the labour jurisdiction were adapted to the new joint corporative structures. The preliminary drafts focused on suppression of the free trade unions in favour of the representation per industrial families, to become a-political and compulsory intermediate structures; the regulation of the trade unions and the settlement of class struggle towards social collaboration was the key issue for Vichy's reformers. In the preparatory studies of the Labour Charter, the major reference from abroad was Salazar's Portugal, even more than Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany.⁵⁸⁷ The original project passed through inter-departmental counterproposals, the scrutiny of German authorities, the faint-heartedness of the employers' associations, the indifference of the

⁵⁸⁴ J.P. Le Crom, «Les syndicalismes et la crise du libéralisme (1930-1950). Entre planisme, corporatisme et liberté», 1996. URL : <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00190984/document>.

⁵⁸⁵ AN, F/22/1774, «Note sur la Charte de l'Organisation Professionnelle. 28 décembre 1940», p.1.

⁵⁸⁶ Ivi. p.4.

⁵⁸⁷ For the documentation on the preparatory works of the Labour Charters, see AN, F/22/1774.

workers, the indecisions of Pétain, the astonishment of the administrative offices.⁵⁸⁸

One year later, on 4th October 1941, the law on the *Organisation sociale des professions* saw the light.⁵⁸⁹ The text provided the juridical framework of the collaboration of productive categories. The preamble specified that the trade corporations determined the regulation of the wages, the profit-sharing, the obligations of all the members of the enterprises, and the *comités mixtes sociaux*, which gathered workers and employers and were defined the «cornerstone of the Charter.»⁵⁹⁰ The Labour Charter was part of an incremental legislation to strengthen the bond of solidarity and the social collaboration: «the social peace is the supreme aim.»⁵⁹¹ The law fixed the obligations of the members of the enterprises in the respective professional families, as for the banning of strikes and lock out.

The collaboration took place in the Social Committees, organised at the local, regional and national level. The Social Committees of the enterprises did not have tasks of management of the industry (which was rather matter of the national Committees), but had voice in all the issues involving the functioning of the enterprise, as well as the social activities, self-help and organizations of the workers. More complex was the organization of the higher hierarchies of the Committees; at a regional level, they gathered between 12 and 24 representatives distributed among the employers, the workers and the other categories. The arrangements for their elections were hierarchical: the local Social Committees designated the regional Social Committees that elected the national Committees. At higher and intermediate levels, they were the effective regulative authorities for the collective agreements, the determination of wages, the vocational training, the rules for hire-and-fire, the health and safety at work. The Social Committees were the core of the social action of the Labour Charter;

⁵⁸⁸ J.-P Le Crom, *Syndicats, nous voilà ! Vichy et le corporatisme*, Paris, Les Editions de l'Atelier, 1995, pp. 121-157.

⁵⁸⁹ «Organisation sociale des professions. Loi du 4 octobre 1941», *JO*, 26 octobre 1941, n.390.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ivi.* p.1.

⁵⁹¹ *Ivi.* p.2.

unlike other social and economic policies – which increased the role of the State – these Committees represented the autonomous organization of the production, within the ideological guidelines set up by the State.⁵⁹² The Social Committees were expected to be the autonomous structures where the tripartite “communitarian solidarity” took place; through these organization within the enterprises, the regime wanted the “new man” to be created.⁵⁹³ The Social Committees, had also more concrete tasks of social policy:

«In the social and family order, the Social Committees study and put into practice all the measures to implement the duties of the corporation towards its members: the security of an employment through the systematic fight to unemployment and through the social provisions for the unemployed; The generalization and management of the insurances and pensions; the self-help and the assistance; the aid to the families, under the moral, material, and intellectual point of view; the improvement of the living standards: housing, gardens, sport, leisure, arts, general culture, etc. »⁵⁹⁴

The law overlapped State's functions; the deregulation of social insurances and unemployment benefits were conditional to further legislation and agreements between the corporations and the MIP.⁵⁹⁵ This did not clarify the apparent contradiction between the attempts to centralize the insurances with the new corporative organization. On the one side, the Labour Charter tried to deregulate labour and social legislation to the corporations, but, on the other, this solution would additionally fragment the French social protection in as many compulsory schemes as the existing corporative branches. In hindsight, both the 1940 draft reforms of the social insurances and the 1941

⁵⁹² M.A. Romieu, «La Charte commence dans l'entreprise», *Le Comité social d'entreprise*, n. 1/1942.

⁵⁹³ H. Toulouse, «L'esprit communautaire», *Le Comité social d'entreprise*, n.3a/1942.

⁵⁹⁴ Ivi. p. 4.

⁵⁹⁵ Ivi. art. 57, pp. 6-7.

Labour Charter were provisional projects. The MIP concocted them in a rush, under emergency situation; they had no a comprehensive idea of the society. In the Vichy regime, there was no consensus on some common guidelines that could lead social policy. The programme on the social insurances was – as for the Italian Labour Charter – a mere declaration of principles; the real focus rather concerned the union legislation and the new structures for managing the industrial life. As noticed at that time, the Labour Charter left unanswered the fundamental issues of the nature and tasks of the new category trade unions, or the extent of the State involvement in the matters attributed to the corporations (e.g. vocational training, labour legislation, social benefits).⁵⁹⁶

From April 1942 the Ministry of Industrial Production and Labour was split in two distinguished departments; Belin was replaced by Lagardelle at the Labour and by Bichelonne at the Industrial Production. By that time, social policy lost the simulacrum of unitary action that Belin painstakingly attempted to give; the dossier on corporatism passed under Lagardelle. The hand-over at the Labour Department (Lagardelle, Bichelonne, and finally Déat) increased uncertainty about the direction to undertake, while the Labour Charter became less relevant in public debate and policy-making. Lagardelle, in continuity with Belin, stood for the pre-eminence of the “trade unions corporatism”. Bichelonne tried to push forward, without success, a greater coordination from the centre of the CO with the Social Committees, which were slowing taking form in some enterprises. In his view, a coordination of the *economic* and the *social* corporative unities should have be driven by governmental central authorities.⁵⁹⁷ Under Déat – critical on the outcomes of the Charter – the implementation of the structures of the Charter did not make any progress.

⁵⁹⁶ P. Durand, J. Brèthe de la Gressaye, P. Voirin, *La Charte du Travail*, Paris, Librairie Sociale et Economique, 1942.

⁵⁹⁷ J. Bichelonne, *Discours de M. Jean Bichelonne, Ministre du Travail par interim, prononcé le 2 mars 1944 au Conseil Supérieur du Travail*, Paris, Extrait du Bulletin de la Charte du Travail, 1944.

There was since the very beginning no agreement on the kind of corporatism to put in place. The Labour Charter was rather due to the need to provide a legislative outcome to the ideological statements of the *Révolution Nationale*. It was, at the same time, characterized by a certain degree of improvisation, despite its long elaboration, and overlapped many other functions of the State, which were not reformed consequently, e.g. the social insurances. The Labour Charter remained substantially stranger to the workers, and lacked of consensus. The emergency conditions in which it was elaborated, the needs of the occupants and the many crop dues at the MIP did not allow policy-making continuity. The most important limit of the corporative bodies created by the Labour Charter was however the lack of an effective liaison with the structures of the CO, the only “true” corporatism put in place by the regime. Belin wanted to integrate the tripartite Social Committees, with specific social tasks (employment and manpower, wages, vocational training, safety at work, labour and health regulations) within the CO which advocated only to State and enterprises the industrial matters; in this sense, the Labour Charter did not achieve these goals. On the contrary, the CO, created outside the juridical framework of the Labour Charter, took over some of the social policies formally attributed to the Social Committees: workers’ canteens, leisure and recreational activities, assistance measures in favour of the workers’ families.⁵⁹⁸

The Labour Charter revived studies and debates on corporatism, provided a tool for the regime’s propaganda – which could fill with contents the proclamation of “social collaboration” – and some organizational heritage, as for the Social Committees themselves. They were the joint organisms where corporative activities were bargained, and where industrial conflict was settled. At the level of the individual enterprises, it concretely meant to organize the socialization among workers and the harmonization of the relationships with the chiefs of the enterprises, who however were firmly in control of this structure, e.g. for the choice of the workers’ representative. Moreover,

⁵⁹⁸ J.-P. Le Crom, «Comités d’organisations et comités sociaux ou l’introuvable interpenetration de l’économique et du social», pp.260-263.

while the Social Committees had regulatory and advisory tasks, the management of the policies (wage policy, hire-and-fire, family allowances and social insurances) were delegated to separate corporative agencies. The local Social Committees were coordinated by two central *Offices des Comités Sociaux* (Social Committees Offices), distinguished in the Occupied and Non-occupied France. They directed the «effective propaganda in favour of the Labour Charter and particularly to find out satisfactory solutions, for everyone, to the problems concerning the establishment and the functioning of Social Committees. [...] It is a tripartite centre [sic] of confrontation, coordination, and information.»⁵⁹⁹ The “social collaboration” channelled the industrial relationships towards bureaucratic settlement tending to favour the industrialists. Studies of the time already recognized how such setting was «the legal and compulsory tool of the methodical paternalism.»⁶⁰⁰ In the intentions of the promoters of the corporatism, the enterprise was indeed hierarchically defined:

«The enterprise is, on the one side, for its own nature, a hierarchical economic community, where, everyone in his own place, from the entrepreneur to the manpower, plays a bridging function. It turns out that is the chief of the enterprise, and under his command the other levels of the hierarchy, who organises the labour (production) and the distribution (retail) and who provides the fair remuneration of the work (wages and benefits of the members of the community), and this under the regulations established by the professions. The enterprise is also a moral community or a natural community of mutual self-help, where everybody, regardless his functions, has equal and mutual bonds of solidarity with the others. It turns out that are the representatives of the different functions within the enterprise who organise the self-help in all its forms and who

⁵⁹⁹ AN, F/22/1791, « Emile Girard. Office des Comités Sociaux. 15 mars 1942 », p.3.

⁶⁰⁰ H. Teitgen, « L'entreprise dans le régime de la Charte », *Collection Droit social*, janvier 1942, p.40, quoted in J.-P. Le Crom, *Syndicats, nous voilà ! Vichy et le corporatisme*, p. 157.

maintain among all a moral environment of true fraternity and social solidarity. These representatives of the diverse functions constitute the Social Committees.»⁶⁰¹

Nevertheless, these organisms passed through a process of democratisation and through forms of effective unionisation. As they were deprived of management functions, they strengthened their representative role, mainly the administration of the social works and activities within the enterprises. This role was retained in the passage from the regime to the PGFR. It is difficult to assess univocally the continuity between Vichy's corporatist structures and the post-war plans of the years; the historical context changed, and the institutional actors confronted on how to reorganize French economic life. The Social Committees were renamed *Comités d'entreprise* (Works Councils), which had major tasks in the social sphere of the industrial life, and advisory and informative functions for economic matters.⁶⁰² The PGFR retained this corporatist structure, but consistently democratized its mechanisms, as for the participation of the free trade unions in the Councils. Furthermore, the post-war Minister of Industrial Production had a certain continuity in the personnel and political guidelines; both Vichy's technocrats and the Minister of Industrial Production from 1946 to 1950, Robert Lacoste, came from the milieu of the *planistes* of the 1930s. In the very beginning, the "new" MIP retained the main functions advocated during Vichy. Driver of the national economic activities, it was expected to manage the allocation of the existing resources, conceive infrastructural plans and coordinate the professional trades.

After the war, the *Organisations Professionnelles* replaced the CO; the State-driven organization of the industries according to industrial branches was retained, but these bodies were emptied by Vichy's ideological agenda. The tasks that Lacoste expected to manage were taken by the *Commissariat Général au Plan* (CGP), led by Jean

⁶⁰¹ AN, F/22/1791, «Note des Comités Sociaux. De l'application de la Charte du Travail dans l'entreprise», p.2.

⁶⁰² J.-P. Le Crom, *Syndicats, nous voilà ! Vichy et le corporatisme*, pp. 376-385.

Monnet. Also the CGP had a precedent in the Vichy's DGEN, but it was autonomous and to some extent concurrent to the MIP.⁶⁰³ The CGP and the 1946 *Plan* derived from a slightly different ideology, that had lesser to do with the "ideological" *planisme* of the 1930s. It was oriented to face the junctural issues related to the recovery and the modernisation of French industry. It combined older and newer economic tools and a good deal of pragmatism, which owed to French previous experience and to the impulse from abroad, and notably from the American aid and "ideology" of productivity.⁶⁰⁴ The *Plan* marked a new step in the State's *dirigisme*, now accompanied by democratic and consultative institutions. Trade unions and other professional associations approved it, with some resistances in the CGT and mostly in the industrialist associations, and had a relevant role in CGP sub-committees.⁶⁰⁵

The whole corporatist narrative of the Vichy regime did not have consistent political and social legitimization, and the corporative structure of the CO was a State-driven measure of constraints, conceived to ease and manage the production in the context of the German war economy. The *Plan*, instead, transposed in the democratic institutions forms of "neo-corporatist" bargains on the wider economic directives (which did not necessarily imply full consensus on each detailed measure); this eventually contributed to its political success.

3.3.2. Corporatism(s) in Vichy France: hierarchy, community, and social collaboration

⁶⁰³ H. Rouso, «Le plan et les administrations économiques jusqu'en 1965 : l'expérience des hommes», in Id. (ed.), *De Monnet à Massé. Enjeux politiques et objectifs économiques dans le cadre des quatre premiers Plans (1946-1965)*, Paris, Editions du CNRS, 1986, pp. 15-40.

⁶⁰⁴ P. Mioche, «Aux Origines du Plan Monnet», *Revue Historique*, n.2/1981, pp. 405-438; Gérard Bossuat, *La France, l'aide américaine et la construction européenne : 1944-54. Vol. I*, Paris, Institut de la gestion publique et du développement économique. Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France, 1997, pp. 63-175; M.-L. Djelic, «Genèse et fondements du plan Monnet : l'inspiration américaine», *Revue française d'études américaines*, n.1/1996, pp. 77-86.

⁶⁰⁵ P. Mioche, «Le démarrage du Plan Monnet : comment une entreprise conjoncturelle est devenue une institutions prestigieuse», *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, n.3/1984, pp. 398-416, see pp. 411-416.

The socio-economic organisation of industry was the centre of the ideological discussion in the regime. The debate on corporatism is probably the most indicative of its “pluralism”, as defined by the political scientist Stanley Hoffmann.⁶⁰⁶ The corporatist doctrine brought together different strands.

Corporatism is commonly associated to reactionary doctrines, including the Catholics, the *Action Française*, the “traditionalist” French far right and single personalities like Maurice Bouvier-Ajam. This form of corporatism gathered also support from some milieu of the industrialists. They did not have neither revolutionary nor “totalitarian” aims; even if anti-liberal, it represented the ideological tool to crush the working-class organization, and reassert the primacy of the chiefs of the industries. Distrustful of the State, the “reactionary corporatists” translated the hierarchical view of the society into the industrial relations. Once the market was expropriated by its role in the determination of prices, production, wages, the State had merely regulative tasks, as the resurgence of the traditional intermediate bodies in economic life could regulate the field of the production.

A second trend gathered the “modernizers”, who to varying degrees referred to the experience of the French *non conformistes*. Mounier had an ambiguous stance on corporatism, but in the very first years of the regime showed interests for the projects concerning the corporatist order. For these intellectuals, the communitarian principles, the collaboration and the co-management of the enterprises, and the establishment of “organic” democracies were the most relevant features of the whole corporatism.⁶⁰⁷ Perroux was rather interest in the increase of productivity through the creation of mixed structures which also secured social rest. These positions focused on the technical tools to manage and coordinate economic and productive activities, and to

⁶⁰⁶ S. Hoffmann, « Aspects du Régime de Vichy », *Revue française de science politique*, n.1/1956, pp. 44-69.

⁶⁰⁷ B. Comte, « Emmanuel Mounier devant Vichy et la Révolution Nationale en 1940-41 : l'histoire réinterprétée », *Revue de l'histoire de l'Eglise de France*, n.187/1985, pp. 253-279 ; M. Bergès, *Vichy contre Mounier. Les non-conformistes face aux années 40*, Paris, Economica, 1997, see pp. 32-186. See also the revue directed by Mounier until 1941, *Esprit. Revue internationale*, Lyon, 1940-41.

overcome class conflict through forms of communitarian collaborations.⁶⁰⁸ These stances were clear in the aim to achieve social peace through collaboration, but lesser coherent when it came to the role of the State; they advocated the primacy of the corporations in determining the functioning of the national economy, but then they retained the State as supervisor of the common good. As corporative doctrine in the 1930s sought for a “third way” between liberalism and State collectivism, for the most part they left unsolved the question of the State.

The former left-wing trade unionists and politicians who endorsed *planisme* in the Thirties had a clearer view of the State with regard to the other societal bodies, especially the trade unions. Based on Henri De Man’s formulation of planned economy, personalities like Déat or Belin came to endorse corporatism.⁶⁰⁹ Their convergence followed different paths, but they were bonded together by the revaluation of the role of the State. In Déat, the shift from *planisme* to corporatism intermingled State’s planning authorities and policies with corporations as regulatory institutions of industrial relations.⁶¹⁰ The adherence of whole sectors of the CGT to corporatism was more circumscribed. With the outbreak of the war, Belin and his comrades claimed for social collaboration through joint representativeness between workers and employers. At the beginning of 1940 the *planiste* trends within the CGT were still anti-fascist, even if increasingly critical both with traditional trade unionism and democratic institutions. What probably marked their repositioning was the failure of the collaboration on voluntary basis and in democratic environment, mainly for the opposition of the employers.⁶¹¹ In a few months, this area

⁶⁰⁸ F. Perroux, *Capitalisme et communauté de travail* ; see also A. Cohen, «Du corporatisme au keynésianisme. Continuités pratiques et ruptures symboliques dans le sillage de François Perroux», *Revue française de science politique*, n.4/2006, pp. 555-592, particularly pp. 558-576.

⁶⁰⁹ H. De Man, *Au-delà du marxisme*, Bruxelles, L’Églantine, 1927; M. Déat, *Perspectives socialistes*, Paris, Valois, 1930; Comité du Plan, *Le Plan français : doctrine et plan d’action*, Paris, Fasquelle, 1936.

⁶¹⁰ M. Déat, *Corporatisme et liberté*, Paris, Recueil Sirey, 1938.

⁶¹¹ J.-P. Le Crom, *Syndicats, nous voilà ! Vichy et le corporatisme*, pp. 63-103.

adhered not to fascism, but to corporatism; they supported the official ideology of the *Révolution Nationale*, meant as “class collaboration”.

There was, therefore, no agreement on the nature, scopes and goals of corporatism, in France even lesser than in Fascist Italy. In fact, corporatism gathered different milieu around few principles: collaboration, social rest, the link between “economic and social revolution”. Grasping under the surface of the propaganda, these watchwords had different meanings for each political group. Furthermore, the Vichy establishment did not even share common views on the kind of social organization to choose, or what kind of “corporatism” support. Therefore, the whole corporative project was already crippled even before being enacted. As profusely abovementioned, it is necessary to distinguish the “substantial” from the “formal” corporatism. Under Vichy, the former took the shape of the “economic collaboration” between the State (and the Germans) and some sectors of the employers, with the exclusion – both substantially and formally – of the workers. This economic organization was deployed by the Ministry of the Economy, in close cooperation with the German authorities. Vice versa, the centre of the projects for the “social collaboration”, embodied by the Labour Charter, was the MPI.

The lack of consensus on this project might be measured by the conflict between the “trade unionist” of the MPI and the “traditionalist” entourage of the Cabinet Pétain. The different drafts elaborated by Belin encountered the opposition of other representatives of the government, like the commandant Gaston Cèbe. Since 1940, he carried out the purge in the public administration and the prosecution of the former trade union delegates. They were regarded as leftovers of the Popular Front, who could have undermined the deployment of the “New State”.⁶¹² In the circles closer to Marshal Pétain, the corporatist project pointed at reducing even more the weight of workers’ organizations, while Belin wanted to restructure the role of the trade unions in the new corporatist setting. The “traditionalists” and some representatives of the employers prefigured the creation of forms of

⁶¹² On the administrative cleansing in Vichy, see M. O. Baruch, *Servir l’État français : l’Administration en France de 1940 à 1944*, Paris, Fayard, 1997, pp. 115-169.

corporatism without the, not even from the “formal” point of view. The *polytechnicien* and representative of the employers Gérard Bardet proposed to group the CO according to production sector (agriculture and food industry, transports, service sector, primary industry, secondary industry). Each industry in these sectors should have created two distinguished consultative bodies: the first was the Social Council, which gathered workers, technicians and employers, while the Trade Committee, in charge of the economic direction of the enterprise, excluded the manpower. Both these bodies were submitted to the CO and the State’s directives.

This divergence affected the whole debate before the Labour Charter, which resulted in a compromise that suppressed free trade unions and gave to the employers a relative autonomy in the decisions concerning the business management.⁶¹³ Notwithstanding these differences, “corporatism” became the shibboleth of the regime; before 1941, as promise to maintain, and, after the publication of the law, as tool to gainer the consensus of the working class. The government created and paid great attention to different centres and services of propaganda, to vulgarize the “official position” on the matter. In all this documentation, the official publications of the *Bulletins de la Charte du Travail*, published by the Ministry of Labour under Lagardelle, deepened single aspects of the administrative and juridical apparatus set in motion by the Charter. These *Bulletins* tried to orient the main decisions, providing the official view of the Ministry of Labour on corporatism, and being a “political tool” in the controversy that involved the different positions within the Government.⁶¹⁴ The Labour Charter became the subject of in-depth juridical and organizational analysis, especially with regard to the implications of the new corporative order in labour legislation and social insurances.⁶¹⁵

⁶¹³ J. Julliard, «La Charte du Travail», in René Remond, *Le Gouvernement de Vichy 1940-1942 : institutions et politiques*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1972, pp. 157-210.

⁶¹⁴ The complete set of the *Bulletin de la Charte* in IHTP, ARC074-45, «Etat français 1940-44».

⁶¹⁵ The issues of *Droit Social* from 1943 to 1944, and other revues in AN, F/22/1780.

The debate on corporatism involved an handful of intellectuals, trade unionists, and technicians. Two groups mainly confronted; the trade unionists closest to the Ministry of Labour, and the group of the *Institut d'études corporatives et sociales* (IECS, Centre of Corporative and Social Studies) of Ajam, expression of the traditionalist milieu that gravitated around the Cabinet Pétain. In a moment where political conflict was repealed, the battleground shifted to governmental groups and lobbies within. The trade unionists gathered mostly around two revues, *Au Travail !* in the Unoccupied territories, and *L'Atelier* in the area under German administration. The editorial boards of these two revues were composed by figures who had also political roles in the government. With different shades of opinion (*L'Atelier* was indeed more critical to the Vichy Government than *Au Travail !*), both supported the action of Belin and Lagardelle and claimed for a main role of trade unions – cleared out by any political platform – in the corporative system. They regarded at corporatism as an evolution of the economic system, where the trade unions were technical and representative bodies.⁶¹⁶ Lagardelle stressed the key relevance of the trade unions in the corporative order, to such an extent that the Labour Charter represented the merging of trade unions in the socio-economic national structures.

To the former anarcho-syndicalist, the unions abandoned the class theories to give their contribution representing the workers' interests, as "constructive" national forces. The trade unionism was also product of the liberalism and the class struggle, and in that regard the Labour Charter marked a paradigm shift: «the basic cell will no longer be the *individual*, but the *group*, which only can free the individual. The national community will be like a body, where all the parts will spread mutual solidarity.»⁶¹⁷ In turn, the renewed unitary social policy represented the unity of the nation and its social bodies:

⁶¹⁶ L. Bertin, «La Bataille Sociale», *Au Travail !*, n. 7, a.1, 11 janvier 1941, p.4; A. Salembier, «Corporatisme! Syndicalisme», *Au Travail !*, n.49, a.1, 15 novembre 1941, pp. 1-2; H. Lagardelle, «Reflexions sur le syndicalisme», *Au Travail !*, n. 51, a.1, 29 novembre 1941, p.1

⁶¹⁷ H. Lagardelle, «Allocution de M. Hubert Lagardelle du 23 septembre 1942», in *La Charte du Travail et son application*, Paris, Offices de Comités Sociaux, 1942, pp. I-IV, p.II.

«the France of tomorrow cannot take its place in the new Europe unless it will be able to gather all the living force in a compact bundle. These are the principles [...] that inspire the social policy I now dedicate myself.»⁶¹⁸ These groups feared the most workers and employers' class struggle; without any support among the workers (Louis Bertin, editor-in-chief of *Au Travail*, was victim of an assassination attempt, while other collaborators, like Pierre Arnaud, were killed), they also attacked the trusts, the reactionary industrialists and the opponents to corporatism in the government. In their analysis – which usually combined references to the history of the working class to articles that enhanced the Nazi social system⁶¹⁹ – corporatism was the tool through which “economy” intermingled “social policy” (being quite elusive on ways and goals of this intersection), overcoming the class struggle fostered by free trade unionism.

Unlike the trade unionists, Bouvier-Ajam considered the the Labour Charter as the affirmation of the principles of duty, discipline, and work, over rights, interests, and leisure.⁶²⁰ Even before the *Révolution Nationale*, Ajam was an admirer of the corporative experiences, and greatly contributed to the activities of the IECS, which was founded in 1935, along the lines of Bottai' *Scuola di Scienze Corporative*. In the 1930s, the IECS provided scientific deepening and juridical basis to corporatism; under the Vichy regime it carried out “academic support” to the *Révolution Nationale*. Ajam's institution was

⁶¹⁸ H. Lagardelle, «L'unité sociale condition de l'unité nationale», *Bulletin de la Charte du Travail*, n.1 avril 1943, pp. 3-4, p.4 ; see also Id., «La Charte sera syndicaliste ou ne sera pas», *Bulletin de la Charte du Travail*, n.6, octobre 1943, p.3.

⁶¹⁹ A. Rey, «Les vieux seront tous morts», *L'Atelier*, n. 8, a.2, 25th January, 1941, p.1; see the acts of the conference «Le syndicalisme se prononce pour la collaboration sociale et la collaboration franco-allemande, conditions indispensables de la collaboration européenne», published in *L'Atelier*, n. 10, a.2, 8 février 1941, pp. 1 and 4; J.-R. Grein, «La structure économique du XX siècle sera nouvelle», *L'Atelier*, n.13, a.2, 1 mars 1941, pp. 1-2; R. Mesnard, «La France ne peut être neutre», *L'Atelier*, n.14, a.2, 8 mars 1941, p.1; M. Roy, «Des possibilités nouvelles offertes à notre main-d'œuvre», *L'Atelier*, n.14, a.2, 8 mars 1941, p.1; «Le travail en Allemagne, moyen de diminuer le chômage », *L'Atelier*, n.14, a.2, 8 mars 1941, pp.1-2.

⁶²⁰ IHTP, ARC/1000 – N.27, «Le corporatisme français. Extraits du Discours de Maurice Bouvier-Ajam. Paris 1942», p.1.

resumed and strengthened by Pétain himself, who wanted it as the official cultural centre for the education of a new intellectual and political ruling class.⁶²¹ For the government, this legitimization served to fix the doctrine and to play a propaganda role, alongside the other agencies created to promote the corporatism and the *Révolution Nationale*. The IECS pursued a policy of propaganda in its broader sense. Ajam quickly gathered some important figures of the French academia and administration, such as Perroux, Raymond Marcellin, Philippe Ariès, Robert Guillermain, Brethe de la Gressaye, and set up five distinguished educational courses, directed to different social and political groups, with preparatory courses, conferences and specific curricula: the *Collège d'études syndicale et corporative*, the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes Corporatives*, the *Cours supérieur*, the *Cours social*, and the *Ecole des hautes études artisanales*. The IECS produced a wide documentation service: bulletins, revues, essays, libraries, texts of the lessons to study and vulgarise the corporative legislation.⁶²² In their publications the regulative, juridical and economic principles were usually vaguely formulated, but some strong concepts recurred: the reference to La Tour Du Pin, the political and economic corporative organisation, the distrust for State-driven corporatism, trade corporations instead of production corporations.

The “left-wing” and the “right-wing” differed as to reasons, means and goals of corporatism, but converged on some points: the hatred to *laissez-faire* capitalism and individualism, the distrust to liberal institutions, the criticism of the inefficiencies of capitalism, the fear of free trade unions and class struggle, the aim for a hierarchically and organically ordered society and economy. A deeper insight would show that also on these points the tendencies of the regime had different approaches. The wartime emergency circumstances gathered

⁶²¹ S. Kaplan, «Un laboratoire de doctrine corporatiste sous le régime de Vichy : l'Institut d'études corporatives et sociales», *Mouvement Social*, n. 2/2002, pp. 35-77; see also the «Letter of Marshal Pétain to Maurice Bouvier-Ajam. 27 June, 1941», published in *Service de Documentation. Cahiers du Travail*, s.d.

⁶²² AA.VV., *Les étapes de la législation corporative en France*, Paris, Institute d'études corporatives et sociales, 1944; see also the *Cahiers du Travail*, Paris, Institute d'études corporatives et sociales, aa.1943-44.

them on the corporatist project. The ultimate goal of the Labour Charter, in the intentions of Belin, was – as he explained many years later – to «establish, between employers and salaried, legal relations in place of power relations, until then dominant, and directly inherited from the dawn of industrialization.»⁶²³ The framework of the State collaboration gave the opportunity for the manifold Vichy ruling classes to bring France into line with the other continental experiences of the corporatist “third way”; in fact, with the other authoritarian countries and the satellites of the Axis Powers. In that regard, corporatism was considered an overarching solution that could have modernized the legislation and the socio-economic structures of the country.⁶²⁴

3.4. *The French social protection from Vichy to the plan of social security*

The Vichy Regime never put in place a global reform of social insurances. In Britain, the domestic dynamics of the “total war” resulted in a major commitment to social reforms. France, instead, experienced economic mobilization in function of the German production. Its limited sovereignty did not compel the regime to any concession to workers and citizens. The corporatist design served to integrate workers in joint structures to ease industrial production, depriving them of free trade unions and means of combating.

Corporatism was only an aspect of Vichy social policy; the more promoted, but not necessarily the most important. The corporative order as milestone of the whole social policy of the *Révolution Nationale*, but it eventually proved to be ephemeral, in its “ideological” aspects. The regime projected and deployed also detailed reforms on single aspects of the social legislation, which overall moved towards centralization and rationalization. Even if the tendency was the administrative unification, it lacked of the universalist impulse, as the prospected reforms were not meant as rights of citizenship. The

⁶²³ R. Belin, *La politique sociale de Vichy (1940-1942)*, Paris, Ecrits de Paris, 1974, p. 16.

⁶²⁴ G. De Lagarde, *La Charte du Travail. Sa place dans l'évolution du corporatisme moderne*, Angoulême, 1942.

longer-run and conjunctural wartime issues did not let room for more reasoned projects:

«The orientation of the social security in the period 1939-1944 followed a natural development of the legislation, affected and accelerated, anyway, by the evolution of the economic conditions and by the war events. After ten years of experience, the social insurances needed improvements, adjustments, and reforms. The increase of wages, the fall in purchasing power required a complete change in their technical and financial bases. In addition, the war and the occupation worsened destitution and undermined the public health, imposing new measures. The afflux of the internally displaced people from Alsace and Lorraine, [...] led to convergence in the two legislations, resulting in a certain unification. Finally, the scarcity of raw materials, as papers, compelled, even besides considerations of opportunity, a simplification of the technical operative aspects claimed from the opinion. »⁶²⁵

Rather than ideologically driven by the *Révolution Nationale*, Vichy social measures were stop-gaps to face the emergency and to bring to a conclusion previous projects of reform. Under Belin's appointment, the MIP passed the more relevant measures. However, also the trade unionists lacked of holistic visions on the social insurances, usually seeing the the Labour Charter as the most important social action. Under the – not inconsiderable – ideological surface, the social insurances followed trajectories along the lines of the political elaborations in the Thirties (as for the AVTS, which resumed projects dating back to 1935), or traced the route for more coordinated reforms. The 1940 Belin's draft project was probably the closest to a comprehensive reform of all the sectors of the social protection, including paid leaves and family allowances. Its importance should not be overestimated though; it was more likely to provide the guidelines

⁶²⁵ AN, 72AJ13, « L'orientation de la sécurité sociale pendant la période 1940-1945 », p.1.

for further reforms grounded on some basic bureaucratic principles: the unification and centralization of the insurance funds for each risk category and the simplification of the procedures. These administrative measures were not accompanied by political implications in the citizenship-based social rights. In fact, the whole legislation enacted by the regime signalled how the major aim was to support the incomes of the family units in a context of social emergency, shortage and occupation.

The ideological scope of Vichy's social policy should not be however belittled. Social insurances and corporatism were two distinguished parts in the regime's public rhetoric, centred on corporative solidarity and social collaboration. The AVTS represented in the words of Pétain, «the solidarity of the Nation, the solidarity of the classes, the solidarity of the generations; solidarity of classes, as the pensions are constituted with the contributions of the social insurances and they come from the both employers and workers; solidarity of generations, as the younger generations paid the contributions for the older.»⁶²⁶ This principle was easily applicable also for the social reforms in democratic regimes. But Vichy's official narrative stressed the coherence between social protection and other projects, such as corporatism and housing policy, and that the new regime achieved what «a fake democracy could not realize, after having promised it for such a long time».⁶²⁷

The continuities and ruptures between the III Republic, the Vichy regime, and the PGFR are ambivalent. Some of Vichy's reforms were retained in the *plan de sécurité sociale*, and in some transitory measures of the industrial organization.⁶²⁸ What radically changed was the approach to the reforms and the ideas underpinning the 1945 plan. It only partially moved towards universalism, but politically departed

⁶²⁶ P. Pétain, «Je tiens les promesses, même celles de l'autres lorsque ces promesses sont fondées sur la justice», *Petit Paris*, 15 mars 1941, p. 2

⁶²⁷ « M. Belin commente la réforme », *Petit Paris*, 15 mars 1941, p.2.

⁶²⁸ P.-J. Hesse, J.-P. Le Crom, « Conclusion », in Id., *La protection sociale sous le régime de Vichy*, pp. 355-364, see pp. 361-364 ; M. Margairaz, *L'Etat, les finances et l'économie. Histoire d'une conversion 1932-1952. Vol. II*, Paris, Comité pour l'Histoire Economique et Financière, 1991, pp. 721-806.

both from the 1940-2 Belin's drafts and from the IIIrd Republic social reforms.⁶²⁹ As I will expose in the second part of my dissertation, the 1944 *Plan de sécurité sociale* was the result of a synthesis between the political legacy of the French social policy and the wartime innovations elaborated in the Anglo-Saxon world. They were also the compromise among the different parties of the Resistance. The Programme for Action of the Resistance, promulgated in 1944, solemnly proclaimed «a thorough programme of social security, aiming at guaranteeing to all the citizens the means of subsistence, in all the cases where they are not able to obtain them with their work, with the co-joint management of the interested organization and of the State. [...] A pension that allows the old-age workers to earn a decent living in the rest of their lives.»⁶³⁰ This general programme was vague enough to overshadow differences among the parties. The *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (MRP, the Christian-democrats) encouraged the «mutualist principles of free of association within autonomous funds managed by the insured themselves under the control of the State, by developing the collective solidarity, without discouraging the self-relief, now fundamental more than ever.»⁶³¹ The Communists embedded social security within the strategy of the “structural reforms”, passing immediate reforms, while progressively changing the nature of State's policies. The Socialists, equally committed to the “structural reforms”, pushed for a more consistent turn towards a more “State-centred” social policy.⁶³² The

⁶²⁹ The pillars of the French *sécurité sociale* were the « Ordonnance n. 45-2250 du 4 octobre 1945 portant organisation de la sécurité sociale », *JO*, 6 octobre 1945 ; « Ordonnance n° 45/2454 du 19 octobre 1945 fixant le régime des assurances sociales applicable aux assurés des professions non agricoles » and « Ordonnance n° 45-2456 du 19 octobre 1945 portant statut de la mutualité », *JO*, 20 octobre 1945.

⁶³⁰ «Texte définitif du Programme d'Action de la Résistance – 15 mars 1944», in Claire Andrieu, *Le programme commun de la Résistance. Des idées dans la guerre*, Paris, Les Editions de l'Erudit, 1984, pp. 168-175, p. 174.

⁶³¹ «Proposition de résolution tendant à inviter le Gouvernement à préparer un plan complet de sécurité sociale, présentée par G. Tessier», mentioned in C. Andrieu, *Le programme commun de la Résistance*, p.112.

⁶³² «Proposition de résolution tendant à inviter le Gouvernement à instituer un service national de sécurité sociale, présentée par A. Gazier et le groupe socialiste», mentioned in Claire Andrieu, *Le programme commun de la Résistance. Des idées dans la guerre*, p.102.

new Minister Parodi, after the failure of the 1940 all-inclusive attempt, now linked social security with the “individual freedom”. The Vichy’s Minister Lagardelle believed that “individual freedom” and social justice were attainable only in the corporative construction. In Parodi’s take, instead, the post-war tasks dealt with the reorganization and strengthening of social protection in the democratic systems:

«It was mostly needed to rearrange the different legislations that, since 50 years, tended to alleviate the effects of the social risks affecting the workers: industrial injuries, sickness, maternity, death, invalidity, old-age were all fragmentary and haphazard acts, grounded on different juridical principles, and resulting in a multiplicity of organisms, and in the dispersal of the efforts. The governmental decree provides the country of a coherent system of social security, which encompasses the social insurances, the industrial injuries, and – with a certain autonomy – the family allowances. In this framework, other risks may be covered in the future. This legislation will put France at the lead of the greater industrial countries. [...] will give to our workers an increasingly better developed security that will ensure their independence and the dignity of their work and their life.»⁶³³

The French social insurances were reformed after the war, with the formulation elaborated during wartime as background, by the Resistance and – to some extent – by the Vichy regime. The aims for the unification were the same than in 1940, but in 1944 they were tackled with a more consistent approach. All the previous schemes were reduced to a single plan of social security, decisively moving to the nationalization of compulsory schemes. The principle of social policy changed; in place of the effort to establish “corporative” social solidarity, the 1945 plan turn to the whole nation, in order to guarantee

⁶³³ A. Parodi, «Allocution prononcée par M. Parodi», in *Après la libération, la liberté. Textes des allocutions diffusées par la radiodiffusion française au cours de la deuxième émission, le samedi 22 septembre 1945*, pp. 4-5, p.5.

the freedom from want. Something similar happened for the industrial relations. For Laroque, they were at the basis of the contemporary “social question”. His concerns to find a settlement for the industrial conflict urged him to collaborate to the first drafts of the Labour Charter.⁶³⁴ After the war, he supported the industrial reconciliation in democratic and bargained forms of agreements. This liberal setting coexisted with some peculiar forms of co-participation of the workers and a major role of the State, which Laroque defined «a midway between the Soviet authoritarian socialism and the Anglos-Saxon liberal organization.»⁶³⁵ This was a sort of “French socialism”, whose origins he retraced in the Popular Front governments rather than in Vichy’s economic and social reforms.

Social policies overlapped incrementally, while the ideological environment changed; the Vichy regime framed social insurances and labour relations in a corporatist and anti-liberal setting, while the PGFR owed the new lexicon and ideology of social security to the formulas elaborated from the *Atlantic Charter* onwards. The new social paradigm born between the Atlantic shores inspired the principles of the *Beveridge Report* in Britain. It equally influenced the French social reformers in 1945, not so much in the detailed policies, but rather in its political and social goals.

⁶³⁴ E. Jabbari, *Pierre Laroque and the Welfare State in Post-War France*, pp.84-98.

⁶³⁵ P. Laroque, *Rapports entre patrons et ouvriers*, Paris, Centre de Documentation de la Sorbonne, 1948, p.308.

4. Fascist Italy from the social legislation to the socialization of the enterprises

At the very outbreak of the war, the regime praises the reorganization and strengthening of the Italian social legislation; the whole system of social institutions was controlled by the regime and conceived as an important way to create consensus. The party reshaped the structures of social authorities, exploiting them as an important tool of propaganda.⁶³⁶ Mussolini conceived the establishment of corporatism and social protection as the achievement of the Fascist revolution in the economic and social life. In 1936, at the utmost height of the consensus for the regime, and just few days before the proclamation of the Empire, he declared that:

«The economy [...] has to secure serenity, welfare, material and spiritual improvement to the masses composing the Nation, which showed, in these times, their high level of national consciousness and their totalitarian assimilation to the Regime. *In the fascist System has to be shorten, and will be shorten, the distances between the different categories of producers, which were submitted to the hierarchies of the highest duty and of the harshest responsibility.* In the fascist economy will be achieved that highest social justice, which, from time immemorial, has been the supreme goal of the masses in the daily and bitter struggle for the basic needs of life.»⁶³⁷

The core concepts of the Fascist social policy are condensed in these few lines: the intermingling between corporatism and social

⁶³⁶ M. Salvati, «Lo stato sociale in Italia: caratteri originali e motivi di una crisi», *Passato e Presente*, n.32/1994, p. 21.

⁶³⁷ B. Mussolini, «La più alta giustizia sociale. Discorso del 23 marzo 1936-XIV», in Id., *Mussolini parla agli operai*, Roma, Confederazione Fascista Lavoratori dell'Industria, 1941, p. 37.

policy; the use of the social legislation as a way to change the balance of power within society; the role of social policy in the Fascist propaganda. In the very framework of the war, this political discourse also confronted other models of social reforms, notably the *Beveridge Report*; this was regarded at once as the convergence of Western democracies towards the fascist positions, and as an ineffective measure to address the “social question”.

The wartime Fascist legislation went on in continuity with the Thirties, until the chaotic years of the RSI. In 1943, the collapse of the regime’s structures and institutions marked another turn in the Fascist public discourse. The revival of a revolutionary ideology attempted to hark back to the origins of the Fascism, in the transition at the very end of the war. Public policies and propaganda, however, followed two diametrically different paths. Salò puppet government did not implement major social reforms; in fact, the RSI could barely save the structures of the Italian social insurances from the palling of Fascist authorities, and preserve that small amount of autonomy from the Nazi occupant. The evolution of wartime social protection under the Fascist regime followed two phases; from 1939 to 1943 the government implemented wartime legislation and provisions. From 1943 to 1945, as the State’s structures collapsed, the promises for a social revolution became the only way to gather consensus and close ranks within the regime. Also in this case, however, social insurances and other provisions carried out with a certain legislative continuity.

4.1. The Fascist social policy to the test of the war

4.1.1. War, “non-mobilization” and social insurances in Fascist Italy

The enter of Italy into war highlighted the inadequacies of the country’s productive system, and the political weaknesses of the regime. The consensus faded as the military defeats piled up. Italy, unlike other powers involved in the war, did not consistently stem its economy to the war production. Historiography stressed the dependence of Italy from Germany in the raw materials and energy

supply.⁶³⁸ In reality, until 1943, the relationships between the two countries were not characterized by the Italian subordination to Germany; their economic and trade relationships were regulated by agreements on equal terms.⁶³⁹ This was also the case of the transfer of the manpower; until 1943 it proceeded on voluntary basis, meeting the German needs in the agricultural sectors and high unemployment among the Italian farm workers. These agreements prefigured also the harmonization of the social insurances for the Italian farm workers in Germany, who, in Italy, had separate schemes with regard to the industrial workers.⁶⁴⁰ The reallocation of manpower at home was inadequate to the war effort, incomparably weaker than the British and German ones.⁶⁴¹ Unemployment was still relatively high in spite of the mobilization for the war. The data on the overall labour mobilization in Italy are not detailed; sector of the armed forces counted nearly 3,5 million of units in 1943, and manpower was transferred from the agriculture and, to a lesser extent, from the light industry to heavy industries during the war years.

The macroeconomic analysis of Vera Zamagni and Petri showed that in Italy consistent economic mobilization never took place; the data suggest that the productive and administrative actors never even tried to commit the country to a long-term war. The impact of the military expenditure on the GDP was on the contrary, lower than in any other

⁶³⁸ This historical commonplace was used by the anti-fascist historiography, see F. Catalano, *L'economia italiana di guerra 1935-43*, Roma, Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione, 1969.

⁶³⁹ M. Rieder, «I rapporti economici italo-tedeschi tra alleanza, occupazione e ricostruzione», in Vera Zamagni (ed.), *Come perdere la guerra e vincere la pace*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1997, pp. 309-345.

⁶⁴⁰ Confederazione Fascista dei Lavoratori dell'Agricoltura, *Rurali di Mussolini nella Germania di Hitler*, Roma, CFLA – Ufficio Propaganda, 1939; A. Dazzi (ed.), *Accordi fra l'Italia e la Germania in materia di lavoro e assicurazioni sociali, 1937-1942*, Roma, Tipografia Riservata del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 1942. Only after 1943 the transfer became forced deportation in German industries and lands, reaching the rough esteem of 1,8 million workers in 1944. See Brunello Mantelli, *Camerati del lavoro. I lavoratori italiani emigrati nel Terzo Reich nel periodo dell'Asse 1938-1943*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1992.

⁶⁴¹ «Legge 2 ottobre 1942-XX, n. 1286 sulla disciplina del collocamento in tempo di guerra», *GU*, 17 novembre 1942-XXI, n. 272.

conflict involved in the conflict: 23% in Italy, 47% in the US, 57% in Britain, 76% in Germany. These figures are even more indicative considering that Italy was still a relatively backward country if compared to the other industrial powers. Also other showed that Italy never set in motion an efficient mobilization: the production did not expand during wartimes, which was only partially due to the need to import raw materials; the private consumptions, already relatively low, did not squeeze until 1943; the performance of the arms industry did not increase consistently between 1940 and 1943; the public finances were under control; inflation rose up to 68% by 1943, being uncontrolled after the breakdown of the regime and the expansion of the black market in the collapse of the supervisory authorities.⁶⁴²

The employment figures are slightly different, even if they contribute to support the interpretation that the Italian economy between 1940 and 1943 was only partially affected by war mobilization. Italy did not achieve full employment during wartime; on the contrary, by the end of 1943 the number of employed slightly dipped. Yet, in some specific sectors, chemistry, mechanical engineering and extractive industry, employment rose against the backdrop of an overall decreasing number of people in work. This seems to corroborate the hypothesis that Italian industry seized the opportunity of the war to steer the production in the specific industrial sectors, where the wartime industrial policies laced up the trend started in the 1930s, to have further development after the war.⁶⁴³

According to Petri, the Italian economic and technocratic establishment operated a precise strategic choice, that is, to not commit the industrial structure in the "total war". Some sectors of Fascism, Mussolini before any all, and the governmental technocracy did not pursue the same objectives. The latter was aware that Italy could not support the effort of a long conflict.⁶⁴⁴ The country had not financial

⁶⁴² V. Zamagni, «Un'analisi macroeconomica degli effetti della guerra», in Id. (ed.), *Come perdere la guerra e vincere la pace*, pp. 13-54.

⁶⁴³ R. Petri, «Innovazioni tecnologiche tra uso bellico e mercato civile», in V. Zamagni (ed.), *Come perdere la guerra e vincere la pace*, pp. 245-307.

⁶⁴⁴ Id., *Storia economica d'Italia. Dalla Grande Guerra al Miracolo economico (1918-1963)*, pp. 158-158.

resources, industrial structure, nor wide-ranging designs to create an area of trade and economic satellites, which could have allowed to wage the war. The regime's political leadership decided to enter into war after that the first successes of the *Wermacht* presaged the quick victory of the war. In the perspective of a speedy end of the conflict, the Fascists underestimated the importance of industrial efficiency and financial stability to wage a longer "total war". Not unlike the collaborationist milieu in Vichy, also the Italian Fascists considered fundamental to jump on the gravy train.

A comparison with the British war effort would be ruthless, as furthermore it would involve an advanced industrial power and a still industrializing country. While the British government was able to squeeze private consumption, ensuring at the same time the expansion of the industrial production in the effort to win the war, the Italian ruling classes shifted the focus to longer-run processes of industrial restructuring. Considering the figures of the Italian macroeconomic fundamentals, every voice followed a descending line, except for the public consumptions, which increased until 1943, to dramatically fall down as a consequence of the crumple of the Fascist State.⁶⁴⁵ The rearmament programmes in Britain contributed to decrease unemployment. Italy, even if participating to different conflicts before WWII (Ethiopia, Spain, Albania), did not undertake any consistent rearmament. In spite of this permanent state of war from 1935 to 1945, the incoming macroeconomic and budgetary data were not massively affected by the military mobilization.⁶⁴⁶ In 1940, Italy entered into a war with the major worldwide economic and military powers, without even having the structural basis to wage the conflict. Britain had the opportunity to collect resources from global markets, or to have access to raw materials. Italy, instead, did not have either of these characteristic; the country lacked of raw materials and did not have a

⁶⁴⁵V. Zamagni, «Italy: How to Lose the War and Win the Peace», in Mark Harrison (ed.), *The Economies of World War II: Six Great Powers in International Comparison*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 177-223.

⁶⁴⁶R. Petri, *Storia economica d'Italia. Dalla Grande Guerra al Miracolo economico (1918-1963)*, pp. 149-157.

vast empire to fall back on, leaning on German exports for energy supply.

Many organisationally and political deficiencies worsened this structural gap. Britain set up a highly hierarchical governmental machinery, while in Italy the reorganization of the executive power was defective, even if the legislative instruments for the war mobilization were sharpened since 1931.⁶⁴⁷ The three Ministries involved in the war did not manage to efficiently mobilize the resources, also for contradictory political orders from the top, which were in the hands of the same person, Mussolini. But political incompetence does not explain, or not completely. In reality, the war economy also clashed against the industrial planning of the autarky, launched between 1935 and 1937, which created a consensus of view between public technocracies and big business. The needs to centralize the management of the production, energy reserves and the military orders fell outside autarkic industrial consortia, and stressed national savings and energy policies. According to Petri, from the 1930s onwards, a new industrial policy was taking shape, and the war mobilization got in the way of medium and long-term projects of technological and productive development: «from this point of view, it was *ex post* rational to opt for a low economic mobilization. [...] Most of the time, in face of contrasting goals, they gave priority to projects considered technologically valid in the medium and long-term, instead of pushing for war mobilization or for the stock-building.»⁶⁴⁸

Italy was unfit to wage a modern war, unable to mobilize resource and enlarge its productivity, and defective in the chain of command at any level: productive, military and political. While Britain changed the features of its executive machinery managing the different

⁶⁴⁷ *Disciplina di guerra e mobilitazione civile. Regolamento per l'applicazione della Legge 14 dicembre 1931, n. 1699 approvato con R.decreto 15 giugno 1933, n.1176 e modificato con R.decreto 28 settembre 1934, n. 1791*, Napoli, Pietracola, 1939; *Disciplina di guerra e mobilitazione civile. Legge 14 dicembre 1931, n. 1699 modificata dal R. decreto-legge 5 settembre 1938, n.1731 e corredata di tutte le altre disposizioni legislative dalla medesima richiamate*, Napoli, Pietracola, 1939.

⁶⁴⁸ Ivi. p. 167. See also pp. 125-180.

aspects of “total war” (economy, society, policy, etc.), the Fascist government was not willing to regiment all the national bodies to channel them to the war. The lack of the coordination of the economic levers and the importance of the centrifugal forces during the war’s years, led to the acknowledging of the failure of corporatism as socio-economic model; a leading light of the regime as the former Minister of the Economy Alberto De Stefani recognized the demise of corporations, which showed not to be able to regulate production, prices, trades and redistribution of the wealth.⁶⁴⁹

Despite the structural gap of Italy with the major European powers, however, the Italian military and political circles were aware of the changing features of modern warfare that fuelled the debate in the interwar period.⁶⁵⁰ In 1938, the text *Economia Armata* was the co-joint effort of military and political elites to design the Fascist mobilization for the war.⁶⁵¹ The generals remarked the need to coordinate scientific, industrial, and military apparatus (Badoglio was by that time Army Chief of Staff and President of the *Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche*, CNR, the National Council of Research). Mussolini, for his part, wanted the nation to be prepared for what he considered a confrontation between two models: fascisms and liberal democracies.⁶⁵² The regime overestimated the autonomy of food supply generated by the autarchy and by the rural policies; Fascists also wrongly believed that corporatism inculcated «a discipline of the labour and an industrial organization where the employers have such an influence which allows them, when the supreme interests of the country are at stake, to require efforts, to ask to make sacrifice, to get differentiations

⁶⁴⁹ A. De Stefani, «La riprivatizzazione», and Id., «Il corporativismo e il monopolio», both in *Rivista Italiana di Scienze Economiche*, a. XIII, n. 12, december 1941 and a. XV, n.2, february 1943, respectively pp. 1205-1209 and pp. 106-109.

⁶⁵⁰ See the essays in S. Förster (ed.), *An der Schwelle zum Totalen Krieg – Die militärische Debatte über den Krieg der Zukunft, 1919-1939*, München, Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2002.

⁶⁵¹ B. Mussolini, P. Badoglio, Aldo Aytano, *Economia armata*, Roma, Edizioni “Centri Tecnici”, 1938.

⁶⁵² Ivi. p. 7.

accepted.»⁶⁵³ The *Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale* (ISPI), one of the most influent think tanks in Italy, was confident that the regulation of the economy carried out by the regime eased the stem of the industry to war economy, while countries like Britain would face difficulties to mobilize resources in a “totalitarian way”. The Fascists reflected upon the structural changes set in motion by the war and its social aftermaths. They elaborated some guidelines to secure productive efficiency and social rest, as long as «the sacrifice that the war requires for the masses will be more easily and more lengthly tolerated as the larger will be the trust in the leaders, the belief in the need and rightness of the war and the realisation of the fair redistribution of the burdens and sacrifices.»⁶⁵⁴

They recommended a balanced wartime social policy on labour policies and social protection. To override social and productive turmoil, the plans proposed three guidelines: regulation of the allocation of the manpower; collective agreements, wage policies, relations between corporations and State’s authorities; social assistance and social protection. This included the strengthening of family allowances, unemployment benefits, special wartime social legislation, like the survivors’ pensions, and the retail of mobilized workers and soldiers’ contributions. They were aware that, to successfully wage the conflict, the State had to deploy thorough social actions, to ensure the maximum productive effort and to keep the grip on the popular masses. The precedent of the Great War made structural some changes in the social systems, in Italy as elsewhere.⁶⁵⁵ The ISPI recommended to keep high the social expenditure and to pursue economic and social reforms even during wartime, meaning in that way the intermingling of public intervention and private entrepreneurship, was also considered to be the best way to avoid post-war slumps. In 1940-3, the regime faced the reality of a full-scale war; notwithstanding the potential, in terms of expertise and legislation, to mobilize the country

⁶⁵³ A. Pirelli, *Economia e guerra*. Vol. I, Milano, Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale, 1940, p. 74.

⁶⁵⁴Ivi. p. 172.

⁶⁵⁵Ivi. pp. 161-190.

for the industrial “total war”, Italy did otherwise.⁶⁵⁶

Italy was ready to wage a circumscribed conflict lasting 3-4 months, not the “total war”; and the German overwhelming victory against France seemed to provide the opportunity to involve Italy in a rapid war on the winning side. A document from the INFPS is quite indicative of how the public policy-considerations were affected by the idea that the *Blitzkrieg* could quickly end the conflict in favour of Nazi Germany, with limited burden on the countries involved in the conflict. INFPS calculated the financial impact of the war on social insurances, finding three main areas of intervention and expenditure: family allowances, pensions of invalidity and unemployment benefits.⁶⁵⁷ The first supported the loss of revenues of the families of the workers called to the army, while special provisions were required for the missing soldiers. The pensions of invalidity was expected to be another important expenditure item: nearly 100.000 pensions of invalidity were directly related to war, comports an expenditure of 100 milliards per years in the first 60 years after the war. As for unemployment benefits, the report provided two hypotheses: in case of a limited war lasting less than two years, the demobilization would have created 650.000 unemployed, accounting for nearly 790 milliards for unemployment benefits in the first year after the war; for a war longer than two years, with a total mobilization of the economic resources, the risk reserves could not cover these benefits not even for the one year, considering that the unemployment benefits for the workers called to army was completely in charge of the State. The same pattern affected the allowances for maternity and marriage: they decreased during wartime, but would increase immediately after the war, boosted by the

⁶⁵⁶ F. Minniti, «Piano e ordinamento nella preparazione italiana alla guerra negli anni Trenta», *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, n.1/1990, pp. 1-41; Id., «L'industria degli armamenti al 1940 a 1943: i mercati, le produzioni», in V. Zamagni (ed.), *Come perdere la guerra e vincere la pace*, pp. 55-148.

⁶⁵⁷ ACS, RSI/ Ministero del Lavoro, 797G, «Istituto Nazionale Fascista della Previdenza Sociale - La previdenza sociale in caso di guerra. S.d.» The report is stored in the record of the Ministry of Labour in the RSI. However, it could be traced back to 1940, as the data and considerations exposed in this report would later in turn used in the legislation drafts for the acts for the family allowances and unemployment benefits.

birth-rate policies of the regime (e.g. the allowances for the marriage enacted just before entering the war). The same additional burden concerned the insurances against sickness and disease, and particularly those against tuberculosis (170 milliards deficit in case of two years-lasting war), expected to upsurge during wartime due to the reuse of the hospitals for military purposes, while the contributions to this insurance dramatically dropped.

Considering a two-years lasting *Blitzkrieg* war, the INFPS calculated a dramatic increase of social expenditure for the war economic and social mobilization. All the risk categories were submitted to structural changes in the years after the war. However, for unemployment, survivors' pension, and family allowances, the difficulties to evaluate the impact of the war suggested the unification of social benefits, regardless the working category of people called in army, and an increased social expenditure, to be entirely funded by the State. This was also rightly considered a relatively new task; the Great War represented only a partial forerunner, since there was not such a branched and developed system of social insurances like in the 40s. The report provided a draft for the accountability of the social burden of the war on the post-war social insurance. The analysis grounded its political and financial esteems on the social insurances of the workers mobilized for the war, focusing on the loss of revenue caused by the war condition. It also focused on the changes brought by the war in the labour market, e.g. with the massive introduction of new workers (the women) in the industries. Workers who previously might be not entitled to social benefits, became thus new recipients of the social insurances. The war was expected to enlarge State's capacities to provide social protection, changing the financial burden of social insurances and the way they were funded. While some measures of contributory unification were considered no longer deferrable, the regime did not elaborate any thorough plan to turn the previous social system, as for the coeval British debate. The legislation proceeded with a piecemeal approach, as the regime, until 1943, considered to have already provided a major turn in the social insurances in the decade before the war.

While structurally inadequate, Fascist Italy reflected upon “total war” and its social aftermaths. The Fascist government also tried to enhance social policy during the war. This did not break with the previous legislation, being rather an incremental process, but demonstrated the effort of the regime to not neglect a fundamental aspect of “total war”: the home front and the consensus. Especially after the publication of the *Beveridge Report* and its quick diffusion through Europe, the ideological contraposition between two different social systems became clear in the reception and criticism of the plan by the Fascist elites.

4.1.2. *The social legislation in Fascist Italy (1939-1942)*

Even if not fully committed to industrial mobilization, also in Italy the outbreak of the war brought about the enhancement of measures of social protection and social assistance:

«From this subordination derives the orientations not only of the economic policy, but also those of the social policy of the Nation at the war, to the former closely linked. If the economic policy has to tend to figure out new productions, to broaden the already existing one, to transform and to adapt to the goals of the war the specific branch of the industries, to boost the internal production to the maximum effort, then the social policy must aim at obtaining from the worker the maximum efficiency and the total dedication, bringing out the self-sacrifice. Production and labour reveal, once again, to be inherently tied factors.»⁶⁵⁸

Differently from Britain, also in Italy the dynamic of the war constricted even more the industrial workforce: working hours, regimentation at workplace, imbalances between industrial sectors, call to arms. The war required also the assistance to the civilians for the emergency, the deployment of social services and healthcare for the population, and the assistance to the soldiers’ families. The extension of

⁶⁵⁸ B. Biagi, *La legislazione sociale di guerra*, Roma, INFPS, 1939, p. 5.

the benefits for the war-related risks, the pensions for the families, the stabilization of family incomes marked the expansion of public social protection, as: «it is the State that becomes the *paterfamilias* of the whole Nation, assuming the related burden and responsibilities.»⁶⁵⁹ The “totalitarian” dimension of the war required to secure the home front and providing social protection in exchange for militarization of labour: «it is therefore outlined the social policy during wartime; the necessity of the rest at home is required especially in the war’s conjuncture and the social legislation reveals to be the most useful tool to favour the production and at the same time to meet the needs of the workers and, broadly speaking, the popular masses.»⁶⁶⁰

Fascism rearranged social insurances just before entering the war, between April and July 1939.⁶⁶¹ These reforms amended some measures of the 1935 fundamental reorganization of social protection in Italy.⁶⁶² The decree and the law of 6th July 1939 coordinated the previous legislation, prefiguring the creation of a Consolidated Law to make simpler for the workers to know their rights and obligations. The law increased the benefits: the entitlement for tuberculosis and unemployment was partially disengaged from the contributory records; the insurance contribution were inflation-linked. The law enlarged the beneficiaries as well: the retirement age was reduced to 60 and 55 years for men and women; the compulsoriness was reduced to 14 years old for all the workers, and was extended also to the upper incomes and better paid categories of white collars, from 80 L. to 156 L. p/w for the former, and from 800 L. to 1.500 L. p/m for the latter; the insurances for farm workers, who did not have unemployment insurance, were harmonized to the general schemes, while homeworkers and other categories were assimilated to compulsory schemes; extension of the benefits to the family of the insured Each

⁶⁵⁹Ivi. p. 7.

⁶⁶⁰*Ibidem*.

⁶⁶¹ «Regio Decreto-Legge 14 aprile 1939-XVII, n. 636», *GU*, 3 May 1939, n.105; «Legge 6 luglio 1939-XVII, n.1272», *GU*, 7 September 1939, n. 209.

⁶⁶² «Regio Decreto-Legge 4 ottobre 1935-XIII, n. 1827 Perfezionamento e coordinamento legislativo della previdenza sociale», *GU*, 26 ottobre 1935.

trade category maintained different contributory rates, paid by employers and employees with State's supplementary subsidies. The greater uniformity did not prefigure universalism, as the fragmentation of compulsory insurances along occupational lines retained different benefits for different categories: self-employees, industrial workers, homeworkers, farm workers, farm day workers, with further divisions among men and women. Discriminatory logics were still present, as for the exclusion of some categories of women farmers, who could not enjoy any kind of compulsory insurance.

In the family welfare, the benefits for marriage and natality replaced the maternity grants. It did not concern only female workers, but also the wives of the workers; this social provision was directed to the family *as a unit*, moving away from the link between the status of worker and the enjoyment of social benefits. The new allowances for marriage and natality absorbed and unified the previous benefits for dependent children and State family aid; the foreigners and the non-Arian Italian citizens were excluded. The survivor's pensions equally supported the families. Their rates ranged between a half and the whole pension of the insured, and supplementary coverages were provided also for the survivors without entitlement. The survivors' benefits concerned all compulsory insurances, except for unemployment, that was nonetheless calibrated to the number of dependent children, and including tuberculosis. This insurance characterized the Fascist legislation, aiming at «defending and improving the race»;⁶⁶³ it combined insurances with assistance measures, e.g. hospitalization and healthcare treatment. Temporary compensations were granted to the family of the insured, according to the category and contributory division. These provisions were expected to «protect the worker, of all the categories, from the risks and the special situations of life – it assured him an integral and totalitarian protection against the events due to this risks and contingencies – and provide for him and his family some provisions, which allow him to look to old-age and invalidity with more serenity and quiet. The serenity of the worker, the tranquillity of his family, the eradication of

⁶⁶³ B. Biagi, *Riforma fascista della previdenza sociale*, Roma, INFPS, 1939, p.6.

the discontent and of the concerns, contribute to the human improvement, and therefore to the performance at work. A complex benefit, therefore, which – ultimately – advantage the whole Nation.»⁶⁶⁴

Overall, the reform was characterized by quantitative and qualitative improvements, in the benefit rates and in their extension to the household of insured workers. The regime was moving forward a greater interlinking between family and social policy; the management of family allowances passed under INFPS. The reform also amalgamated the different insurances. At the outbreak of the war, Fascist Italy extened and harmonized social protection, even if not with a comprehensive plan as the *Beveridge Report*. In March 1942, the President of INFPS, Ferruccio Lantini, boasted «the massive System of achievements and improvements made by our social and assistance legislation, which is among the most advanced.»⁶⁶⁵ He harked back the principles of the 1927 *Carta del Lavoro*; also the social legislation was part of the organic view on labour and social relationships, and it transposed the recurring rhetorical themes of Fascism: the new corporatist order was presented as the Fascist solution to the crisis of capitalism, and as stronghold against Bolshevism; the confrontation between liberalism and Fascism, as opposition between “atomistic” individualism and corporatism. This was considered the juridical framework that regulated the social collaboration:

«Besides the new concepts of freedom and equality, there is also the *social solidarity*, that is, the solidarity among the men and among the different professional categories, which are no longer considered fighting to death as they represent the various conflicting interests of the capitalists and proletarians. On the contrary, these classes are put on the same footing of collaboration, under the aegis of the State, which direct and guide them toward the supreme goals of the Nation, achieving for them the principles of a complete

⁶⁶⁴ *Assicurazioni sociali*, Capodistria, V. Focardi, 1939, p.3.

⁶⁶⁵ INFPS, *Al di là del lavoro e del salario*, Firenze, Vallecchi, 1942, p.3.

and real social justice.»⁶⁶⁶

The Fascists did not distinguish social protection from the “corporative revolution”. The regime established some «broad guidelines and the general principles, which inspired the unifying and coordinating action to be implemented in social policy.»⁶⁶⁷ They concerned the collective agreements and the industrial relations, the assistance, the education, and the social insurances. In fact, “corporatist” and “liberal” social insurances differed more for the political purposes than for huge differences in the administration, which were nonetheless important, especially after 1942. For the Fascists, the social insurances were the natural product of the corporative system. Social protection was seen as a measure to dignify work and to inculcate in the workers the social duty of the labour before the nation. The Fascist social legislation did not consistently depart from other compulsory schemes abroad, but did not conceive social solidarity along citizenship-related bases, but as “corporative”, that is, occupational, ties of solidarity, embodied by the Fascist State.

The war broadened the fascist legislation. From 1939 to 1942, family allowances and emergency measure had the major legislative improvements. From the end of 1942 onward, the government enacted the twofold increase of family allowances for the workers of industry, trade, and workers gone to war.⁶⁶⁸ The further legislative actions adjusted social insurances and family allowances according to the war conditions, in a relentless effort to patch and adequate benefits to the new situation, while carrying on with the current administration of the other insurances.⁶⁶⁹ In 1941, the regime covered with family allowances

⁶⁶⁶Ivi. p. 9.

⁶⁶⁷*Ibidem*.

⁶⁶⁸ «Regio Decreto-Legge 25 marzo 1943-XXI, n.314 - Raddoppiamento della misura degli assegni familiari agli impiegati privati ed agli operai richiamati alle armi per esigenze di carattere eccezionale», *GU*, 8 maggio 1943-XXI, n.107.

⁶⁶⁹ INFPS, *Rendiconti dell'anno 1941*, Roma, INFPS, 1942; The complete list of the social acts of the Fascist government during wartime in INFPS, *Indice degli atti ufficiali . Anno 1943*, Roma, INFPS, 1943.

also the soldiers missing or interned.⁶⁷⁰ In the same year, the regime established the increase, at the expense of the State, of unemployment benefits from 120 up to 180 days in the sectors that fell in employment.⁶⁷¹ As remarked in the legislation draft, the extension of the benefits was due to the imbalances in the labour market created by the war and had to be retained also for the recovery, since the measure «is solely and exclusively in relation to the economic situation resulting of the State of war and in the prevision that the process of demobilization and normalization of the national economic activities might be achieved within one year from the end of the war.»⁶⁷² Other provisions developed autonomously from warlike conditions; the sickness and disease schemes significantly increased, while the reform of the invalidity and old-age pension shifted the contributory burden to the employers, who had to finance them for the two-thirds.⁶⁷³

At the very beginning of 1943, the regime enacted the *Ente Mutualità Fascista* (EMF, Fascist Mutualist Authority), a building block in healthcare insurances.⁶⁷⁴ Instead than on a central Ministry for the Health, the regime relied on a State-owned authority to centralize this risk category, in accordance with its general tendency to delegate to separate public authorities the management of public policies. The EMF was placed under the governance of three distinguished Ministries: Corporations, Finance and Domestic Affairs. The reform did not progress, like in Britain with the NHS, towards a distinguished branch of social policy, as it did not even foresee any autonomous centre of public healthcare. However, the law of 11th January 1943 automatically

⁶⁷⁰ «Regio decreto-legge 20 marzo 1941 -XIX, n.123», *GU*, 23 marzo 1941, n. 70; «Regio decreto-legge 29 dicembre 1941-XX, n. 1582», *GU*, 6 febbraio 1942-XX; n. 30.

⁶⁷¹ «Regio Decreto-Legge 17 marzo 1941-XIX, n. 124», *GU*, 23 marzo 1941.

⁶⁷² *Disegno di Legge n. 1339, presentato alla Presidenza il 26 aprile 1941-anno XIX*, «Camera dei Fasci e delle Corporazioni», XXX Legislatura, I della Camera dei Fasci e delle Corporazioni, Roma, 1941.

⁶⁷³ «Legge 12 aprile 1943-XXI, n.455 – Estensione dell’assicurazione obbligatoria contro le malattie professionali », *GU*, 14 giugno 1943-XXI, n. 137; « Regio Decreto-Legge 18 marzo 1943, n. 126 – Aumento delle pensioni e dei contributi dell’assicurazione invalidità e vecchiaia», *GU*, 31 marzo 1943-XXI, n.74.

⁶⁷⁴ «Legge 11 gennaio 1943-XXI, n.138 - Costituzione dell’Ente Mutualità Fascista - Istituto per l’assistenza di malattia ai lavoratori», *GU*, 3 aprile 1943-XXII, n. 77.

included all the workers of industry, agriculture, credit, trade, and the self-employed; for the few other categories, the registration was not compulsory. Further decrees established that the EMF absorbed the private mutualist funds;⁶⁷⁵ while the healthcare still relied on private sector, the insurances were managed by a single authority, achieving an important simplification. Its funding was completely paid by workers and employers, being thus far from the principles of the future British NHS, which moreover was designed as an entirely public service.

Like for Vichy's healthcare policy, the tendency was to merge the functions of social insurances for the worker and his family, medical treatments, and public assistance. The regime never implemented regulatory decrees. Even if it remained on the drawing, the reform was the last effort of the regime to enforce improvement in the social policy. The EMF constituted the third main branch of the Fascist social protection. Three public authorities were in charge of as many policy areas: the compulsory social insurances (old-age, tuberculosis, family allowances, unemployment) administrated by the INFPS; the industrial injuries and disabilities to the INFAIL, and the healthcare insurances coordinated by the EMF. This configuration of the social protection was explained by Bottai: «The *Ente Mutalità Fascista* complements the other great corporatist authorities of the regime, signalling the global coverage guaranteed by the regime to the workers, concerning the social insurances, the industrial injuries, and now, the healthcare.»⁶⁷⁶

Just before the collapse of the regime, Fascism committed to the modernization of an overarching system of social protection. The regime increased the social provisions, in the most sensitive areas in terms of political consensus. There was not a coherent pattern of reform, except for the war needs, as for the case of the family allowances for the workers called to the army. Overall, in the years 1940-42 the regime did not implement comprehensive reforms. Fascism

⁶⁷⁵ «Regio Decreto-Legge 6 maggio 1943-XXI, n. 400», *GU*, 10 maggio 1943, n. 507.

⁶⁷⁶ G. Bottai, *L'idea corporativa nella Riforma*, Roma, Istituto per le Relazioni Culturali con l'Estero, 1943, p.5.

settled major rearrangements of social insurances just before the war. On the other side, as for the Vichy Regime, the regime did not handle the matter with a unitary effort. Only with the establishment of the RSI, Fascism restated designs of social revolution. But in 1943 social protection reached its peak for the extension and structure of the social benefit, both those related to the warfare and the “current” affairs. The history of the RSI was instead related to the attempt to make a qualitative leap in the meaning and the scope of the word “social policy”.

4.2. *The Republican Fascism and the social revolution*

4.2.1. *The Italian Social Republic and the construction of the “State of Labour”*

With the creation of the RSI, the Fascist ruling class attempted to piece together what remained of the former PNF. At the same time, the new-born republican Fascism wanted to grip the control over the territories under its administration. To do so, the Fascists tried to gather the different trends of Fascism, also opening to the political opposition, and to define the main guidelines of the party. As stated in the *Manifesto di Verona*, the most relevant document of the Republican Fascism, the regime wanted to «stay with the people».⁶⁷⁷ The renewed Fascism wanted to quickly come back to fight and to enact the “social revolution”.⁶⁷⁸ These two goals were intermingled; to carry out the war, the regime needed to recast consensus and address the wartime social issues. The RSI’s social policy moved along two tracks: the restructuration of the socio-economic basis of the country according to principles of national and social solidarity; dealing with emergency and social assistance, even more compelling as the frontline came closer to the territories under RSI control.

⁶⁷⁷ «Manifesto di Verona», in Roberto Bonini, *La Repubblica Sociale Italiana e la socializzazione delle imprese. Dopo il Codice Civile del 1942*, Torino, G. Giappichelli Editore, pp. 70-72, p.72.

⁶⁷⁸ ACS, RSISPD-CR, 61/630/1, «Agenzia Stefani. Prima riunione Direttorio nazionale Pfr.4 marzo 1944».

The *Manifesto di Verona* fixed the main guidelines of the new formed *Partito Fascista Repubblicano* (PFR, the Fascist Republican Party). The second part of the *Manifesto* was consecrated to social policy. Its programme mediated among different constituencies, gathered around the new ideological shibboleth of the “socialization”, a concept never used by Fascism before 1943. The RSI’s social policy covered three main areas; the socialization of industries, the trade unions’ structures, and the social insurances and assistance. The *Manifesto di Verona* stated the labour was at the very foundation of the social and political order of the republic. The major revolutionary interventions concerned the organization of the economy, favouring the labour against the capital (and borrowing, after twenty years of corporatism, the Marxian class lexicon). The regime combined the retail of private property with forms of profit-sharing and cooperative organizations in the factories. The article 11 mentioned the State’s ownership to «everything that for dimensions or functions goes beyond the interest of the individual to enter in the public interest».⁶⁷⁹ The vagueness of this statement left the room for further nationalizations by the hands of the State-owned authorities. The favourite form of socialization was the profit-sharing, the three-headed factory councils, and the creation of land trusts.

Other provisions concerned the creation of a single national trade union, where the workers of all the categories had to register. This trade union incorporated also some tasks and agencies for the management of social protection. The article 16 restated that «all the huge welfare measures set up by the fascist Regime during twenty years are retained. The Labour Charter constitutes in its letter their consecration, just as it constitutes in its spirit the starting point for further improvement.»⁶⁸⁰ The Labour Charter was not repudiated, but its place in the Fascist narrative changed: from the culmination of the Fascist revolution, it became the starting point for further measurers. Relatively new, although relevant, policy areas were the housing policy and the wage policy. The programme foresaw the creation of an agency

⁶⁷⁹«Manifesto di Verona», in Roberto Bonini, *La Repubblica Sociale Italiana e la socializzazione delle imprese. Dopo il Codice Civile del 1942*, p.71.

⁶⁸⁰ Ivi., p.72.

to provide own houses for the workers, with the construction of new public and social houses or the buy-back of the rental payments. This authority had important tasks for the post-war recovery and the revalorization of the buildings. The wage policy, instead, was strictly related to the war commitment, for the control over the inflation and the fight against the black market. The wage adjustment had to reach the national minimum income for workers and employees, hand in hand with price and market control.

During the works at the Verona's Congress in November 1943, leading to the *Manifesto di Verona*, Angelo Tarchi recapitulated the benchmarks of Republican Fascism. Tarchi was Minister of the Corporative Economy in the RSI, in charge of social insurances until the end of the 1944, when the new Ministry of Labour handed over the tasks of social insurances, assistance, labour policy and socialization.⁶⁸¹ Tarchi admitted the failure of corporatism during the *Ventennio*. He complained the intermingling between political personnel, bureaucracies and the trade unions, and the attempt to regulate the social struggle via the merely juridical category of "corporation".⁶⁸² He designed the outline of the new socio-economic setting of what he defined the «Corporative State, or better the State of Labour.»⁶⁸³ The RSI promoted the socialization, the participation of all the productive categories in the management of the enterprises, the sharing of the profits and the harmonisation of the productive activities under the framework of a "national economic programme", bargained by the corporative organisms at every level. Altogether, these measures would lead to the shifting of «*the enterprise from epicentre of the social struggle, to the core of the total collaboration between productive forces.*»⁶⁸⁴

The ultimate goals of corporatism were in fact restated, but turned upside down. In Gentile's "institutional" corporatism, the

⁶⁸¹ ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 83/652/1 «Ministero per l'economia corporativa. Trasformazione del Ministero dell'Economia Corporativa in Ministero per la produzione industriale. S.d.»

⁶⁸² A. Tarchi, «L'organizzazione economico-sociale dello Stato Repubblicano del Lavoro», in Id., *Teste dure*, Milano, Editrice S.E.L.C., 1972, pp. 250-259.

⁶⁸³ Ivi. p. 252.

⁶⁸⁴ Ivi. p. 255 [italics in the text]

corporations represented the expression of the productive categories, embedded into the State's structures. Tarchi, instead, prefigured a State where the producers were the fundamental socio-economic and political cell: «*it is in the enterprise where the very foundation of the corporative concept is born.*»⁶⁸⁵ Tarchi designed a non-statist socialization, where the productive categories co-participated to the productive and distributive activities. The national economic planning was ideally the result of the collaboration between productive categories and the State, which adjusted the outputs to the national programme. Complementary, the other pillar of Tarchi's "social state" was the trade union jurisdiction. The only legal trade union deregulated its functions: from the national collective agreements to local or sectional agreements. The Fascist trade union organized the consensus among the workers, and their co-participation in social protection and assistance, even if the State retained the management of social insurances through its public agencies. With the *Manifesto di Verona*, the regime tried to attract the workers through the two topics that were expected to take a hold over the: the economic planning and the representation in the State's bodies.⁶⁸⁶

In the confusing process of reconstruction of State's authority two points were clear: the new Fascism was "republican" and "social". The Fascists prefigured a State where social protection was integral part of the Constitutional Charter. At least three constitutional projects were presented in 1943, by Bruno Spampanato, influent figure of the RSI, by Vittorio Rolandi Ricci, and by the Minister and former Director of the *Scuola Superiore di Studi Corporativi* of Pisa, Carlo Alberto Biggini.⁶⁸⁷ This latter attached greater importance to social protection. The constitutional guidelines recommended that «welfare laws and provisions for all will be implemented, the assistance for the sick, maintenance for the disabled person, old-age pensions, fair distribution of the labour [*sic*] and of the remuneration, so to eliminate the

⁶⁸⁵ Ivi. p. 256. [italics in the text]

⁶⁸⁶ Ivi. p. 258.

⁶⁸⁷ Roberto Bonini, *La Repubblica Sociale Italiana e la socializzazione delle imprese. Dopo il Codice Civile del 1942*, pp. 17-22 and pp. 146-212.

exploitation of the work, each will enjoy the fruits of his own works.»⁶⁸⁸ The integration of the workers in the State's structure resulted in the new role of the "Senate" [*sic*], now become «Supreme Body of the Labour», as it gathered all the labour's representatives, whose election was determined by social and economic bodies and by the Chief of the State.⁶⁸⁹ The traditional "aristocratic" nature of the Senate was replaced by the «supreme assembly of the Labour's aristocracy»⁶⁹⁰ Besides social protection, the constitutional draft had "progressive features", validated by Mussolini himself: the draft proposed universal suffrage, gender political and social equality, abolition of titles and honours, progressive taxation, free and compulsory education and scholarships for the students, housing owned, reorganization of the national healthcare system. The draft also proposed the socialization of the industries and large estates, under cooperative forms or with the State's direct control. The other constitutional drafts had similar social content. Rolando Ricci, for instance, proposed to create another social authority, the *Ente Nazionale Edile* (National Housing Authority) to promote the housing policy, and the transfer of ownership to workers' families. The housing policy was one of warhorses of RSI propaganda, but was mainly an antic-cyclical measure; the post-war republican parties used the housing policy was used as social and employment policy.

In the introductory relation to the decree on socializations, Minister Tarchi announced the core concepts of the renewed Fascist social policy, which had to «accompany the action of the weapons with the affirmation of a political idea». ⁶⁹¹ The RSI linked social policy to the outcomes of the war, regarded as a confrontation between capitalist

⁶⁸⁸ ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 2/24/1, «Alcune idee sul futuro assetto politico e sociale del popolo italiano. S.d.», p.l.

⁶⁸⁹ See the different hypotheses in ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 2/24/3, «Precedenti storici e prime idee per una riforma del Senato. S.d.», pp. 17-18.

⁶⁹⁰ Ivi., pp. 1 and 2.

⁶⁹¹ A. Tarchi, «Relazione al d.g. del Duce 12 febbraio 1944, n.375, "Socializzazione delle Imprese" G.U. n. 151 del 30 giugno 1944», in Francesca Romana Scardaccione (ed.), *Verbalì del Consiglio dei Ministri della Repubblica Sociale Italiana. Settembre 1943 - aprile 1945*, Roma, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali Direzione Generale per gli Archivi, 2002, p.324.

plutocratic Powers and proletarian Nations and their «new order».⁶⁹² The war set in motion structural changes in every belligerent party; only through the victory, the Fascist social model could assert itself against Anglo-Saxons social reforms and Soviet collectivism. The socialization joined social and economic policies, overcame capitalism without abolishing the private property, and followed the principles «of a higher social justice, of fairer redistribution of wealth, of the participation of Labour to the life of the State».⁶⁹³ The core of the reforms dealt with the regulation of the production, the social function of the enterprises and their management, and the creation of new and more centralized authorities, like the *Istituto Gestione e Finanziamento* (IGeFi, the authority managing State's shareholding, funding and investment to the private sector). The relation barely lapped the social insurances, focusing on the interlink between social and economic policy. While in Britain full employment was regarded as the complementary State's intervention to support social security, the RSI tackled with a different approach the issue of the «range of collective needs that the State for obvious reasons had to face.»⁶⁹⁴ The Fascists wanted to regulate economy to boost the productivity, and then redistribute the wealth with forms of profit-sharing and self-management in industry. The socialization was a «powerful tool to discipline the development of the production according to criteria of general interests, and no longer sectional.»⁶⁹⁵ In this sense, the decree concerned social policy; the RSI deployed a thorough reform of the productive basis of the State into which incorporate social insurances.

Tarchi stressed the political continuities of the *Premise to Socialization* with regard to the whole evolution of the Fascist social policy.⁶⁹⁶ He attempted to give theoretical basis to the socialization. It had no theoretical roots in Italian economic thought and policies; at best, emergency measures rescued the banking system, and, by 1936, the

⁶⁹² *Ibidem.*

⁶⁹³ *Ibidem.*

⁶⁹⁴ *Ivi.* p. 331.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibidem.*

⁶⁹⁶ A. Tarchi, *Parole sulla socializzazione*, Milano, S.A.M.E., 1944.

State already hold part of the Italian industrial stocks. Tarchi stressed the continuities between the 1927 Labour Charter and the socializations, which created a mixed economy where the capital was socialized yet neither nationalized nor suppressed. It was “socialized” since the profits were distributed among the different elements of the industries. The issue of the private property assumed a certain relevance in this debate; one year and half before, the new Civil Code defined the property according to its “social function”, in opposition of the traditional subjective conception of property.⁶⁹⁷ According to law historian Roberto Bonini, in the *Manifesto di Verona* stood out the «lack of any reference to very recent code, as it [the RSI *n.d.a.*] already lives in another world and out of history (or, at least, to “that” history). [...] convey us the meaning of the secondment, if not explicit rejection, of twenty years of history.»⁶⁹⁸ In reality, the “place” of property resulted from the compromise between the left-wing, and the more conservative elements. In the article ten of the Manifesto, the property was «State guaranteed» if it is «the result of work and individual saving», and if it not «disintegrates the physical and moral personality of other men, through the exploitation of the work.» However, the 1942 Civil Code was not disowned. The Article 1 of the decree on the socializations explicitly declared that «the “labour” takes directly to the management of the socialized enterprise. The regulation of the socialized enterprises is codified by this decree and related implementing rules, by the statute of each enterprise, by the norms of the Civil Code, and by the special laws as they do not contradict this decree.»⁶⁹⁹ The management involved all the productive actors of each enterprise, with the co-operation between the chief and the works councils that gathered employees and workers.

The socialization strengthened the collaboration between producers in the basic units of production, as «by embedding the

⁶⁹⁷ See the *Libro Terzo* of the Civil Code, which deals with the right of property, «R.D. Approvazione del testo del Codice Civile, 16 marzo 1942, n.262», *GU*, 4 aprile 1942, n.79.

⁶⁹⁸ R. Bonini, *La Repubblica Sociale Italiana e la socializzazione delle imprese. Dopo il Codice Civile del 1942*, p.15.

⁶⁹⁹ «Decreto legislativo del Duce – Socializzazione delle Imprese, 12 febbraio 1944-XXII, n. 375», *GU*, 30 giugno 1944.

workers in the organism of the enterprises, in order to allow them to regulate it, concretely implemented the concept of Labour-Collaboration.»⁷⁰⁰ The principles of collaboration were devolved from the “institutional corporatism” to a sort of “industrial codetermination”; this might recall the German *Mitbestimmung*.⁷⁰¹ The corporatist principle of the *Carta del Lavoro* where transferred from governmental institutions to the enterprises, where the intermediate bodies guaranteed «the match of the salary with the daily exigencies of life, with the productive capabilities, and with the labour productivity.»⁷⁰² For Tarchi, the 1927 Fascist social programme was finally implemented in 1944 with the decree on the socialization, thanks to the war. It made clear the betrayal of capitalists and conservatives, and erased the block of interests, giving the opportunity to «recast among the material and spiritual ruins a better Italy.»⁷⁰³ The war was revolutionary due to economic, geo-political reasons, and ideological reasons. Tarchi restated the traditional Fascist narrative on WWII; in his view, the access to raw materials became fundamental to increase the production and put into practice a major redistribution of the national income. “Total war” became the way through which achieve the new socio-economic structure: «pursue the struggle for winning the war until the end; without this is not even conceivable the implementation of any kind of social justice, because to lose the war means leave the field open to the forces of the capitalist reaction represented by the Anglo-Saxon world.»⁷⁰⁴ The war brought together different topics of the Fascist social policy’s conceptualization: the contraposition between capitalist empires and proletarian powers; the link between power politics and social welfare. The new Fascist State proclaimed itself inherently “social” in the sense that its structures resulted from renewed industrial and social relations emanated by the “productive units”. These “revolutionary” policies and ideology at the foundation

⁷⁰⁰ Ivi. p. 5.

⁷⁰¹ even if in the archive records there is no specific reference to this model.

⁷⁰² *Carta del Lavoro*, cit., art. 12.

⁷⁰³ Ivi. p. 8.

⁷⁰⁴ Ivi. p. 7.

of the new State were accompanied by current legislation and administration of the social insurances and provisions.

4.2.2. *Legislative continuities, revolutionary reforms*

The's RSI social policy gravitated around two poles: the improvement of previous policies and the implementation of structural reforms. The latter accompanied the reorganization of the social authorities.⁷⁰⁵ They followed the split of the social and assistance authorities between Northern and Southern Italy, with regulatory and administrative overlapping. As for the jurisdiction, the INFPS continued to operate and provide social benefits only in the Northern Italy, until the collapse of the regime.⁷⁰⁶ The INFAIL and the EMF were put under the oversight of governmental special commissioners who took over the collegiate management.⁷⁰⁷ In its overall discontinuous law-making, the RSI passed a quantitatively relevant legislation, 50 decrees from October 1943 to March 1945.⁷⁰⁸ The main part of these acts provided minor administrative adjustments, but other reforms were

⁷⁰⁵ The resettlement of INFPS was implemented with the «Decreto Interministeriale 21 gennaio 1944-XXII, n.87», and with the «Decreto Ministeriale 4 febbraio 1944-XXII, n.89», both in *GU*, n. 72, 27 marzo 1944.

⁷⁰⁶ «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 15 dicembre 1944-XXII, n. 985 - Sospensione dei termini in materia di assistenza sociale nelle zone invase dal nemico», *GU*, n. 32, 8 febbraio 1945.

⁷⁰⁷ For the INFAIL the decree were the «Decreto Ministeriale 4 febbraio 1944-XXII, n.88», in *GU*, n.72, 27 marzo 1944, and the «Decreto Ministeriale 8 maggio 1944-XXII», n. 329, *GU*, 21 giugno 1944-XXII, n. 144.

⁷⁰⁸ Among the most important laws on social insurances: «Decreto Interministeriale 25 gennaio 1944-XII, n. 137 - Corresponsione delle indennità di richiamo e degli assegni familiari alle famiglie dei richiamati per i quali non è possibile accertare l'attuale situazione», *GU*, 22 aprile 1944, n.95; «Decreto Ministeriale 21 aprile 1944-XXII, n. 173 - Norme per la concessione degli assegni di natalità e nuzialità», *GU*, 10 maggio 1944, n. 110; «Decreto del Duce 23 maggio 1944-XXII, n.289 - Aumento del 30% delle pensioni indirette di guerra», *GU*, 17 giugno 1944, n. 141; «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 31 agosto 1944-XXII, n. 603 - Abrogazione del decreto legislativo 8 maggio 1944-XXII, n. 194, concernente il risparmio obbligatorio», *GU*, n.229, 30 settembre 1944; «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 15 novembre 1944-XXIII, n. 844 - Assicurazione contro gli infortuni sul lavoro dei cittadini mobilitati per il servizio del lavoro», *GU*, n. 291, 14 dicembre 1944.

more relevant. The legislation kept moving towards the unification of social insurances, harmonizing to the global contemporary trend, to which Britain had the lead. The acts implemented by the RSI also incorporated embryonic elements of the “social revolution”, promised in the *Manifesto di Verona*.

As for the Vichy regime, the legislation covered some specific categories of workers in Germany or for the German enterprises.⁷⁰⁹ Conjunctural measures, like family allowances for the missing soldiers after 8th September, were submitted to some limitations and prerequisites, and administratively streamlined.⁷¹⁰ This act revised and limited the provisions passed in 1941; as the war carried out, the twofold increase of family allowances for the working categories excluding the agricultural, were unsustainable for the employers and the State, whose contribution for 1943 and 1944 was estimated in 350 million. The enlargement of the social provisions was difficultly manageable from the financial point of view. The Ministry of the Finance recommended to uniform the contributions for family allowances among the working categories to balance the burden.⁷¹¹ Financial issues concurred thus to limit the scope of the social intervention in some sensitive areas.

The assistance measures overlapped traditional insurance benefits. The *Opera Nazionale Mutilati and Invalidi del Lavoro* (the Assistance for Work Injured) was placed under the control of the INFAIL, as complementary agency; while the INFAIL covered the insurance contribution, the *Opera* provided the social assistance. Tasks of this agency were the healthcare, the material and psychological

⁷⁰⁹ «Decreto del Duce 20 febbraio 1944-XXII, n.94 - Disposizioni per i pagamenti in Italia dei risparmi ai beneficiari indicati dai lavoratori ed impiegati che prestano la loro opera in Germania», *GU*, 29 marzo 1944, n. 74; «Determinazione Intercommissariale 29 settembre 1943-XXI - Pagamento delle rimesse dei lavoratori italiani in Germania alle famiglie in Italia», *GU*, 12 febbraio 1944-XXII, n.35.

⁷¹⁰ ACS, RSI - Ministero del Lavoro, 785G, «Istituto Nazionale Fascista della Previdenza Sociale - Assegni familiari, criteri di massima. 1 settembre 1944».

⁷¹¹ ACS, RSI - Ministero del Lavoro, 785G, «Direzione Generale del Lavoro e della Previdenza Sociale - Appunto sulla soppressione del concorso dello Stato nella maggiorazione degli assegni familiari- Agosto 1943».

assistance, the physical recovery, the assistance to the family of the disabled and the reintegration into the labour market.⁷¹² The law integrated assistance and insurance action, concentrating both functions in the same authority, which constituted the host centre to each risk category. Something similar happened with the management of the sanatoriums for the treatment of tuberculosis, run by the INFPS for the insured. These were attempts to rationalize the different branches of social policy, incorporating the healthcare in the compulsory social provisions. After 1943, some serious elaborations for the improvement of the healthcare services were proposed. It is a stretch to infer echoes from the British debates on the NHS, but the traditional Fascist mutualist conception matched with a new approach the function of the healthcare policy:

«It is only through the implementation of an *universalistic* [the italics is mine] System that we can create the figures of the “state medical” and of the “state sick” [sic], the two elements, which represent the technical and economic basis of fascist mutualism. “State medical” who behaves, in the healthcare assistance, with the ultimate goal of the good of the corporative State; “State sick” [sic] who considers his own health as a need for the power of the State.»⁷¹³

Some proposals to extend on national basis uniform healthcare provisions with tasks of preventive medicine were at least debated. The national healthcare service had «an important political setback through the function of propaganda that it could fulfil»⁷¹⁴, and this especially in the midst of the war. The proposals differed from British universalism underpinning the free health system; the Fascists prefigured a national, unified, and inclusive healthcare service, placed under the control of

⁷¹² «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 21 aprile 1944-XXII, n.251 - Istituzione dell’Opera Nazionale Mutilati ed Invalidi del Lavoro», *GU*, 7 giugno 1944-XXII, n. 133.

⁷¹³ A. Salotti, *L’assistenza sanitaria nell’Ente mutualità fascista: proposta di un metodo*, Siena, Lazzeri, 1943, pp. 1-2.

⁷¹⁴ Ivi, p. 2

the EMF. The national healthcare was still mutualist and corporative, and covered only the workers and their family. The access was not related to rights of citizenship but to the status of insured worker; indeed, it was not founded by general revenues, but by the contributions of workers and employers. It was still grounded on the central function of the Italian mutualist GPs; the hospitalization, the nursing at home and the sick leaves had to be validated by him. These further improvements in the healthcare insurances grounded on the reform of January 1943, and pushed forward the process of centralization of social services.

Toward greater rationalization moved also the unification of the different contributions for industrial workers, self-employed and home workers. The unification concerned all the compulsory schemes: old-age, invalidity, survivors' pensions, tuberculosis, unemployment, marriage and maternity benefits, work-related injuries, sickness, the separate schemes for white collars, and family allowances.⁷¹⁵ The single contribution covered also the allowances for the workers called to the army, the measures for wage supports, and the compulsory trade union dues for the inscription to the *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro, della Tecnica e delle Arti* (CGLTA, the national union), the brand new compulsory insurance that linked the trade union system to the social protection. The employers had the most important charge, except for the trade unions due. The act established that, from the second half of 1944, the workers' contribution charges were transferred to the enterprises, while for the separate pensions funds the charge of workers was retained, decreased by a third.⁷¹⁶ The administrative

⁷¹⁵ «Decreto Ministeriale 20 settembre 1944-XXII - Determinazione delle misure dei contributi dovuti, a norma del Decreto Legislativo 10 maggio 1944-XXII, n. 376 dalle imprese artigiane e industriali», *GU*, 19 dicembre 1944, n.295.

⁷¹⁶ The complete charge of the social contributions, originally limited to the industries and craft firms, was later extended to other sectors, «Decreto interministeriale 20 settembre 1944-XXII, n. 853 - Carico di contributi per le assicurazioni sociali obbligatorie e per l'assistenza malattia», *GU*, 19 dicembre 1944, n. 295. «Decreto Ministeriale 16 settembre 1944-XXII - Approvazione del Regolamento per l'unificazione dei contributi dovuti dalle imprese industriali ed artigiane e dai lavoratori dipendenti», *GU*, 23 dicembre 1944, n. 299.

simplification was achieved by registering all the contributory records into one single work card.⁷¹⁷ These administrative changes were regarded as «some innovative principles in the field of the social security, which are framed into those measures that the government is about to implement, meant to give impetus to the social feature of the Italian Republic of Labour.»⁷¹⁸

The contributory unification did not merely simplify the system, which was now covered by only one employment record. It was also in line with the trends of coordination, of the compulsory insurances carried out in the European countries, and had embryonic elements of “universalism”. The 1944 reform extended the compulsory social insurances to all the working categories, prefiguring the gradual overcoming of the occupational setting of the Italian social insurances. It also embedded family allowances within the system of compulsory scheme. This principles «aimed, on the one side, at increasing the disposable income of the workers and at improving the insurance claims, and, on the other, to bring the workers close in the rights and in the duties that came from the work.»⁷¹⁹ Another measure was comparable to countries like Britain or France; the consolidation of all the tasks of social protection within a single Ministry. It was the Ministry of the Corporative Economy, until march 1945, when all the functions passed to a new-born Ministry of Labour, which also took the matters relating to the socialization.⁷²⁰

The legislative activity carried out until the last weeks also addressed the changes brought by the war conditions to the social

⁷¹⁷ «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 10 maggio 1944, n.376 - Unificazione dei contributi e tenuta del libretto di lavoro nel settore dell'industria», *GU*, 1 luglio 1944, n.152; «Decreto Ministeriale 16 settembre 1944-XXII - Approvazione del Regolamento per l'unificazione dei contributi dovuti dalle imprese industriali ed artigiane e dai lavoratori dipendenti», *GU*, 23 dicembre 1944, n. 299; Ministero dell'Economia Corporativa, *Regolamento per la esecuzione del Decreto 10 maggio 1944 n.376 sull'unificazione dei contributi nell'industria*, Bergamo, SESA, 1944.

⁷¹⁸ ACS, SPDRSI - CR, 84/656/2, «Agenzia Stefani n.17. 1 luglio 1944-XXII»

⁷¹⁹ *Ivi*.

⁷²⁰ «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 1 febbraio 1945 - Ordinamento dei Ministeri della Produzione Industriale e del Lavoro», *GU*, 12 marzo 1945, n. 59.

insurances: survivors' pensions, temporary supplementary benefits for retired people, and the pensions of invalidities. The principle was to retain benefits and allowances for the soldiers, equalizing the period in the army as work. The different contribution of the soldiers were then inserted in the insurance's class categories of their previous jobs, to calculate the effective burden to the State for granting pensions of invalidity and the other social benefits after the war.⁷²¹ Other RSI' social measures dealing with emergency were the transformation of all the restaurant in collective canteens and the requisition and nationalization of important sector in the food industry.⁷²²

On the other hand, the harshest times of the war and the resurgence of the so-called "Fascist left" radicalized the ideology of the RSI. The *Commissariato Nazionale del Lavoro* (National Labor Office), under direct governmental control, assisted the CGLTA in the regulation of salaries, working conditions, employment and assistance to the workers abroad.⁷²³ The CGLTA superseded the previous corporative trade unions, as the category organizations were replaced by one single union on national basis, gathering in the same organization workers and employers. The mechanisms of social interests' representation were thus reshaped; the new "totalitarian" national trade union brought together salaried workers (of industry and agriculture), managers and technicians of the industries, traders, shopkeepers, employees in the private and public sector, artists and white-collars. Some specific categories were excluded: «to the capital, to the property as source of labour and production, to the business

⁷²¹ See the different drafts and projects in ACS, RSI/Ministero del Lavoro, 797G, «Schema decreto recante norme per la liquidazione delle pensioni ai superstiti in caso di morte assicurati e pensionati dell'assicurazione obbligatoria invalidità e vecchiaia. 21 marzo 1945»;

⁷²²«Decreto del Duce 31 dicembre 1944-XXIII, n. 298 - Trasformazione in mense collettive di guerra di tutti i ristoranti e trattorie di qualsiasi categoria», *GU*, 4 gennaio 1945, n. 3; «Decreto del Duce 4 gennaio 1945-XXIII, n.1 - Requisizione delle aziende dei grossisti in derrate alimentari e delle aziende industriali per la produzione, lavorazione, e trasformazione dei generi alimentari», *GU*, 4 gennaio 1945, n.3.

⁷²³ «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 7 dicembre 1943-XXII, n. 843 - Istituzione del Commissariato Nazionale del Lavoro», *GU*, 17 gennaio 1944-XXII, n.12.

companies and to the public limited companies as such, no trade union representation is recognized.»⁷²⁴ All the social public-owned authorities hooked up to the CGLTA, which took in charge some of the functions of education, training, assistance and protection of the workers and their families.

The juridical status of the confederation was framed by the trade unions legislation, just few months before the end of the war.⁷²⁵ The legal system allowed to «achieve the active participation of the workers to the political, economic, and social life of the State», and put into practice the principle that «The Labour, in all its manifestations, constitutes the very foundation of the Italian Social Republic.»⁷²⁶ The trade union legislation established the structures and competences of the CGLTA, and provided the right/duty of representation of the working organizations in the State authorities. The CGLTA had hierarchical structures, from the “municipal unions” to the national confederation. The national leadership was approved by the government, implying the union’s subordination to the State. The aim was to regiment and mobilize the workers both geographically and by category, guaranteeing what was defined the «uniform worker protection» and their participation at any hierarchical level.⁷²⁷ The CGLTA also was the transmission belt of the workers’ claims to the State; participated to the wage policies, the improvement of the production, the cost reduction; regulated the collective agreement; took in charge of the social protection, the training, and the assistance; had a voice, with a vague formula, in «all the other functions useful to the pursuit of the social goals of the Republic.»⁷²⁸ The trade union was also allowed to set up parastatal authorities for recreational and training activities. The functions related to the social protection were rather

⁷²⁴ «Decreto del Duce 20 dicembre 1943-XXII, n. 853 - Costituzione della Confederazione generale del lavoro, della tecnica, delle arti», *GU*, 2 febbraio 1944-XXII, n. 26, p. 122.

⁷²⁵ «Decreto del Duce 18 gennaio 1945-XXIII, n.3 - Ordinamento sindacale», *GU*, 26 gennaio 1945, n.21.

⁷²⁶ Ivi. p. 111.

⁷²⁷ Ivi. p. 112.

⁷²⁸Ivi. p. 112.

supplementary schemes, as the compulsory insurances were still monopoly of the INFPS.⁷²⁹ The trade union dues were amalgamated to the other compulsory insurances and were the only contribution completely paid by the workers. The legislation designed a “trade union State”, which merged the party, the public policies, the State and the unions. The CGLTA penetrated in the socio-economic basis of the country also by the functions assigned in the enterprises, regardless they were socialized or not. The trade union could set up internal committees to settle the individual and collective controversial in the factories, advise on the matters of production and create mutual-aid organizations. At a national level, the CGLTA established the collective agreements within its joint structures workers/employers, and had the charge of the Employment Offices on the territories.⁷³⁰

The trade union legislation corresponded to an ideological rationale, pointing at unifying labour authorities and organizations. Also due to objective difficulties in the administrative reorganization, these projects mostly remained statement of principles or «a time bomb placed against the winning Anglo-Americans.»⁷³¹ However, they account the effort to give a social footprint to RSI puppet government in the search for a coherent solution to the “social question”. The overall setting of the RSI social legislation was ambiguously related to the heritage of the twenty previous years. On the one side, the RSI pretended to overcome corporatism. On the other, its effective policy could not disregard the former policies. Fascism had apparently exhausted its social programme in the corporatism, and after 1943 there was no room and no force for further elaborations.

⁷²⁹ «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 20 dicembre 1943-XXII, n.853», *GU*, 7febbraio 1944, n.26.

⁷³⁰ «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 2 febbraio 1944-XXII, n.65 - Disciplina del collocamento dei lavoratori», *GU*, 18 marzo 1944, n. 68.

⁷³¹ L.Gaeta, A. Visconti, «L'Italia e lo stato sociale», in Gerhard Ritter, *Storia dello stato sociale*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2011, pp. 227-276, p. 249.

4.3. *The socialization of the industries*

4.3.1. *The side-slip towards wartime socio-economic totalitarianism*

The RSI passed the socialization of the industries in 1944.⁷³² The label “socialization” was apparently suggested by the “pro-communist” Nicola Bombacci, while originally the Fascists opted for the more appropriate definition of “social collaboration”.⁷³³ The legislative decree established the guidelines, and the creation of a mixed economy, where the public and private enterprises coexisted. The socialization and the trade union legislation addressed the economic organization of the State, but also intermingled social policy, and overall created what the regime defined the «new fascist social order.»⁷³⁴

The socialization aimed at incorporating the workers in the management of industries and profit-sharing. The measure was directed to all public industries and to the private business that had – by 1st January 1944 – one hundred employees and one million of capital. The different kinds of enterprise had to elaborate a statute in accordance with the guidelines established in the first part of the law. With few differences, they set up co-joint councils: industrial assemblies, management board, board of auditors. These organisms guaranteed equal representativeness to the labour (workers, technicians, employees) and the capital (shareholders).⁷³⁵ Their statutes were validated by the Ministry of Corporative Economy, and then published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*.⁷³⁶ All the factories voted the chief of the enterprise, which only in the

⁷³² «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 12 febbraio 1944-XXII, n. 375 - Socializzazione delle imprese», *GU*, 30 giugno 1944, n. 151.

⁷³³ R, Bonini, *La Repubblica Sociale Italiana e la socializzazione delle imprese*, p. 222.

⁷³⁴ ACS, SPDRSI - CR, 84/656/2, «Relazione del decreto del Duce sulla costituzione dell'istituto nazionale fascista della cooperazione. S.d.», p. 1.

⁷³⁵ «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 12 febbraio 1944-XXII, n. 375 - Socializzazione delle imprese», art. 3-7.

⁷³⁶ There is a certain documentary proof that various enterprises had their statutes approved. ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 27/221 – Socializzazione dell'impresa, «Agenzia Stefani, 2 marzo 1945-XXIII»

individual enterprise had to correspond to the entrepreneur; in public enterprises he was nominated by the Ministry of Corporative Economy and by the Treasury, while in the private business was chosen among the shareholders, and, for the limited companies, «the chief of the enterprise is elected among persons of proven technical and administrative capacity within or outside the enterprise.»⁷³⁷ The tasks of the chiefs of the enterprises (cut off to workers' representatives by the law) were relevant; he was responsible of the production and of its harmonization to «the needs of the general planning of the production and to the directive of the State social policy.»⁷³⁸ The most part of the Italian industrial base was not submitted to a “true” socialization, but rather to the coordination to national productive plans. The social collaboration was now devolved from national corporations to each productive unit.

In accordance to Fascist “third way”, the socialization did not mean public property nor workers' control of the enterprise. The State took over «the property of the enterprises in the key sectors for the political and economic independence of the State, as well as the providers of raw materials, energy, or the services required for the smooth functioning of the social life, might be assumed by the State by the hands of the I.Ge.Fi.»⁷³⁹ It mentioned the *Istituto di Gestione e Finanziamento* (IGeFi, Management and Funding Authority), a public authority with a separate incorporate entity (juridically differing from IRI and IMI). The IGeFi amalgamated IRI and IMI, and was a project supported at least since 1943 by Tarchi; the new authority centralized the functions of Fascist public interventionism during the Thirties. The rationale rested on ideological and conjunctural reasons:

«The opportunity to amalgamate the two functions in a single organism is clear [...] But the inherent intermingling

⁷³⁷ «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 12 febbraio 1944-XXII, n. 375 - Socializzazione delle imprese», art. 9.

⁷³⁸ «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 12 febbraio 1944-XXII, n. 375 - Socializzazione delle imprese», art. 22.

⁷³⁹ «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 12 febbraio 1944-XXII, n. 375 - Socializzazione delle imprese», art.31.

between the two activities [...] did not become, as it should and could, a way to control the productive activity and to replacement of the private property of the capital with the public ownership, in all cases where the collective interests required it. It is even more opportune, therefore, in the moment when we reorganize the socio-economic structure of the country, to organically gather the functions of management of public capitals, of public participation in private enterprises, of medium- to long term financing, in a single institute, which will have to, with unitary criteria and following the economic directives of the Ministry of Corporative Economy, collect the operating surpluses of the public enterprises and those of the private businesses where it participates. It will use them, alongside with the direct saving of the investments, for furthers investments and financing operations.»⁷⁴⁰

In the second half of 1944, only after the law on socialization, the RSI enacted the decrees on the regulation and structure of the IGeFi.⁷⁴¹ It was never operational, but signalled the political will to to carry on a more radical policy of centralization of the older economic institutions of the regime. This national authority was expected to become the only public lending institution that provided credit to the whole industrial system, under the directives of the Ministry of Corporative Economy, being the fundamental tool to harmonize production to the governmental guidelines and national planning.

The aspects with the greatest implications concerned the workers' profit-sharing. The new organization of the enterprises

⁷⁴⁰«Repubblica Sociale Italiana – Socializzazione delle imprese. Istituto di Gestione e Finanziamento (I.Ge.Fi.)», in R, Bonini, *La Repubblica Sociale Italiana e la socializzazione delle imprese*, pp. 278-292, p. 286.

⁷⁴¹ «Decreto Legislativo del Duce – Costituzione dell'Istituto di Gestione e Finanziamento (I.Ge.Fi.), 12 febbraio 1944XXII, n. 269», *GU*, 13 giugno 1944, n. 137; «Relazione al Decreto Legislativo del Duce concernente l'istituzione dell'Istituto di Gestione e Finanziamento» in R, Bonini, *La Repubblica Sociale Italiana e la socializzazione delle imprese*, pp. 298-301. See also ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 32/240R/1, «Statuto dell'Istituto di Gestione e Finanziamento».

sparked off a stakeholder economy among all the productive actors of the enterprise. It was established in percentage to the yearly compensations, and in any case up to maximum 30% of the annual global net remunerations to the workers. The surpluses were delivered to the Compensation Fund managed by the IGeFi, which devoted these surpluses «to social and productive purposes»⁷⁴², and notably – it was suggested – «the preeminent destination to the development of social housing»,⁷⁴³ which was the other core social policy area of the regime. The repartition of the profit and the joint representation were at the foundation of the project of socialization. The act of February 1944 was a compromise that let the workers in the life of the industries, yet left them subordinate to the employers, who were likely to express the chief of the enterprise and enjoyed the main part of the profit-sharing. The act intervened on the functioning and representativeness within the industries, but, on purpose, did not change the hierarchies, the roles, and the balance of economic power between labour and capital. And yet, the compromise was achieved not without divergences in the elaboration of the draft reform. Mussolini's Head of Cabinet, Francesco Maria Barracu, complaint the «wretched and humiliating» solutions, especially for the distribution of profits.⁷⁴⁴ Tarchi, instead, recommended caution and the need to bargain the legislative process with the Nazi authorities, and to overcome the resistances opposed by the industrialists.⁷⁴⁵ Other reports accused the inefficiencies of the peripheral apparatus for the delay and uncertainties in the reforms. The industrial workers were considered sensitive to the socialization, but the trusts they apparently still put on the RSI might be disappointed by

⁷⁴² «Decreto Legislativo del Duce 12 febbraio 1944-XXII, n. 375 - Socializzazione delle imprese», art.46.

⁷⁴³ «Repubblica Sociale Italiana – Socializzazione delle imprese. Istituto di Gestione e Finanziamento (IGe.Fi.)», p. 290.

⁷⁴⁴ ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 27/ 221- Socializzazione delle imprese, «Appunto di Barracu per il Duce. S.d.», p.1.

⁷⁴⁵ ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 27/221/7, «Lettera del Ministro Tarchi al duce. 11/2/1944».

halfway reforms.⁷⁴⁶ The notes sent to Mussolini estranged from reality, as already in 1944 the regime completely lost the popular consensus. However, they convey how, within different milieus of the RSI, a thorough debate developed on limits and extents of the social reforms.

The contrasts were not limited to dispute between the “left-wing” and the conservatives, but also between the supporters of the socializations and the trade unionists. The former claimed for the reorganization of the socio-economic structures, while the latter gave pre-eminence to the ratification of the new place of the trade unions in the national life. The different views in the government postponed any consistent improvement; the trade union legal system, for instance, was passed only in 1945.⁷⁴⁷ While the socialization concerned the economic participation of the workers in the industries, the union legal system pointed at integrating them in the decision-making of the State, to «ensure the legal equality of all the producers and their close collaboration within the socialized enterprise; collaborate with the State’s authorities for the boost and the improvement of the production and the reduction of the costs; bargain the collective agreements; take care of the moral and material improvement of the workers, their assistance and training; fulfil, broadly speaking, all the other function to achieve the social goals of the Republic.»⁷⁴⁸ The decree also prefigured the transition of some of the insurance regulations from the State to the trade union. In turn, the Ministry of Labour, not set up yet by January 1945, monitored the activities of the CGLTA, which had – like the IGeFi – separate incorporated entity.⁷⁴⁹ The lack of independence of the trade union restated the governmental control over major aspects like collective agreements, or legal representation. The references to CGLTA’s social tasks were vague enough to suggest that its only real “social functions” resulted in the recreational and

⁷⁴⁶ Some reports suggested to start the socialization with the industries of the Jews and the other enemies of the regime, see ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 27/221 – Socializzazione delle imprese, «Appunto per il Duce. Socializzazione delle imprese. 6 giugno 1944-XXII».

⁷⁴⁷ «Decreto del Duce sull’Ordinamento sindacale, 18 gennaio 1945-XXIII n.3», *GU*, 26 gennaio 1945, n.21.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ivi.* art. 4.

⁷⁴⁹ *Ivi.* art. 8 and 9.

after-work activities, by their nature exploitable for propaganda. However, the decrees passed too late; within two months the regime collapsed, making impossible – like for all the pillars of the RSI social policy – to implement the structures of the new social order.

The Fascist legislation proceeded quantitatively stronger than in the first phase of the war, but the related institutions never took root on the territory. The disengagement from the intermediations of the *Ventennio* allowed more radical social plans. In turn, the collapse of the traditional structures of consensus prevented the implementation of the new socio-economic organization. The regime could never extend the trade union structures, the very framework of the new totalitarian State, in the few areas under its control. The Commissary of the *Confederazione Fascista dei Lavoratori dell'Industria* (CFLI, the branch of the industrial workers, the more committed to the social reforms), Nazareno Bonfatti, along with the trade union delegates of the major Northern provinces (Milan, Turin, Genoa, Venice, Bologna), submitted a very critical report on the situation of the RSI's social organization.⁷⁵⁰ They criticized the disorganization of the republican social policy, and the failed unification of social, economic and administrative agencies. The socializations and the trade unions legal system should delegate to the CGLTA the regulation of salaries, work conditions and social policy. The deregulation to the CGLTA could have created the "trade union State", the aim of the RSI's revolutionary syndicalism. This also corresponded to the "totalitarian" unification of the social and labour issues both for the administrations and the policies:

«We have to arrive at the centralization of all the social and economic leverages, in order to ensure, on minimum waste of energies and means, the unity of the management and of the policies' guidelines. The discipline of the basic issue concerning the labour and the prices, for example today divided and fragmentary, it has to be brought back to a unique level of intervention, constituting the most adequate

⁷⁵⁰ ACS, SPDRSI-CO, 28/1487 – Confederazione Fascista Lavoratori dell'Industria, «Al Capo del Governo. Promemoria per il Duce. 8 luglio 1944»

tool to promote, coordinate, and realize the social politics of the new Republican State.»⁷⁵¹

To achieve the totalitarian trade union State, the central organisms of the CGLTA claimed for the taking-over of the corporatist social institutions. They also wanted to participate to the administrative and account activity of the three-headed fascist social security (INFPS, INFAL, EMF). While these institutions directly concerned the life of the workers, they were outside their own control. The cleavage between the social functions of these authorities and their management, was even aggravated by their temporary receivership that contradicted the guidelines of the Fascist social policy on the deregulation to the trade unions. The CFLI claimed for the implementation of the co-joint direction of the social authorities between government and trade unions, a first step towards the intermingling of “social” and “economic” policy, and the totalitarian trade union State.

Similar limits also concerned the daily administration at local level. Other notes sent to Tarchi underlined the disbandment of the trade union organisms within the RSI, just few months after their re-foundation.⁷⁵² The CFLI indulged in class revolutionary mind-sets and focused on the organizational aspects, but they did not recognize that all the social institutions of the regime – except the assistance and emergence organizations – had no longer popular support. They denounced the decomposition of Fascist trade unions, and the failure of the Fascist social policy; yet, they found the causes in the corruption or in the bourgeois betrayal against the Fascist social revolution.⁷⁵³ This signalled the decoupling between the regime’s organisms and its social basis. On the eve of the Liberation, their dispatches conveyed very well

⁷⁵¹ Ivi.p.4.

⁷⁵² ACS, SPDRSI - CO, 28/1487 - Confederazione Fascista Lavoratori dell’industria, «Per l’Eccellenza Tarchi ministro dell’Economica Corporativa. 11 febbraio 1944-XXII»p. 1.

⁷⁵³ ACS, SPDRSI - CO, 28/1487 - Confederazione Fascista Lavoratori dell’industria, «Per l’Eccellenza Giovanni Dolfi - Segretario Particolare del Duce. 3 gennaio 1944-XXII»; ACS, SPDRSI - CO, 28/1487 - Confederazione Fascista Lavoratori dell’industria, «Per l’Eccellenza Tarchi ministro dell’Economica Corporativa. 11 febbraio 1944-XXII».

the idea on how was received the «fascist revolution of the socialization».⁷⁵⁴ The project aborted in the mobilization of intellectual and political resources, and had very little popular support. In 1945, the institutional bodies for the socialization did not exist yet: «the socialization is considered a very insignificant aim, it has basically no importance!!! [...] unfortunately, we are back to the usual routine; babbling, babbling and bad faith, improvisation and overall lack of preparation.»⁷⁵⁵ No less discouraging was the support to the Republican Fascism:

«Going around the collective canteens in Milan I approached the working people, workers, technicians, profession, etc. but mostly workers, with whom I talked long time, fathoming their morale. I had the clear impression that they are diffident, if not indifferent, to the success of the republican social program. They say, Mussolini was not able to get rid of the groups and men who will do anything to undermine the socialization, whose program in their hands is slipping away day by day, turning from red to white.»⁷⁵⁶

This mistrust in the RSI action rebounded in the strangeness of the regime to factories and to the workers, even if the lack of consensus of the working classes was dropping since the beginning of the war. The RSI's social and labour institutions were empty boxes, which fed the regime's self-referential rhetoric. Few days before the crumble of the regime, the inspectors in the factories could note nothing but the void around the Fascist trade unions.⁷⁵⁷

The regime tried with the laws on the socialization and the trade unions to take forward the reorganization of the "State of

⁷⁵⁴ ACS, SPDRSI - CO, 92/ 7700 - Berti Cesare A. Confederazione Fascista Lavoratori dell'industria, «Lettera di Berti a Vecchi. 19 marzo 1945», p.1.

⁷⁵⁵ Ivi. p.1.

⁷⁵⁶ Ivi. p.3.

⁷⁵⁷ ACS, SPDRSI - CO, 92/7700 - Berti Cesare A. Confederazione Fascista Lavoratori dell'industria, «Lettera di Berti a Mussolini. 24 marzo 1945».

Labour”, broadening the social and economic rights of the workers. These policies had to be bargained with the German authorities, which – unlike the French case in the years 1940-2 – scrutinized the socio-economic measures of the RSI, that the Nazis viewed with suspicion. The protected factories and companies were directly controlled by the German authorities, and on their juridical status the Ministry of the Industrial Production could substantially execute the German commands.⁷⁵⁸ A similar subordination concerned also social policy. Many problems arose with regard to the status of the Italian military prisoners or missing soldiers, and their enjoyment of family and soldier allowances. They were submitted to a broad spectrum of different situations, making difficult to uniform their legislation after 1943; it also concerned the jurisdiction of the Italian territories annexed to the Nazi Reich as well as all the integrative provisions related to the war and to the status of the RSI with Nazi Germany.⁷⁵⁹

The Ministry of the Corporative Economy operated in a context of shortage of raw material, inflationary spiral, low productivity, lack of manpower. The burden of the social insurances and of the new social measures did not match the financial situation of the RSI; the charge of the contributions to the enterprises, the end to the layoffs and especially the policy of wage increase revealed unsustainable, if effectively implemented. Given the difficult intermingling of the social goals of the regime with the harsh economic situation and the desperate political position of the RSI, the government had to balance the retain of the social legislation with the necessity to not overburden the economy. The Ministry’s proposal figured out a way to relieve the

⁷⁵⁸ ACS, Ministero dell’Interno - Gabinetto RSI (1943-45), 52/K.52/968/E-a.

⁷⁵⁹ ACS, RSI - Ministero del Lavoro, 821 G, «Ministero delle Corporazioni, Questioni urgenti da risolvere per il trattamento dei richiamati - Collocamento con le autorità tedesche per i provvedimenti in materia sociale. 25 ottobre 1943»; ACS, RSI - Ministero del Lavoro, 821 G, «Istituto Nazionale Fascista della Previdenza Sociale - Assegni familiari agli operai richiamati alle armi e indennità di richiamo agli impiegati privati. 14 ottobre 1943»; ACS, RSI - Ministero del Lavoro, 821 G, «Questioni urgenti da risolvere per il trattamento dei richiamati»; ACS, RSI - Ministero del Lavoro, 821 G, «Direzione Generale del Lavoro e della Previdenza Sociale – Elenchi dei fascicoli trasferiti in Alta Italia concernenti pratiche generali in corso di trattazione. S.d.»

industries from the workforce surplus, ensuring at the same time a «minimum vital income»⁷⁶⁰ for the workers, and their reallocation for reconstruction works. The redundant workers were treated as “temporary unavailable”, retaining their workplace in the enterprise, but being available to tasks of war reparation and disburdening the enterprises submitted to war legislation. The “temporary unavailable” workers were entitled of the minimum vital income (40 L. p/d for the men, 20 for women and men under 18 y. o.), funded for 15% directly by the enterprise, for 35% by the social insurance, and even for 50% by the State. All the current social provisions cumulated the minimum wage of “temporary unavailability”. The Ministry also proposed the increase of family allowances increase to 30% in all industrial sectors, moving towards unified benefits regardless the working categories; the draft decree equalised upwards benefits and contributions between industrial workers and employees.⁷⁶¹

The rationalizing processes were also dictated by the emergency; the RSI tried to find a compromise to carry out the production avoiding economic upheavals and to mitigate social unrest. The agencies for the planning of the public works adopted coercive measures, as for the labour’s militarisation which was hierarchically regimented in “battalions”:

«With these measures, I believe that it is possible to give a precise address to the employment workers in every province, by relocating them to aims related, directly or indirectly, to the war production and the military needs. In the same time, the enterprises are relieved from a consistent part of the surplus workers, who otherwise they [*the enterprises n.d.t.*] would be forced to keep in service, with the

⁷⁶⁰ ACS, SP Duce - CR, 84/656/2, «Relazione agli attuali provvedimenti legislativi per il collocamento in temporanea disponibilità della manodopera non utilizzata presso le imprese e per la costituzione di consorzi provinciali per la ricostruzione e manutenzione di opere pubbliche. S.d.», p. 3.

⁷⁶¹ ACS, SPD - CR, 84/656/1 - Gabinetto Ufficio Legislativo, «Schema di Decreto per l’aumento degli assegni familiari agli operai dell’industria»

related burden, and they shall be, thus, enabled to rely on excessive increases of production costs. The financial problem is thus solved with an equal distribution of the burden among the enterprises (which nowadays are totally charged of it), the social protection authorities and the State
»⁷⁶²

Due to the exceptional war conditions, the regime planned employment placement and the first wave of nationalizations, which attempted to deploy a thorough economic policy.⁷⁶³ With the incorporation of the Labour supervisory authority, the War Production supervisory authority and the Prices supervisory authority, the Ministry of Corporative Economy got all the leverages of economic and social. A unique political head supervised social and economic policies, which the regime considered a single matter, and ensured a shred of autonomy from the German ally/occupant: «such a fragmentation contrasts with the need to have an unitary policy that the control of the production, the distribution, and the consumption must have [...] it is needed to oppose as much unity of directives and of action on the Italian side to avoid that, as it is happening, the action of Italian authority is completely emptied and replaced by the German organisms.»⁷⁶⁴ The RSI tried to maintain the gain autonomy in the purview of the productive cycle, especially over the warfare production. However, the Germans exercised control over the Italian industry, including the socialization, which, unlike the French Labour Charter, directly affected German economic demands.⁷⁶⁵ The uptake of different function in only one Ministry was also related to precise

⁷⁶² Ivi. p. 7.

⁷⁶³ ACS, SPDRSI - CR, 84/656/2, «Relazione al decreto sul passaggio in proprietà dello Stato delle imprese elettriche. S.d.».

⁷⁶⁴ ACS, SPDRSI - CR, 84/656/2, «Relazione allo schema di provvedimento per l'inquadramento del Commissariato dei Prezzi e del Commissariato del Lavoro alle dipendenze del Ministero dell'Economia. S.d.», p. 1.

⁷⁶⁵ See the different reports of the meetings between the Ministry of Corporative Economy and the German plenipotentiaries in Italy in ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 85/657/1; ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 27/21/8.

domestic choices; for instance, the Labour Supervisory Authority was suppressed, as it «leads to the emptying of the trade unions, which are expropriated if their principal functions with regard to the regulation of the labour matters [...] and reduced to mere subsidiary bodies of the Labour Supervisory Authority.»⁷⁶⁶

In the social assistances services, the policy of the regime had two phases. Initially, the PFR resumed the regime's previous institutions, and grouped them together in a single National Assistance, called *Opera Nazionale di Assistenza*, put under the party's direction. The PFR claimed to centralize every aspect of the political and socio-economic life of the country. In fact, this measure was needed due to the breakdown of the State also in periphery and to wider assistance tasks: displaced, disaster-stricken, casualties, relatives of the fallen and missing soldiers, the inmates and compulsory workers in Germany, and all the people who had no access to basic necessities and healthcare. The party alone could simply not deal with such a task.⁷⁶⁷ Indeed, the PFR quickly lost the monopoly on the assistance sector, while the former Fascist local and sectorial assistance took back their importance: the *Enti Fascisti di Assistenza* (EFA, Fascist Assistance Authorities, to varying degrees coordinate at a central level by a National Authority), and mainly the OND. Both authorities were gradually disembodied from the offices of the party from the beginning of 1944. Very soon it became evident that the different cases and categories required the hive-off of the various jurisdictions and administrations of the social assistance. The ramification of these authorities gave the task of the military social assistance to the OND, while other provisions, such as those for the families of the soldiers were still matter of the civilian social assistance. It was not only an administrative split, as the regime tried to «achieve also an important

⁷⁶⁶ ACS, Segreteria Particolare del Duce - Carteggio Riservato, b. 84, fasc. 656/2 - Schema di provvedimenti e relazioni a decreti, «Relazione allo schema di provvedimento per l'inquadramento del Commissariato dei Prezzi e del Commissariato del Lavoro alle dipendenze del Ministero dell'Economia», p.2.

⁷⁶⁷ Roberto D'Angeli, *Storia del Partito Fascista Repubblicano*, Roma, Castelvechi, 2016, pp. 81-101.

political goal: to promote a deepest intermingling between the morale of the working class and of the soldiers, whose working class were meant to be the highest and better representatives.»⁷⁶⁸ And on this basis, it is probably to understand the effort of the OND also for the propaganda, as I will investigate in further detail in the second part.

4.3.2. *The myth of the left-wing Fascism and the extent of the socializations in the RSI*

The RSI had a similar pattern to that of the Fascist regime. The incremental improvement of social schemes was accompanied by a public discourse that exalted the “revolutionary” features of the Fascist policies. The regime devoted a primary attention to the social change; few days after the birth of the Republic, Mussolini pronounced from the “Headquarter” a discourse that gravitated around three watchwords: “Italy”, “Republic”, “Socialization”.⁷⁶⁹ Fascism could integrally achieve its social programme after being released from the conservative elements: monarchy, army, bourgeoisie. The republican order paved the way to a “national” socialism: «because it makes of the Labour the only subject of the economy, but it refuses the complete levelling, [...] With this, we point at involving the best elements of the working class. The capitulation of September marks the infamous liquidation of the bourgeoisie as ruling class.»⁷⁷⁰ Fascism restated its “third way”, a formula that was worn out, yet still used in articles and pamphlets of propaganda.⁷⁷¹

The Fascist propaganda set in motion a public narrative that considered the Republican Fascism a “return to the origins”, and the socialization as the natural development of corporatism.⁷⁷² In this discourse, the war pushed social policy towards more revolutionary outcomes, as it promoted the confrontation between “proletarian

⁷⁶⁸ Id. p. 87.

⁷⁶⁹ B. Mussolini, *Italia, Repubblica, Socializzazione. Discorso pronunciato al Quartier Generale il 14 ottobre XXII*, Milano, Ministero della Cultura Popolare, 1944.

⁷⁷⁰ Ivi. p. 5.

⁷⁷¹ P. Di Girolamo, *Due estremi: liberalismo e comunismo*, Chieri, Aspesano, 1944.

⁷⁷² B. Mussolini, *Il discorso del Duce a Milano*, Milano, Edizioni Erre, 1944.

Nation" (Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy) and "plutocratic powers" (Great Britain, US, and even USSR). The Fascist provisions to guarantee social equality were challenged by the Anglo-Saxon imperialist war; to be protected, they had to make a "revolutionary" qualitative leap. The labels and claims of the propaganda did not change between the *Ventennio* and the new republican regime. The Fascist public discourse still overlapped social protection and the economic organization of production and labour:

«The socialization aims at achieving this very noble principle. The highest social justice is a formula whose characters were defined by Mussolini when he mentioned "a fair salary, job security, a decent home" for all the working class. Throughout these twenty years, is very well-known the commitment of fascism to concretely implement these watchwords: the collective bargaining agreements, the social housing, the growth of the assistance thanks to the development of the social insurances (and in this last field we should remember how the opulent and democratic Britain, taken as a model by all the antifascists of different political ideas, pretended to make the most important concessions to the working class by promising the set of social reforms of the *Beveridge Plan*, all while Italy already implemented the same reforms).»⁷⁷³

The war and the collapse of the Italian institutions led some sectors of the Fascism to think about a renewed Fascist State, enabling laws that a hierarch from the first hour like Alessandro Pavolini defined not merely «social», but more appropriately «socialist.»⁷⁷⁴

Social insurances, trade union legislation and socialization were regarded as the culmination of a «massive social legislation»,⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁷³ A. De Giglio, *Italia, Repubblica, Socializzazione*, Milano, Edizioni Erre, 1944, pp. 6-7.

⁷⁷⁴ A. Pavolini, 28 ottobre 1943. *Ritorno aile origini*, Milano, Edizioni Erre, 1944, p.13.

⁷⁷⁵ «Rivoluzione Sociale - Primi sintomi», *La Corrispondenza Repubblicana*, n.2, November 1943, pp. 49-51, p. 49.

implemented throughout twenty years. The RSI pointed at transcending even the British plans for social security, as «revolution is not reformism; it goes indeed far beyond the reform of the legislation and has to completely renovate the system as a whole.»⁷⁷⁶ Fascism set out to come back «to its own revolutionary origins in all the sectors, but first and foremost in the social one that is the foundation of the individual life and of the community.»⁷⁷⁷ The label “social policy” assumed a different meaning in the RSI propaganda; while the British specifically referred to the *Beveridge Report* or the governmental *White Papers*, in the RSI the debate on social policy was at once wider and vaguer. For good part of the Fascist ruling class, the RSI was a revolutionary experience that overcame capitalism, to which the social security programmes *à la Beveridge* were considered integral part. The decree of the socialization was seen as the peak of a path inherent to the Fascist revolution and to the Italian history.

In reality, the socialization was stranger to the Italian political and social culture, but the Fascists referred to Mazzini’s social thought, which opposed to Marx’ classism at the time of the I International. He claimed for “spiritual” forms of socialism that integrated the working classes in the national community; his exploitation by the Fascist propaganda was quite understandable.⁷⁷⁸ The RSI’s new deal of was also seen as a return to the “Fascism of the origins” and as a logical prosecution of *Ventennio*’s corporatist policies. Even if corporatism showed its limits in changing the socio-economic relations, the socialization resumed the same anti-plutocratic themes of the regime.⁷⁷⁹ The rupture/continuity with the *Ventennio* and with the history of the Italian nationalist social thought were endorsed by Mussolini himself,

⁷⁷⁶ Ivi. pp. 49-50.

⁷⁷⁷ Ivi. p.50.

⁷⁷⁸ There is a relatively rich documentation on the propaganda related to Mazzini’s thought as exploited by the RSI. See F. Vignini, *Mazzini agli operai*, Milano-Venezia, Edizioni Erre, 1944; E. Santoni, *Il Risorgimento italiano*, Milano-Venezia, Edizioni Erre, 1944; G. Mazzini, *La questione sociale*, Milano-Venezia, Edizioni Erre, 1944.

⁷⁷⁹ Carlo Alberto Biggini, *Giovanni Gentile. Discorso pronunciato alla Radio il 23 aprile XXII*, Milano, Ministero della Cultura Popolare, 1944.

who used to attach copies of the Constitution of Mazzini's Roman Republic, from which the RSI borrowed also the name.⁷⁸⁰ The RSI's mythology on socialization lacked of an in-depth political elaboration. Corporatism could boast a relatively long tradition, even beyond Fascism, while the socialization seemed from the very beginning a watchword hastily invented to rejuvenate Fascist social programme. It gathered different tendencies within the regime, the revolutionary "left-wing", the elements that represented the institutional continuity with the *Ventennio*, and the "intransigents" within the PFR, like Pavolini, Roberto Farinacci, Guido Buffarini Guidi, who considered social policy in the merely terms of social control.

Very few groups tried to elaborate further the social doctrine, usually outside the circles of power of the RSI. The most committed were undoubtedly the left-wing Fascists and the trade unionists, who were not majority in the constituency of the regime, but were active in the collateral centres of study and propaganda. They arose autonomously from governmental directives, which nonetheless was always kept abreast of their activity.⁷⁸¹ There are not many documents on the activities of these centres, which were aligned with the official stances. The *Centro di Studio per i problemi della socializzazione*, set up in Milan in 1944 by the *Unione Fascista dei Lavoratori dell'Industria* (UFLI, the industrial). This study centre developed a wide debate to «study, coordinate, develop and promote the initiatives and the issued related to socialization [...] with the purpose to orient the public opinion on these same problems.»⁷⁸² These groups never reached a wide audience, even if they included in the debate the industrialists, or other political tendencies, as the Catholics.⁷⁸³ They assumed that liberalism, as demonstrated by the Anglo-Saxon debate on social security, was no longer a paradigm, but was shifting to «a new social economy, without

⁷⁸⁰ ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 2/24/1, «Lettera di Benito Mussolini a Carlo Alberto Biggini. 27 maggio 1944-XXII»

⁷⁸¹ ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 27/221/5, «Lettera di Ezzelino Zuliani al Duce. 25 giugno 1944-XXII».

⁷⁸² G. Spinelli, «Centro di Studio per i problemi della socializzazione», Milano, 1944, p.3.

⁷⁸³ S. Contri, *Il pensiero cattolico e la socializzazione*, Milano, Centro Studi per la Socializzazione, 1944; E. Zuliano, *Comee un industriale vede la socializzazione*, Milano, Centro Studi per la Socializzazione, 1944.

the expropriation of the goods and to the collectivization of the production.»⁷⁸⁴ The concentration of interests and management of the economy through the corporative bodies allowed the State to «intervene and assume the management function of the economy. This is what is happening not only in Italy but in good part of the world.»⁷⁸⁵

The war condemned the *laissez-faire* paradigm, while the socializations «overcome once for all the conflict between Capital and Labour.»⁷⁸⁶ Private property and forms of “social” capitalism were retained, but were submitted to the national interests and transformed from within. The workers “quantitatively” occupied the work councils and “qualitatively” enlarged their importance in the productive process. The socialization pre-empted capitalism:

«And if this organization of the industries will assume, as I do believe, totalitarian aspects, capitalism as doctrine and spirit will be buried. Will be buried not as a result of the decree of the State, but for the capacity and will of the workers themselves; in this way, the Labour will be subject, and not object of the economy [...]. The motto “to create an higher social justice” found in the decree on the socialization not only its juridical settlement, but also its economic value, and its social meaning.»⁷⁸⁷

The war accelerated the «the real fascist democracy of Labour»,⁷⁸⁸ changing the economic relations among individuals and the juridical relations with the State, because the workers/producers became the social citizens and managers of the social economy:

«Capitalism, just for this ties to profit and individual gain

⁷⁸⁴ G. F. Simonetti, «Verso la nuova economia sociale», *Centro Studi per la Socializzazione*, Milano, 1944, p.6.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ivi*. p. 13.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ivi*. p.13.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ivi*. 14.

proportionate the production to consumption through an highly fragile distributive System. Collectivism, disengaged from profit and individual gains could possibly in the future better balance production to consumptions, but the production will always be grounded on standard types. This ultimately means that the standard of life will keep moderate, or less modifiable, while capitalism was able to create a growing standard of life for more and more categories of population, as demonstrated by economic history. [...]The Anglo-Saxon capitalism (liberalism in politics) and communism are mistakes through which the human conscience passes in the current stage of history. The first points at the wider freedom in the individual economy, while the second at the negation of any kind of individual economy. The current and most urgent historical task nowadays is to be able to start the economic and juridical regulation of the relation between Capital and Labour.»⁷⁸⁹

The socialization harmonized the economic relations among productive categories and redistributed wealth and private profit in function of the national planning and needs. As capitalism showed unable to reform itself, the confrontation was rather with collectivism. Unlike Bolshevism, the Republican Fascism «forge the Capital towards some form of moral, juridical, and economic collaboration with the Labour, coming thus to the current socialization, which is a concept of equilibrium among Capital, Labour, and State.»⁷⁹⁰

The intellectual and former trade unionist Ugo Manunta identified socialization with corporatism, opposing trade unionists' classist positions, which were emerging in the republican regime.⁷⁹¹ Manunta stressed the continuities between the RSI and the social

⁷⁸⁹ Id., *Il sistema economico nell'URSS e la socializzazione*, Milano, Centro Studi per la Socializzazione, 1944, pp. 12.-13.

⁷⁹⁰ Ivi. p.14.

⁷⁹¹ U. Manunta, *I tre pilastri del rinnovamento sociale: azienda, sindacato, socializzazione*, Milano, Centro Studi per la Socializzazione, 1944.

achievements of the *Ventennio*; the socialization was the «expression, on the economic level, of the inherent and natural solidarity between those who contributed to the productive process.»⁷⁹² He supported the creation of company unions instead of the professional unions, which retained the dualism Capital/Labour and were expression of the “egoistic” interests of each category. The war allowed to make the breakthroughs in this reconfiguration of the trade unions’ structures, which Manunta considered at the core of Fascist doctrine:

«Fascism already was an anticapitalist doctrine; but its action in this sense was systematically hindered by a set of obstacles, which maintained ambiguous the primary goals of the revolution. From 8th September, the anticapitalism, which has never been erased by the fascist flag, became the principal purposes of the governmental action. From this, descends all the provisions, which are leading us to a definitive clarification of ideas and institutions.»⁷⁹³

The company trade unions gathered all the productive actors regardless their role and hierarchy in the self-governed enterprise. The company union became “real” corporation: «the social question will no longer torment only one class, but [its solution] will become the goal towards which all the classes naturally tend, seeing in this the ultimate and real aim of the human efforts.»⁷⁹⁴ According to Manunta, the “trade union cell” was the true totalitarian corporation. Thanks to the socialization, unions and factories became a unitarian productive centre, making superfluous any other productive State agency or authority. With the socialization, the economic factor (the factory) and the social actors (the union) became a unique totalitarian entity. The labour self-government was firstly realized in the enterprises to permeate the whole national economic organization, structured in different cells of self-managed industries coordinated by the State,

⁷⁹² Ivi. p. 4.

⁷⁹³ Ivi. p. 7.

⁷⁹⁴ Ivi. pp. 8-9.

which regulated the production through planning. To Manunta, this solution overcame corporatism: «we should substitute the older system with a new order. If it is true that capitalism could be banned, then we should necessarily overcome also the dualism of classes.»⁷⁹⁵

For the “left-wing” Fascism, the RSI was the chance to get back at the working masses. In their analysis, the regime crumbled because it carried out a harmless polemics against the bourgeoisie, without implementing any revolutionary action that ensured the loyalty of the working class to the regime. This consideration, asserted by important representatives of the RSI, as Manunta, Concetto Pettinato, Bruno Spampanato led to different conception of social policy. Throughout twenty years, the regime effectively implemented compulsory schemes of social insurances, but did not include the working class in the State, if not in “formal” terms. This component regarded at the RSI as bridge between Fascism and the working class, reweaving the threads of a collaboration on socio-economic bases rather than juridical regulations. This trend coexisted with the governmental technocrats, like Tarchi, Barracu, Biaggini, who were in favour of major social reforms; rather than pushing for revolutionary actions, they bargained the socialization with the Germans or tried to reduce their scope through corporatist compromises. This group drafted the reforms and was charged of the legislative action. A third pole was represented by the PRF, headed by Pavolini. While the trade unionists claimed for a totalitarian social revolution and the governmental circles ensured “corporative continuities”, the Republican party dealt with assistance tasks. The PRF interpreted Verona’s declaration to “stay with the people” in the light of the war emergency conditions and of the need to mobilize the population. The party tried to take over the functions on the territory of the previous Fascist assistance agencies, weakened by the events following the 25th July 1943. The pressure from the PRF for interwoven its structures with the assistance competences clashed against the militarization of the party decided by Mussolini in mid-1944, and the indifference, if not hostility, of the population.⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹⁵ Ivi. p. 12.

⁷⁹⁶ R. D’Angeli, *Storia del partito fascista repubblicano*, Roma, Castelvechi, 2016, pp. 81-107.

Besides the divergences in the Fascist establishment, the debate on the socializations was disconnected from the social and political reality of the Northern Italy. Historian Giuseppe Parlato wrote that the “social left” under RSI was, if not a myth, a minority unable to orient the policy of the regime, controlled by other contingencies: «the left [...] had never the strength to succeed against the five enemies that in reality were the true players of the republic: the government of the RSI, worried about socialist or collectivists drifts; Pavolini and the project of the party’s hegemony; the world of labour, that varied between distrust and open hostility; the industrialists, less than eager to listen to those who claimed for the expropriation of the means of production; the Germans, perplexed by forms even embryonic of collectivism and mostly against the autonomy from the ally that many representatives of the left manifested.»⁷⁹⁷ The socialization was the retaliation against the former block of interests – the industrialists, the monarchy, the conservative middle classes – that now «faced with the prospect of the integral communism in case they reject and fight a social regime that, with a more balanced view, tries to reconcile the functions of all the elements of the production.»⁷⁹⁸ This feeling probably was shared by the whole RSI’s establishment, including the sectors that were side-lined in the years of mass consensus. These positions suggest the (wrong) acknowledging that the outcome of the war in Italy would have been revolutionary either in Fascist or in Communist sense. They also reveal that Fascism could no longer elaborate original social doctrines to replace the fall of the corporatist myth. The regime could not go beyond the “third way”: «as the socialization resumes, thus, the revolutionary programme of the corporatism, it stands out on the one side as the overcoming of capitalism, and on the other as more human and comprehensive solution than communism.»⁷⁹⁹

The rhetoric of the socialization was filled with regret for the

²⁶⁵ G. Parlato, *La sinistra fascista. Storia di un progetto mancato*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2000, p. 3003, see pp. 289-302.

⁷⁹⁸ ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 27/221/7 – Socializzazione delle imprese, «Nota per il Duce. 30 giugno 1944-XXII», p.1.

⁷⁹⁹ Ivi, p. 6.

“betrayal” of the middle classes and the “plutocracy”, and the disappointment for the apathy of the working classes, ungrateful to the social provisions put in place by the regime. On the other hand, the RSI restated the principle of the social collaboration; transitioning from corporatism to socialization, it only changed in its legal framework, from the juridical regulation to the self-regulation in the industries, via joint commissions. The resurgence of the “left-wing” Fascism under the RSI had more to do with the war contingencies than with social revolutions freed from institutional counterbalances, as the Fascist propaganda relentlessly claimed. In the passage from the regime to the RSI, Fascism lost credibility, consensus and a good part of its official intellectuals, like the philosopher Gentile or Bottai. Even if the RSI had first ranks technicians and politicians, they could simply not elaborate a thorough social doctrine that hold on the popular masses suffering for the terrible war conditions, when the country became the frontline of the conflict. More than ideological elaborations, other factors should be taken into account; among these, the payback of what remained of the Fascist ruling class and the need to close ranks of the stiff supporters of the republic. The propaganda did not have any grip on the population, and, in reality, did not even probably work on the paramilitary troopers that savagely fought alongside the Third Reich, who now had other reasons to combat than the achievement of the never made Fascist social revolution.

4.4. The legacy of the Fascist authorities in the Italian post-war social protection

The events of the war did not mark effective ruptures in the Fascist social policy. From 1939 to 1943 the regime implemented a wartime legislation and strengthened the previous insurances. After 1943, even if the institutional collapse freed the components previously “silenced” by the regime, the RSI had important political, administrative and military continuities with the previous regime.⁸⁰⁰ The continuity of political and administrative personnel led to

⁸⁰⁰ L. Ganapini, *La repubblica delle camicie nere*, Milano, Garzanti, 2010.

continuities in public policies, reducing the scope of the socialization. While the RSI carried out an ambiguous discourse of rupture with the *Ventennio*, the social legislation retained its setting, which referred to the 1935 reform of the social insurance and to the 1939 reorganization of the social legislation.⁸⁰¹ The RSI, in the Fascist narrative, was indeed the logical prosecution of twenty years of social policy, freed from the obstacles that prevented the «achievement of its very high social purposes.»⁸⁰² Fascist public discourse moved alongside two tracks: on the one side, the Fascist doctrine never changed from the 1919 San Sepolcro speech to the RSI; on the other, political turmoil and “total war” allowed the complete deployment of the Fascist social revolution: «the fundamental act on the socialization. It is, that is true, a new milestone, but on the background as heritage to which we do not renounce there is the path we difficultly undertook;»⁸⁰³ The continuity in social policies from 1926 to 1944 was clear in the final goals of the 1944 decree; ensuring social rest and class collaboration.

After 1943 and the “betrayal” of the capitalists signalled, implicitly, that classes existed, and that «thus it is necessary that the State intervenes in the midst of the struggle, by eliminating the dominance of the Capital and by giving to the Labour an effective force and function.»⁸⁰⁴ The purposes of social collaboration and submission of class interests to the nation were approached differently; from the juridical corporative framework to the intervention on the structures of the economy, in the production and management of the enterprises. The decree on the socialization, although dealing with the *economic*

⁸⁰¹ ACS, RSI - Ministero del Lavoro, 797G, «Appunto per il Consiglio dei Ministri. Schema di decreto legislativo che reca norme per la liquidazione delle pensioni ai superstiti in caso di morte di assicurati e pensionati dell'assicurazione obbligatoria invalidità e vecchiaia. 10 gennaio 1945»; ACS, RSI - Ministero del Lavoro, 797G, «Bozza di decreto del Ministro Segretario di Stato per il Lavoro di concerto con il Ministro per le Finanze. 5 gennaio 1945».

⁸⁰² «Ventennale sviluppo logico della dottrina fascista», *Brescia Repubblica*, 23 February 1944-XXII.

⁸⁰³ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁰⁴ «Le basi della nuova economia», *La Corrispondenza Repubblica*, January 1944, pp. 102-104, p.102.

reorganization of the productive basis, actually had a deep *social function*, to some extent comparable to the “link between the social and the economic realm”, which was the motto of Vichy’s “left-wing” trade unionists. The socializations implied a closer collaboration between workers and employers, but instead of being mediated by national corporative organisms, was achieved directly in the factories. The collaboration was not carried out on equal basis; the State claimed to put the workers in the conditions to manage the factories and to participate to the profit-sharing.

This change was entailed by different factors: the retaliation against the industrial establishment (and for good part of the fascist ruling class this reason was between the lines); leaving a “time-bomb” behind the reconstruction to the Allied and the democratic parties after the unavoidable defeat; a mere tool for the propaganda of the puppet regime, which otherwise had no “political” justification to exist.⁸⁰⁵ All these aspects help to explain the RSI’s more pronounced social programme. But there was probably also the need to revive the “Fascist social revolution” that constituted a good part of the 1919 original programme and that too many times had been delayed.⁸⁰⁶ By restating the “third way”, the regime had a double goal: on the one side, the concrete elevation of the material conditions of the worker, thanks to social protection and the participation to corporate profits; on the other, the reconfiguration of the social relations and class representation had also the purpose to better serve the interests of the “State of Labour”. Only when co-opted to the management of the enterprises, «the worker will no longer represent an antagonist and hostile element, only concerned to assert his own class interests.»⁸⁰⁷

On the legacy of the previous social policy, the war set in motion more radical dynamics. Differently from Britain, in Italy the

⁸⁰⁵ L. Gaeta, A. Visconti, «L’Italia e lo stato sociale», in Gerhard Ritter, *Storia dello stato sociale*, p.249.

⁸⁰⁶ R. De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario, 1883-1920*, Torino, Einaudi, 2005, pp. 419-560, see the documentary annexes: «Programma dei Fasci di combattimento (1919)», pp. 742-745; «Postulati del programma fascista (maggio 1920)», pp. 746-748.

⁸⁰⁷ *Le basi della nuova economia*, p.103.

processes of social change were not driven by the socio-economic mobilization; they resulted from precise ideological goals, only partially related to the re-emergence of the trade unionist sectors of Fascism. The socialization was the only reform that promoted a unitary action to the RSI's social policies, as it was inextricably interlinked to the national economic planning and to the trade union legislation. These institutions referred to the technocracy of the Ministry of Corporative Economy, also charged until 1945 of the social insurances, that in this sense had the "totalitarian" control of the social and economic leverages.⁸⁰⁸ This centralization matched the needs of the (German) war and the new deal undertaken by Fascism. Such ambitious project of social and economic reorganization revealed impossible to achieve in the context of the dissolutions of the State structures as Italy became the battlefield of a "Liberation and civil war"⁸⁰⁹ and when the consensus to the regime dramatically dropped.

The socialization did not survive to the regime; unlike for instance the French CO or Social Committee, not even the framework of these structure was put in place. The elaborations and projects faded as the regime dissolved. The rhetoric of the "red revolutionary Fascism" – still present nowadays in the Italian far-right and fostered for years by the autobiographies of the RSI's protagonists⁸¹⁰ – should be distinguished by the public policies implemented, just like social legislation has to be discerned from Fascist ideology. What survived to

⁸⁰⁸ ACS, SPDRSI-CR, 83/652/1, «Ministro per la Produzione Industriale. Disciplina della produzione e della distribuzione dopo lo scioglimento delle organizzazioni sindacali dei datori di lavoro. 9 febbraio 1945-XXIII».

⁸⁰⁹ C. Pavone, *Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità della Resistenza*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 1991.

⁸¹⁰ The RSI still fascinates some milieu of the Italian "new" far-right. This experience, and notably its social content, gave birth to a wide literature, halfway celebratory and historical works. See C. Ozella, *Socialfascismo: dal programma di San Sepolcro alla socializzazione delle imprese*. Torino, Noctua, 1999; L.L.Rimbotti, *Il fascismo di sinistra: da Piazza San Sepolcro al congresso di Verona*, Roma, Settimo Sigillo, 1989. See also autobiographic works, E.Cione, *Storia della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Roma, Il Cenacolo, 1948; U. Manunta, *La caduta degli angeli: storia intima della repubblica sociale italiana*, Roma, Azienda Editoriale Italiana, 1947; A. Tarchi, *Teste dure*.

Fascism, was good part of the economic and social public authorities set up from the beginning of the Thirties onwards, like the INPS, the INAIL, the IMI and the IRI. Their birth was only partially linked to the dynamics of the regime, and the post-war Republican social institutions retained elements the Fascist social protection, first and foremost the occupational framework.⁸¹¹ Fascism took over the liberal social protection, by extending, rationalizing and unifying the social schemes. This tendency, was not just Fascism's prerogative, as all the major European countries in those years enacted measures to strengthen and unify the social insurances.

This incremental process pursued also in the transition from the regime to the democracy. As elsewhere in Europe, the Italian anti-fascist parties knew the last innovation on social security, and elaborated reform proposals. However, they did never tackle this issue with a global plan of reform, not even comparable to the British post-war reforms or the French plan of the *sécurité sociale*. Due to the peculiar geo-political and economic conditions of post-war Italy, the country lacked of any consistent universalistic turn at least until the '60s. The Italian system of social protection remained occupational, while the Fascist social agencies were democratized. These latter, far from being an inherently corporatist "product" of the Fascist ideology, were rather part of the policies put in place to face the structural crisis of the Thirties almost everywhere. They passed through the war in the new democratic context; freed from the Fascist ideological superstructures, they proved to be pliable enough to adapt to the new principles of the post-war social security.

⁸¹¹ A. Cherubini, *Storia della previdenza sociale in Italia (1860-1960)*, Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1977. M. Ferrera, *Il welfare state in Italia: sviluppo e crisi in prospettiva comparata*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1984; M. Ferrera, Fargion, Valeria, Jessoula, Matteo, *Alle radici del welfare all'italiana. Origini e futuro di un modello sociale squilibrato*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2012, pp. 29-154; F. Girotti, *Welfare State: storia, modelli e critica*, Roma, Carocci, 1998.

5. *The wartime social systems: State's universalism and corporative solidarity*

A comparative view on the wartime social legislation and projects prevents from generalising mono-causal explanations, and confirms the relevancy of the *policy legacy* and *path dependence* as decisive factors in the evolution and ruptures of social policy. Cleansed by propagandistic statements (which concerned all the three case-studies), the prospected reforms rooted on solid legislative and historical backgrounds. In Britain, the *Beveridge Report* originally pointed at rearranging the garbled system of public/private schemes, increased in the harshest years of the Great Depression. The only *completely* new provision was the NHS, whose exact features were still to be clearly fixed by 1942. In the Vichy regime, the pre-existing mutual interests had a fundamental role to block the reforms.⁸¹² Their pressure, and the political rivalries in the government, scuppered the attempts at achieving a more coherent system. In Italy, not even the transition from the regime to the RSI marked a real break in the legislation. The two major social reforms continued along the lines of the law-making in the 1930s, retaining the traditional corporatist setting, as for the mutualist national authority for the healthcare.

Within this lump of interwoven administrative practices and legacies, the war constituted a moment of transition, regardless the sides in conflict. It has been written that «in virtually every rich or middling income nation, on the Allied side, there is a clear sense of demarcation: the welfare state before the war, and after the war. Existing programmes were made more generous and older provisions limiting coverage to the indigent or to industrial workers were generally removed. The common denominator was that after the war, social umbrellas opened up, sheltering the middle classes as well as the

⁸¹² D. Simon, «Les assurances sociales et les mutualistes (1920-1932)», *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, n.4/1987, pp. 587-614.

working classes.»⁸¹³ In reality, the Axis and its satellites did not escape from the same tendency; the evolution of social protection posed some general political and administrative issues that crossed the borders between political systems. Without underestimating relevant divergences among Britain, the Vichy regime and Fascist Italy/RSI, equally important convergences might be retraced in some general guidelines and administrative arrangements.

Everywhere, bone of contention was the tendency to centralize of compulsory schemes; the rationalization and uniformity of contributory mechanisms and benefits; the progressive taking charge of wider social risks by the States. More radical divergences concerned the scope of these reforms, which dealt with different conceptualizations of “social solidarity” and “citizenship”. In Britain, the State-managed compulsory insurances encountered less resistances in comparison to what happened in the Vichy regime, while in Italy the compulsory occupational schemes managed and coordinated by the State-controlled INFPS and INFAL was not even questioned under the RSI. In the comparative summary on the policies between 1939 and 1945, I cross-correlating the data of the three previous chapters, fleshing out convergences and divergences, with the use of comparative tables. In this preliminary conclusion I focus on the wartime years. I will return to the extent and the limits of the “paradigm shift” in the third part, scrutinizing the influence of “universalism” in the post-1945 social reforms in France and Italy.

The stratification of European social legislations and the ways to address the “social question” during wartime

Between the 1930s and the 1940s, residual compulsory schemes coexisted with a plethora of competing mutualist funds, which fragmented and made unequal the access to social protection. At the eve of the war, policy-makers had to address their increasing financial

⁸¹³ T. B. Smith, «Renegotiating the social contract: Western Europe, Great Britain and North America», in Michael Geyer, Adam Tooze (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Second World War. Vol. 3. Total War: Economy, Society and Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 552-574, p. 557.

burdens and administrative inefficiency. In the 1930s, Britain coped with unemployment by implementing a case-by-case basis legislation. The borders between “insurance” and “assistance” often faded; public authorities resorted to the institutions which traditionally provided aid for the poor to relieve the workers who lost their incomes due to unemployment. The aftermaths of the Great Depression could undermine the political legitimization and social fabric.⁸¹⁴ The appointment of the *Beveridge Committee* in 1942 enshrined in the huge debate of the 1920s and 1930s that focused on the need to ensure social harmony and industrial collaboration.⁸¹⁵

Already in 1914, the industrialist and social reformer Rowntree (who took part to the *Beveridge Committee*) considered unemployment the greatest danger to Britain, as it affected the moral, physical and psychological conditions of the nation, and weakened the social cohesion. Rowntree regarded at unemployment not merely in economic terms, but in its social consequences: «I do not wish to introduce religious phraseology into an economic essay, but our national life is, after all, built on ideals. [...] by harmonious co-operation – a co-operation in which every individual is of vital importance to the State, and the State is of vital important to every individual.»⁸¹⁶ Nearly thirty years later, the *Beveridge Report* pointed at guaranteeing the vital income and subsistence standards, which, it was argued, the pre-war social insurances could not ensure. The three main assumptions were the overhaul of the older system and of the “sectional interests” grown in its shadows; the incorporation of the social insurances within a wider «comprehensive policy of social progress»;⁸¹⁷ the renewed collaboration between State and individual.

⁸¹⁴ W. Hannington, *The Lean Years*, London, Left Book Club Edition (not for sale to the public), 1940.

⁸¹⁵ H. Hazell, *Labour and Capital in Alliance*, London, John Murray, 1927; N. Angell, *Must Britain travel the Moscow Road?*, London, Noel Douglas, 1926; J.A.Hobson, *The Conditions of Industrial Peace*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1927; W. Beveridge, *Causes and Cures of Unemployment*, London-New York-Toronto, Longmans, 1931.

⁸¹⁶ S. Rowntree, *The Way to Industrial Peace and the Problem of Unemployment*, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1914, p. 143.

⁸¹⁷ HMSO, *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, p. 6.

These three points could have hypothetically been subscribed also by Fascist and Vichy's reformers. The first two aspects, because they resulted from longer-run and structural transformations of the social insurances, independently from the political systems; the last one, instead, because the war contrasted two opposite approaches to face the "social question". In Britain, as well as in Italy and France, every reform of the social insurances encountered resistance from the vested interests: private business, mutual funds and trade unions, whether "free" or "corporative" ones. The history of the wartime social reforms also concerns the greater or lesser success of the State to impose itself as principal actor of the social protection with regard to voluntary/mutualist insurances. In all the countries were proposed "new pacts" between State and citizens. The coordination among the different social policy areas and their link with forms of State's interventionism in the socio-economic processes was shared by the British reformists as well as the French or Italian technocrats.

The British and French projects in comparison

In Britain, the *Beveridge Report* aimed at eradicating the "Want" from British society. This goal was expected to be achieved through a plan that covered all the citizens without upper income limits, providing to all same benefits for same contributions, without underestimating different working conditions: «it is a plan all-embracing in scope of persons and of needs, but it is classified in application.»⁸¹⁸ Important administrative changes were suggested: the unification of the social insurances in respect of contributions and professional categories, from the public servants to the housewives; the simplification of their administration under a single political centre; the supersession of separate compulsory schemes and local/private funds; the attribution to the *Friendly Societies* and the trade unions of the management of public sickness benefits; the creation of a separate national health service, unrelated to the insurance contribution but made available to every citizen.

⁸¹⁸ *Ibidem.*

While encountering resistances from the vested interests, trade unions and some political circles, the universalistic reforms were accepted thanks to a greater political legitimization that neither the Vichy regime nor the RSI had. Beveridge himself recognized that the *War Cabinet* initially seemed to not endorse the report in its entirety. In his view, the sudden urge of the war should have led the government to overcome financial uncertainties, ideological resistance and lobbyism from the private business:

«The Government's procedure loses the great psychological effect that might have been produced on the people of this and other countries by full and courageous acceptance of a policy of freedom from want. It raises inevitably doubt whether preparation will in fact proceed as rapidly on a plan that is hypothetical as on one for which there is commitment. It leads finally to the certainty of continuing controversy, to risk of danger to national unity and to apparent or real dissipation of energies required for prosecution of the war. All this could be avoided and the whole issue settled out of hand by acceptance of the principle that, in allocation of resources, provision of a national minimum for subsistence has priority over all purposes other than national defence. That is a principle which, I suggest, the Government of Britain should now accept as a directive from the democracy of Britain. A second directive is that the Government should take all necessary steps for the maintenance of employment after the war, being prepared to use the power of the State so far as necessary for that purpose, subject only to the preservation of a limited list of essential British liberties, such as worship, speech, association, choice of occupation, and personal spending. In these two directives I believe are set the main lines of our home front policy for the reconstruction period. Acceptance of the first directive would remove all difficulties in the way of full and final acceptance of the Plan

for Social Security for abolition of want which is in my Report.»⁸¹⁹

The climate of “total war” overcame in Britain the same unsurmountable resistances that made impossible under Vichy to come to a comprehensive reform, even if the French drafts had not such a broad scope as the British one. [TAB.4 and TAB.5] The divergences between the *Beveridge Report* and the first governmental proposals involved matters of principle. Beveridge considered fundamental the amalgamation of the older Workmen’s Compensation in the compulsory industrial insurances, entirely funded by general taxation. He wanted this risk take out from the private competitive business and the juridical contentious, to make it a public universalistic service. He also eagerly supported the cost-of-living adjustment of flat-rate benefits, notably old-age pensions and children’s allowances, against the hesitation of the Treasury. It was not a mere matter of bookkeeping of the public accounts, but the bone of contention that involved the scope and goals of post-war social security. As the whole report was built around the key concepts of national minimum and vital income, the governmental initial rejection of the benefits’ correlation to subsistence level would have invalidated the objectives intrinsic to the reform:

«My Plan is not simply a plan to develop social insurance: it is a plan to give freedom from want by securing to each citizen at all times, on condition of service and contribution, a minimum income sufficient for his subsistence needs and responsibilities. It interprets, as any democracy must interpret, freedom from want to mean, not a claim to be relieved by the State on proof of necessity and lack of other resources, but having, as of right, one’s own income to keep one above the necessity for applying for relief. My Plan takes as its aim abolition of want. The Government in regard to

⁸¹⁹ W. Beveridge, «The Government proposals and the Beveridge Report», in Id., *Pillars of Security*, pp. 126-137, pp. 135-136.

pensions wholly, and in regard to children's allowances and to unemployment and disability benefit to a lesser extent, abandon that aim.»⁸²⁰

Vichy's social reformers twice tried to pass a legislation that could overcome the former schemes. The 1940 all-inclusive reform was dismissed due to political resistances and financial concerns. In the

TAB.4 Draft reforms and governmental proposals on employment policy in Brain, 1944

Employment policies:	Employment policies:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State responsibility for full employment ("more vacant jobs than available workers"); - A structural plan to achieve full employment; - Frictional unemployment: 3%; - International Trading Arrangements (full employment, balancing of international accounts, stability of economic policy); - National budget used to ensure every year the total outlay to set up the demand; control and transfer of industries and manpower according to national plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governmental responsibility and aim for high and stable employment; - Primarily concerned with the prevention of mass unemployment after the war; - Frictional unemployment: 3-5%; - International collaboration and trade agreements to support exports; - Anticyclic macroeconomic policies; microeconomic interventions on industries and manpower.

⁸²⁰ Ivi, p. 132.

TAB.5 Draft reforms and governmental proposals/reforms on social insurances and healthcare service in Britain, 1942-1944

Proposed reform	Governmental proposals/reforms
<p><u>1942 Beveridge Report:</u></p> <p>Social insurances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - universalism (all citizens against all risks in a single insurance); - flat-rate contribution/benefits; - tripartite funding; - Ministry of Social Insurances; - Insurances benefits at a real subsistence rate (free from want through social insurances); - Indefinite period for sickness benefits without means-tests; unemployment benefits unconditional for six months, then training benefits. <p>Healthcare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separate, free and universal national health service. 	<p><u>1944 White Papers:</u></p> <p>Social insurances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - universalism (all citizens against all risks in a single insurance); - flat-rate contribution/benefits; - tripartite funding; - Ministry of Social Insurances; - Lower insurance rates and duality social insurance/social assistance in the scheme; - Sickness benefits turned into invalidity benefits after three years; 30 weeks unemployment, then assistance under certain conditions. <p>Healthcare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NHS fully and freely available to all the citizens.

TAB.6 Draft reform and legislation in France, 1940-1942

<p><u>1940 first draft reform:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unification of social insurances, family allowances, and paid leaves in a single contribution, with same contribution system; increased State's contribution for sickness benefits - Progressive centralization of mutualist/voluntary funds; - Public pension for lower-income old-age workers (AVTS). <p><u>1942 second draft reform:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Central coordination of mutual funds - Territorial reorganization of occupational funds - Unification of sickness benefits, family allowances and death grants 	<p><u>1941 AVTS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No comprehensive reform of the social insurances; - Retention of mutualist system; - Public pension for lower-income old-age workers (AVTS). <p><u>Reform rejected</u></p>
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same year when the *Beveridge Report* was published, Vichy did not seize the last opportunity to implement a relatively wide reform of the social insurances. As in Britain, the transition from the voluntary sector to the State's coordination was difficult; the drafters expected resistances from the private companies and some sectors of the government. Unlike Britain, the French reformers did not take to the extreme the rationale of the proposal. While the *White Papers* proposed the suppression of the *Approved Societies* and the limitation of the role of the *Friendly Societies*, in France the MIP advanced a less radical solution: «the affinity-based reunification, in the local realities, would allow to

give an immediate solution to all the problems arisen from the too many local funds currently operating. [*The reform n.d.a.*] would perpetuate the advantages inherent to the typically French regime, which is characterized as such: free choice of the schemes by the insured, huge administrative autonomy, coordination in the same time flexible and firm.»⁸²¹ Even so, Belin's project encountered insurmountable difficulties that led to its dismissal, as the Chief of the State himself rejected the project.

The reform was considered «State socialism», that «radically delete the variety and multiplicity (which by the way must be considered excessive) of the private business that is currently ensuring the provisions to the social insured. He wants instead to centralize and unify as much as possible.»⁸²² This was ideologically irreconcilable with the *Révolution Nationale*, because introduced major elements of State's control, clashing against the role that the new intermediate bodies – in 1942 were roughly hewn – were expected to play.⁸²³ Belin's project was not considered suitable to address any of its goals, which did not differ from those of the British or Italian social reformers: simplification, unification, savings.⁸²⁴ Vichy's "corporative" stand did not opened up to citizenship-based universalist reforms and encroached on the pre-existing occupational setting of the French social insurances, in many regards retained after 1944–5. This combination made politically impossible to reform in a "vertical sense" the French social protection; the concern of vested interests and professional categories against the reform met the anti-centralist claims of good part of Vichy establishment, which reached ideologically-biased paroxysm.⁸²⁵ While

⁸²¹ AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Note sur l'organisation administrative des assurances sociales, s.d.», p.4.

⁸²² AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Secrétariat d'état. Lettre du 5 mars 1942», p.2.

⁸²³ AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Note sur un projet de loi relatif à l'organisation des caisses d'assurances sociales, 8 mars 1942», p.1; see also the dossier AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Notes sur un projet de creation de cause unique territorial d'assurances sociales».

⁸²⁴ AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Examen technique de quelques principes énoncés par l'exposé des motifs ou résultant des textes du projet».

⁸²⁵ AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Note sur un projet de loi relatif à l'étatisation des assurances sociales, 8 mars 1942»; AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Note sur un projet de loi relatif à l'étatisation des assurances sociales, 8 mars 1942»; AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Lettre du

Belin did not see contradiction between corporative industrial relations and centralization of social insurances, other constituencies of the regime defended traditional free mutualism.

Vichy's approach slightly differed from the British ones for the social function of compulsory schemes: «The protection which is so granted must not refer uniquely to the individual. It has to be addressed directly to the social group in itself. In that regard, we can retrace two essential functions: the *healthcare protection*, and the creation of an *effective link of solidarity* between the different social groups.»⁸²⁶ The social rights were granted as member of professional categories, rather than as citizens. Social solidarity deployed along the lines of the industrial “natural communities”, preventing the bureaucratisation of the social protection and easing the creation of interclass solidarity within each community: «conceived as such, the Social Insurances can be one of the fundamental elements in the path of the collaboration, which is necessary to inculcate within the whole national community, and above all between the active members of the working communities: employers, employees, and industrial workers.»⁸²⁷

Between 1940 and 1942 the MIP set up minimum public schemes (the AVTS) or more coordinated policies supervised by the State. The 1940 and 1942 reforms lacked of the coherence of the British plans, but attempted to seize the conditions to enact projects that could not be addressed with the same radicality in peacetimes. The cross-fire of vetoes and the minority positions of trade unionist within the government blocked them. The entourage of Pétain represented the entanglement of vested interested that had everything to lose from an all-inclusive reform. The private healthcare companies, the voluntary

Conseil Central de la Fédération des Syndicats des Maîtres-Imprimeurs de France au Directeur du Cabinet Civil de Monsieur le Maréchal de France Chef de l'État Français, 23 mars 1942»; AN, 2AG/499/CC.80.C, «Lettre du Chef Départemental de la Légion de l'Ardèche à Monsieur le Maréchal, 27 mars 1942», and many other similar correspondence sent by the mutual and private companies to the Director of the Civil Cabinet.

⁸²⁶ G. de Lagarde (ed.), *Les assurances sociales peuvent-elles et doivent-elles s'adapter à la nouvelle Organisation corporative ?*, Paris, 1941, p. 6.

⁸²⁷ Ivi. p.8.

family welfare and the representatives of the mutualist funds opposed to the overhaul of what was called “the traditional French free of choice”. Not even after the war the plethora of mutualist actors was overcome. However, in a couple of years the political and international context radically changed due to the spread of new ideas and the military victory of the Allies; what had not been possible to accomplish in 1940 and 1942, was achieved in 1944. The differences between the 1940-2 Belin’s projects and the plans of *sécurité sociale* should not be underestimated, but some goals were similar, and good part of the technical personnel was by no means stranger to Vichy’s plans of social reforms.

The “Fascist” social reforms in a European perspective

For the Italian case, the lack of documentation on the 1944 legislative arrangements made more difficult a direct comparison with the wartime debates in Britain and France. There is no archive of the Ministry of Corporative Economy nor of the Ministry of Labour, so I crossed the data from single records. Until 1943 Italy did not experience any institutional breakthrough as occurred in France. The social legislation followed a linear trend since 1931, utterly in line with other European tendencies; the three different laws of 1935, 1939 and 1944 progressively systematized the Italian social protection towards unification and centralization. [TAB.6] As for the Vichy regime, and unlikely the British case, the Italian action only partially resulted from structural changes due to the war. “Total war” affected Fascist policy-makers rather from an ideological point of view. The reform of 1935 constituted the foundation upon which the other acts made further amendments, within the framework of the general principles of the Labour Charter:

«The National Fascist Institute of the Social Insurances is an autonomous authority with its own legal personality and independent management. [...] The Institute has the purpose of implementing, within the limits set by its competence, the principles established by the Labour Charter, coordinating its

own action to the one of the other corporative bodies, of the professional associations, and of the assistance authorities. It is inspired by the Fascist conception of the social protection as the highest embodiment of the principle of reconciliation of the productive factors.»⁸²⁸

The appointment of Bottai as first President of the INFPS signalled the regime's effort to promote a coordinated policy between industrial relations and social insurances. His successor, Bruno Biagi, had a similar curriculum; Undersecretary of the Corporative Economy, he was an important theorist of corporatism and employment policy.⁸²⁹ He promoted studies and legislation on family allowances, social medicine, social insurances, tuberculosis benefits.⁸³⁰ In the "official" compendia, social protection, union legislation, social assistance and corporatism were regarded as separate branches of social policy: «unitarily conceived and organically implemented, the social protection had in Italy a linear progression» – and the lines of this development were corporative – «the social protection undertook a remarkable and logical path under the impulse of the corporative collaboration and of the solidarity, which is the highest expression of this collaboration.»⁸³¹ As in Vichy, social solidarity did not spread primarily among the individuals as "citizens", but firstly among the individuals as member of the same corporations. Fascist theorists transposed the corporative doctrine of interclass collaboration in the social protection. In reality, the two aspects developed autonomously from each other.

⁸²⁸ «Perfezionamento e coordinamento legislativo della previdenza sociale. Regio Decreto-Legge 4 ottobre 1935-XIII, n.1827», *GU*, 26 ottobre 1935, pp. 1-2.

⁸²⁹ B. Biagi, *Lo Stato corporativo. I Il sindacato. II la corporazione*, Roma, Istituto Nazionale di Cultura Fascista, 1934; Id., *Gli strumenti dell'azione corporativa di intervento diretto*, Firenze, Casa editrice Poligrafica Universitaria, 1938; Id., *Lineamenti dell'ordine corporativo fascista*, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1939.

⁸³⁰ For the writings of Biagi as President of the INFPS, see *infra* pp. 204-206. See also B. Biagi, *Prolusione e discorso di chiusura al congresso della previdenza sociale*, Bologna, INFPS, 1935.

⁸³¹ PNF, *La politica sociale del fascismo*, p. 115.

TAB.7. Reforms of the social insurances in Fascist Italy (1935, 1939 and 1944)

Year	
1935	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The INFPS became public-law institution with legal status; - Coordination of all the compulsory insurances under the INFPS.
1939	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The INFPS is charged of the family allowances, and supplementary measures to income integration and support.
1944	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The social contributions are unified in a single card; - Shift in the contributory burden from the workers to the employers.

The creation of national social authorities improved former institutions and resulted from the specific political choice to not overcome sectional interests. The regime privileged the coordination of the mutual funds rather than the nationalization of the insurances, as proposed by the unionist leader Edmondo Rossoni.⁸³² Between 1932 and 1933 the creations of the INFPS and the INFAL encountered Bottai's suggestions towards major centralization: «our legal framework is ambiguous, as the insurances are compulsory, but there is free choice of the fund. It is about seeing whether maintain this setting or move consistently towards the compulsory insurances as State's task.»⁸³³ The propensity for public insurances might clash against corporatism, as weaselling noticed by the industrialists' associations; the regime moved in a direction that had more to do with coordination and rationalization, than with specific principles of "corporative doctrine". The Italian legislation in the Thirties was not so

⁸³² Correspondance between Rossoni and Mussolini, mentioned in F. Bertini, «Il fascismo dalle assicurazioni per i lavoratori allo stato sociale», in Marco Palla (ed.), *Lo Stato fascista*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 2001, pp. 177-314, cfr. pp. 213-214. F. Cordova, *Verso lo Stato totalitario. Sindacati, società e fascismo*, Soveria Mannelli, Il Rubbettino, 2005

⁸³³ G Bottai, «Tre questioni in discussione sulle assicurazioni sugli infortuni», *Il Lavoro fascista*, 10 giugno 1932, mentioned in F. Bertini, «Il fascismo dalle assicurazioni per i lavoratori allo stato sociale», p. 235.

much the result of Fascist revolution's achievement. It was part of the Euro(American) response to the economic and political turmoil of the 1930s, which compelled the States to figure out amendments to the previous schemes.

Not all the countries addressed the Great Depression in the terms of the "nationalization" of the services (as for the Dutch or the same French cases).⁸³⁴ But the reforms of social insurances became topical: the British 1934 *Unemployment Act*, the US 1935 *Social Security Act*, the Italian legislation between 1933 and 1935, the Swedish *Folkhempolitik* and the pension reform in 1937, the prospected Robert Ley's single pension scheme in Nazi Germany, the debate on State's social pensions in France, the Danish 1933 *Social Reform Act*. These projects called into question the previous residual settings, even if they did not challenge the occupational framework of social insurances. In Italy, the regime operated the progressive uniformization in a piecemeal fashion: more consistently on unemployment, old age, invalidity benefits and industrial injuries, while sickness and healthcare policy remained matter for mutualism, even if the regime introduced compulsory insurances against tuberculosis and set up public sanatoria managed by the INFPS.⁸³⁵

The 1935 reform assigned to the INFPS the management of the funds for the compulsory insurances with the exception of the industrial injuries. Like elsewhere, they were object of separate jurisdiction and only in 1944 Britain amalgamated this risk category

⁸³⁴ G. Ritter, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-114. For other "peripheral" countries, see the contributions in S. King, J. Stewart (eds.), *Welfare Peripheries. The Development of Welfare States in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Europe*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2007, and particularly C. Nottingham, P. De Rooy, «The Peculiarities of the Dutch: Social Security in the Netherlands», pp. 39-66; J. H. Petersen, K. Petersen, «Shake, Rattle and Roll! From Charity to Social Rights in the Danish Welfare State 1890-1933», pp. 149-179; P. Markkola, «Changing Patterns of Welfare: Finland in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries», pp. 207-230; G. Esping-Andersen, «The Making of Social Democratic Welfare State», in Klaus Misged, Karl Molin, Klas Åmark (eds.), *Creating Social Democracy. A Century of the Social Democratic Labour Party in Sweden*, University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992, pp. 35-66.

⁸³⁵ S. Centonze, *La tubercolosi dal punto di vista social ed azione dell'Istituto Nazionale Fascista di Previdenza*, Padova, Società Cooperativa Tipografica, 1942.

within social security. The INFPS reported to the Minister of the Corporations; the regime did not set up a separate and specific minister for the social protection, as its functioning was expected to fall within the scope of the corporative organizations. This represented also an exception to the rationalization of supervisory centres, and did not get rid of the administrative fragmentation: the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of the Colonies shared important tasks of control.

The law of April 1939 left unsolved major problems; huge differences in the schemes for each salaried category persisted, exacerbated by further sub-categorisations for specific categories, especially in agriculture (agricultural salaried workers and sharecroppers did not have compulsory insurance yet), which constituted a relevant part of the whole of Italian manpower. The reform left healthcare a matter of mutualist funds or public assistance authorities. On the other side, the regime introduced new benefits and categories, as for the survivors' pensions and the extension of social protection to the whole family unit, which would have been so important also in Vichy's social legislation and in the British plans. The reform tended to a larger uniformity between industrial workers and employees, which nonetheless paid the contributions to different funds and with different benefits. The contributory mechanisms remained unchanged, as «half of the contributions for invalidity and old age, tuberculosis, unemployment, marriage and natality is to be provided by the employer and half by the worker.»⁸³⁶

In 1944 the regime unified the contributions and extended them to all the salaried workers in the craft and industrial firms, still excluding self-employees and farm workers. The project was already discussed between 1940 and 1942, in studies that recognized that «the older world is leaving and a newer one is coming.»⁸³⁷ The INFPS tackled a problem of all the European social systems; the fragmentation

⁸³⁶ «Modificazioni delle disposizioni sulle assicurazioni obbligatorie per l'invalidità e la vecchiaia, per la tubercolosi e per la disoccupazione involontaria e sostituzione dell'assicurazione per la maternità con l'assicurazione obbligatoria per la nuzialità e la natalità – Regio decreto-legge 14 aprile 1939 -XVII», *GU*, 3 maggio 1939.

⁸³⁷ V. Soldà, *L'unificazione dei contributi*, Genova, Società d'Arte Poligrafica, 1942, p.4.

in different funds that overlapped functions. Without prefiguring any universalistic turn, the prospected solutions were closer to the coeval British elaborations than Vichy's reforms: «an efficient unification should be pursued along the lines of the establishment of a single contribution, to be determined with single criterium, on a single contributory basis, and to be carried out with a single payment to a single authority.»⁸³⁸ The unification did not concern the whole of citizens nor to the mass of the salaried workers, albeit the report recommended to «level the benefits among all the categories of workers.»⁸³⁹ It concerned each “corporative” (occupational) category as «all the employers, the employees, the workers of all the similar industries may form, respectively, a single category.»⁸⁴⁰

More than on political reasons, the reforms grounded on practical considerations similar to those behind the British and French projects; the streamlining of the administrative proceedings, which made confusing the payments of benefits and comported important financial burdens. Also the political goals did not depart so much from the British or French plans; the reform was expected to legitimize the political system through its social institutions: «the success of the proposal would basically be a success of the Fascist corporative and trade unionist organization, because the reform enshrines, as mentioned, on the trade union regimentation and on the activity of its [*corporative n.d.a.*] organization, which is compelled to collaborate even more closely with the public and parastatal administrations, assuming new functions of general interest to serve the Nation and the Regime.»⁸⁴¹ The INFPS recommended gradual approach to progressively harmonize the contributory system. The coming of “total war” also in Italy – although under different forms than in 1941 Britain – probably accelerated the legislation under the RSI. This process concerned also the single employment records for all the contributions; present since 1931 in Italy, they were extended to the non-industrial

⁸³⁸ Ivi. p. 11.

⁸³⁹ Ivi. p. 13.

⁸⁴⁰ Ivi. p. 14.

⁸⁴¹ Ivi. p. 52.

categories in 1944.⁸⁴² It was needed to track the insured when their corresponding funds were falling outside the RSI's jurisdiction or the workers displaced from their original work circumscription. Nonetheless, this reform was completely in line with European trends; the principle "One card, one stamp, all benefits" was an administrative goal and a slogan widely used by social reformers in Britain and at the time of the *plan de sécurité sociale* in France.⁸⁴³

Universalist vs corporatist approaches: the case with healthcare policies

During the war, the three social systems, with significantly different backgrounds, converged on some common grounds. All attempted to coordinate some of the main sectors of social policy. In Britain, from the works of the various Committees of the Ministry of Reconstruction emerged a coherent approach to social and economic issues; the *Beveridge Report* and the subsequent *White Papers* addressed these areas with a uniform method. Compulsory insurances, industrial injuries, family allowances and the NHS constituted what was defined in the political and technical lexicon "social security", and the policies for full employment were the corollary to protect the individuals from the loss of income. Under the Vichy regime, the MIP twice attempted to pass a more limited all-inclusive reform, as it did not prefigure the overcoming of the occupational setting in a universalistic scheme of public compulsory insurances. Both drafts combined the corporatist framework with an extended role of the State: on the one hand, the coordination of the mutual funds and the unification of contributions, family allowances and paid leaves; on the other, the provision of minimum public pensions that envisaged a major State's commitment in the future. In the healthcare policies, the government refused any approach that implied public involvement beyond the occupational health. The mutual protection was preferred to universalist reforms.

⁸⁴² «Unificazione dei contributi e tenuta del libretto di lavoro nel settore dell'industria. Decreti Ministeriali 20 e 16 settembre 1944-XXII», Biblioteca Legale della Gazzetta del Popolo, pp. 12-20.

⁸⁴³ *Social Insurance, Including Industrial Injury Insurance. One Card, One Stamp, All Benefits. Brief Guide to the Government's Plan*, London, 1944.

Relevant divergences were present on the more detailed mechanisms, as for the contributory system. The tripartite funding of post-1945 British social security was not a completely new concept, even if the equal contribution and the corresponding flat-rate benefits were innovations. In the Italian or French social protections this setting was residual, or even non-existing, for State's contribution. The technical solutions did not merely hide divergences – although might not be so radical – in the way to conceive the “citizenship” and to implement “social solidarity”. The equal tripartite contribution relied on a double principle: the traditional principle of self-protection against the risks and the State's participation through the general taxation as a citizenship-based social solidarity. The income support was no longer exclusively matter of the individual, but the whole community took in charge of the minimum vital incomes of their members. This qualitative leap was particularly evident in the industrial injuries benefits and in the NHS, both funded by the national community. For the former, the war played a crucial role in the equalization of the wounded soldiers in the frontline with the injured workers in the workplace. But just in the field of the healthcare policies, the differences between the corporatist and the citizenship-based approaches became relevant; they provide a good case study to grasp the “inherent” divergences in the rationale of the wartime reforms.

Neither in Italy nor in France the healthcare reform was strictly interwoven to those of the social insurance, as it was in Britain. In France, with the 1941 *Charte hospitalière* the hospitals no longer assisted exclusively the poor, but opened up to all the citizens who could afford the costs of treatment. The regime also tried to intervene on sickness benefits and private healthcare structures, similarly to the EMF in Italy. The creation of the INASAS was expected to supervise the mutualist healthcare structures and to take direct control of the outpatient facilities.⁸⁴⁴ It also managed public structures for the insured, not differing that much from INFPS's sanatoria against the tuberculosis. The INASAS concerned only the insured, and was not opened to all the

⁸⁴⁴ AN, 2/AG/499/C.C.80, «Projet d'Institut National d'Action Sanitaires des Assurances Sociales, 25 Novembre 1941».

citizens; yet, it encountered political resistances within the government, which opposed some «major objections in principles» as it was feared the creation of a «vast and powerful State's structure.»⁸⁴⁵ Similar discussions were taking place in Britain, with the suppression of the *Approved Societies*, and in Italy, with the EMF. But the political conflicts under Vichy weakened the healthcare reform; it was feared that the INASAS «organized a thorough public administrative system dedicated to healthcare, to the preventive medicine, and to the treatment of the diseases only of the workers subjects to the social insurances, while all the Frenchmen, whether employers, self-employed, or salaried, should benefit of the same sanitary measures.»⁸⁴⁶

Not even the reform of healthcare in Italy, while providing one step ahead in the administrative coordination, prefigured the qualitative leap of the fully universalist healthcare. The 1943 law completed the trend started in 1935. The regime articulated social policy along three main branches: compulsory insurances (including family allowances, managed by the INFPS), industrial injuries and healthcare. By 1943, the regime expected to supervise and manage them through three distinguished public authorities, even if the EMF could only start its action. Alongside the provisions to protect maternity and childhood, it was moved by demographic and power considerations.⁸⁴⁷ But not even this aspect was inherent to Fascism; the 1906–14 *Liberal Welfare Reforms* were passed due to the concerns on the decline of the “national efficiency” in the international scenario and on the poor physical conditions of British citizens/soldiers.⁸⁴⁸ Also the social reformers of Free France in 1942 linked healthcare policy to French imperial role. Even in the peaceful Sweden, the social

⁸⁴⁵ AN, 2/AG/499/C.C.80, «Note sur la loi portant creation d'un Institut National d'action sanitaires des Assurances Sociales, 10 Novembre 1941», p.1.

⁸⁴⁶ Ivi. p.2.

⁸⁴⁷ S. Baravalle, *Maternità ed infanzia e previdenza sociale*, Vercelli, Edizioni SAVIT, 1939.

⁸⁴⁸ G. Searle, «“National Efficiency” and the “Lesson” of the War», in David Omissi, Andrew Thompson (eds.), *The Impact of the South African War*, London, Palgrave, 2001, pp. 194-211.

democracy was committed to eugenic enhancement.⁸⁴⁹ Also in this case, therefore, the breakdown was not a consequence of the ideological differences between “totalitarianisms” and “democracies”.

In Italy, the management of the sickness benefits and medical treatments faced the resistances of mutual sector, which only gradually accepted the progressive coordination and simplification that by 1939 was in the making through the suppression of the Business Sickness Funds.⁸⁵⁰ Neither the EMF nor Vichy’s hospital reforms are nearly comparable to the launch of the NHS in Britain; designed from scratch, it was funded by the whole national community, took over the mutual funds and was expression of principles of social solidarity that crossed political and status differences. [TAB.7] The Fascist regime never produced a coherent declaration of intents as the British *White Papers*. Yet, a propensity to reform according to similar political rationale might be retraced from the early 1930s to the very end of the war. The State was progressively taking functions and control of the mutual social insurances in more centralized funds; as in Britain, and as – with more resistances – in France, regardless the institutional ruptures in 1940 and 1944. Similarly, the transition from the regime to the RSI did not change this trend; the systematization of social policies was “too structural” to be affected by regime changes and by the misleading division between “democracies” and “totalitarian/authoritarian” regimes.

The NHS’s full availability and accessibility marked the most consistent departure from the previous policies. In France, the hospitals became a service for all the population; yet, they were not a *universalistic* social service, as they opened to those who could afford it.

⁸⁴⁹ A. Spektorowski, E. Mizrahi, «Eugenics and the Welfare State in Sweden: The Politics of Social Margins and the Idea of a Productive Society», *Journal of Contemporary History*, n.3/2004, pp. 333-352.

⁸⁵⁰ F. Bertini, «Il fascismo dalle assicurazioni per i lavoratori allo stato sociale», pp. 280-288.

TAB.8. Healthcare reforms in Britain, France and Italy, 1941-44

	Reform	Provisions
Great Britain	<i>White Paper on National Health Service</i> (1944)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Health Service: funded by general revenues; fully universalist; run by the Ministry of Health; - Suppression of the <i>Approved Societies</i>.
France	<i>Charte hospitaliere</i> (1941) INASAS draft project (1942)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening up the healthcare services to all the citizens who can afford it; - Appointment of the heads of hospitals and medical staff by the Prefects (end of assistance approach); - Supervision of the mutual sickness funds; - Management of sanatoria and outpatient healthcare structures.
Italy	<i>Legge 11 gennaio 1943- Ente Mutualità Fascista</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amalgamation of the mutual sickness funds (excluding public sector); - [Since 1933 the INFPS ran sanatoria for the insured and their families]

In Italy, the sanatoria for the tuberculosis were created to assist the workers; while in fact good part of the population (the insured workers and their families) could enjoy the treatments, for other diseases the regime did not operate any effective U-turn.

All these reforms suggest a “social solidarity” in concentric circles; firstly, between the corporative categories, secondarily, and as a consequence of the “corporative solidarity”, among the members of the nation. The retail of the occupational schemes was claimed to be particularly suitable for the corporatist projects in the two regimes. In reality, the principles of social solidarity are not in conflict with the occupational/corporatist compulsory schemes. The universalist British social security did not have consistent carryover in the European Continent after the war. But the universalistic *principles* fuelled everywhere the plans of reforms for the post-1945 European

democracies. The means and the extent of their spread constitutes the third part of my dissertation.

Part Three. Wartime Ideas and Policies in a Global Perspective

6. Social policy and the home front

Since the beginning of the war, social policy was exploited to strengthen the domestic front. In different context, the three countries relied on their respective social programmes to garner consensus. The British *War Cabinet*, as well as the Vichy regime and the RSI, centred their propaganda on the promises of a better world and social improvement. The belligerent *had to* bargain the regimentation of labour with more social rights and benefits. But this link explains only partially the reasons why social policy had such pre-eminence in the conflict. Politics already used the promise of new social concessions as a tool to keep the population and the army mobilized during WWI.⁸⁵¹ In the years 1939-45, the “social content” of the war assumed a greater scope for all sides in conflict. The importance assumed by the plans of post-war socio-economic organization shows that WWII was perceived as an ideological confrontation between social models.

The promises of fairer social systems were exploited to strengthen the home front but quickly became an instrument of propaganda abroad. The *Beveridge Report* was used by the British government to project the message of social renewal abroad. From 1941 onwards, the Allied war effort incorporated social security and full employment as pillars of the post-war international and domestic order; for these principles the Allied committed their societies to the war. The Axis powers and their satellites undertook a similar effort. Under the Nazi European Order, the various fascist and puppet governments promoted their own social revolutions. The role of “total war” clearly affected the debate in Britain, while the ideology was a key element of the last Fascist experience. The effort to keep the country out of the conflict, instead, moved the political action of the Vichy regime;

⁸⁵¹ A. Gregory, *The Last Great War. British Society and the First World War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, particularly pp. 187-295; G. Procacci, «Popular Protest and Labour Conflict in Italy, 1915-1918», *Social History*, n.1/1989, pp. 31-58.

the war conditions, however, gave the opportunity to implement the principles of the “social collaboration”. For the British and – in a different shade – Italian cases, the definition of “home front” applies in its warlike sense; for Vichy, it rather indicates its search for consensus and legitimization in the wider context of the war and occupation, which lapped the regime notwithstanding the effort of the regime to start thinking the recovery policies within the framework of the post-war Nazi European Order.

6.1. *The British public opinion and the Beveridge Report: towards a new social pact?*

The British civilian morale has been investigated by a wide literature that generally agreed on the firmness of the society when Britain pretended to “stay alone” against Nazi Germany in the years 1940–1.⁸⁵² With the evacuation of Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain and the German aircraft *Blitz* from September 1940 to May 1941, the British WWII epic was born and carefully exploited by the offices of propaganda and by the press, to stay in the collective memories for decades.⁸⁵³ Since 1941–2, the topics of propaganda left more room for the peace aims and followed the shift in the war events and the changing mood of the population. The attempt to give more importance to the social features of the war shored up the weakening of the British morale by the first quarter of 1942, after the blaze of the civilian mobilization of the years 1940-1 was over:

«At this stage of the war public feeling and the public’s reactions to the war cannot any longer be taken for granted. To study them, to assess them and to adjust our publicity to

⁸⁵² C. Ponting, *1940: Myth and Reality*, Chicago, Ivan R. Dee, 1990.

⁸⁵³ P. Summerfield, «Dunkirk and the Popular Memory of Britain at War, 1940–58», *Journal of Contemporary History*, n.4/2010, pp.788-811; M. S. Alexander, «Dunkirk in military operations, myths, and memories», in Robert Tombs, Emile Chabal, *Britain and France in Two World Wars. Truth, Myth and Memory*, London, Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 93-118; M. Smith, *Britain and 1940: History, Myth and Popular Memory*, London, Routledge, 2000.

meet them is now a much more important concern of the Government than it was two years ago. Yet this publicity cannot be wholly effective unless it interprets the considered policy of the War Cabinet as a whole and unless the actions of Ministers and Departments generally are consistent with it. [...] There has been in recent months a widespread decrease in confidence. To some extent this confidence will ebb and flow with the course of events, but we should be altogether too complacent if we merely waited for a run of successes to restore it. There is a prevalent sense of frustration. [...] Many people want the war to be over so that they can be free to start on something positive and constructive for the future. They do not find in our present avowed purposes the impulse to a crusade or to a genuine fervour of endeavour.»⁸⁵⁴

The report of the Ministry of Information (MOI) recommended to differentiate the topics of propaganda, «not only about the armed forces and the war situation but also about production, labour, wartime reconstruction and the big problems that affect the life of everyone today.»⁸⁵⁵ The changes in public mind met the assessment that «the whole position concerning propaganda in factories seems still to be extremely unsatisfactory.»⁸⁵⁶ The MOI feared to lose connection with the workers, afraid of being “betrayed” as it already happened after WWI: «it is difficult to exaggerate the growing force of the demand for guarantees that “privileges” be not allowed to lose the next peace, as it is generally felt to have lost the last one; individualistic capitalism must yield place to “controlled” capitalism; we ought to be told what we are fighting for, etc. etc. Remarks like this can be heard wherever working

⁸⁵⁴ TNA, INF/1/679, «Report of the Ministry of Information to the War Cabinet. Propaganda at home. 24th April, 1942», p.1.

⁸⁵⁵ Ivi. p.2.

⁸⁵⁶ TNA, INF/1/679, « Ministry of Information. Propaganda in factories. 27th April, 1942», p.1.

men gather together.»⁸⁵⁷ To prevent the dismay of the home front, in the first half of 1942 the propaganda services stressed the need to show to the workers the direct relationship of their constraints with the war effort and with the post-war settlement.⁸⁵⁸ These considerations were accompanied by stronger coordination between central and peripheral information offices, and the use of the mass medias. These were considered the most efficient way to reach interclass sectors of the population; lower-middle and upper classes, male industrial workers and housewives. In the factories, such kind of information was considered more useful than the press. As the information reached a wider audience, it was essential to find out topics that could gather peoples' aspirations: «generally the work of the Regional staffs would be infinitely easier if they were working under the *inspiration of comprehensive policy not only for the war, but for the reconstruction period after the war.*»⁸⁵⁹

The first directives on British social services in Britain propagandized the most important speeches of the members of the *War Cabinet*, as the Minister of Labour Bevin, or the plans for the post-war settlement to which since the beginning the social insurances were related.⁸⁶⁰ They had the explicit goal to «serve to convince the public in this country and abroad of the progress made by British social services in wartime.»⁸⁶¹ The Minister for the Reconstruction enthusiastically approved its contents:

«The material is so admirable that I should like to suggest that consideration be given to making it available in

⁸⁵⁷ TNA, INF/1/679, «Report to the Director of Home Division. Ministry of Information. 26th April, 1942», p.4.

⁸⁵⁸ TNA, INF/1/679, «Summary of Trends in Public Opinion during the period April 20th – May 18th 1942», p.3.

⁸⁵⁹ TNA, INF/1/679, «Home propaganda. 25th April, 1942», p.6. The italics is mine, underlined in the original type-written.

⁸⁶⁰ TNA, INF/1/683, «Papers dealing with Reconstruction & Post-War Planning prepared by Reference Division. 17th June 1942»

⁸⁶¹ TNA, PIN/8/164, «Letter from Brandon Bracken to Arthur Greenwood. 1st December, 1941».

published form. I suggest that the sort of thing we want is a publication which shows the steps we have taken during the war to advance our social services, in spite of the stresses and strains of the war, as an earnest of our intention to implement our undertakings in the future. I would hearten our Allies and fortify the neutrals to know that we mean to take the lead in fulfilling our obligations under the Atlantic Charter. Such a publication, covering both the pre-war situation and war developments, would show a broad front of advancement. This, I am sure, would be well worth doing. Six months ago I said that Britain (then taking the major strain of the war) was the one country in the world which had advanced its social services. The picture could be made even more impressive to-day.»⁸⁶²

The government hoped to exploit at home and abroad the «remarkable expansion of many different kinds of collective social provision.»⁸⁶³ The MOI worked together with other departments to promote monthly reports on the advancement of the reconstruction policies and to monitor the official and unofficial debate on the subject.⁸⁶⁴ The Ministry pointed at accounting the opinion of few detailed and doable commitments that government made for after the war, rather than promising impractical plans.⁸⁶⁵

The meetings of the Beveridge Committee started between 1941 and 1942. Their results, in November 1942, matched the changing climate of the population with regard to war and reconstruction. The timing of the *Beveridge Report* was propitious for providing to the public opinion the specific reconstruction policies that few months

⁸⁶² TNA, PIN/8/164, «Letter from Arthur Greenwood to Brandon Bracken. 21st November, 1941».

⁸⁶³ TNA, PIN/8/164, «Britain's Social Services and the War», p.1.

⁸⁶⁴ TNA, INF/1/683, «Proposed plan for the collection of information regarding reconstruction matters and the preparation of periodical reports. 24.10.41»

⁸⁶⁵ TNA, INF/1/683, «Publicity regarding the planning for reconstruction. A note on a Discussion between Representatives of the Ministry of Information and the Reconstruction Secretariat. 5/7/43».

before the MOI recommended. Yet, in the beginning the *War Cabinet* was caught off guard by the report and by the autonomous publicity that Beveridge made of it, which arose a not completely expected interest in the press and opinion. The government was careful in the promotion of the report, as not all the measures were immediately enforceable. The Treasury proposed to put emphasis to limited provisions, like family allowances, which might be immediately introducible, to not create false expectations on overarching reforms during wartime.⁸⁶⁶

Politics, however, was immediately played around the report; in the few weeks before its publication, the *War Cabinet* was almost compelled to chase Beveridge's activism. There was no agreed strategy among departments and Beveridge's entourage, and the leaking of the survey to the press before the publication embarrassed the government.⁸⁶⁷ The guidelines for the publicity were decided by the Paymaster General (and future Minister of the National Insurances) Jowitt, the MOI and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The MOI was expected to be the only governmental agency in charge of the publicity, but had to coordinate the summaries of the report to be published with the Ministry of Health and with the Treasury, in order to select the information. The government wanted to directly supervise the propaganda, preventing overlapping or further leaking of information.⁸⁶⁸ This because the *Beveridge Report* was still a set of proposals that did not compel the government. As the *War Cabinet* did not know how the public opinion would have received the text, the report was meant to be provisional before the official *White Papers*.

The report found fertile ground among the British opinion, but also eager listener within the government and the departments of the MOI. In the weeks before its publications and for the months just after,

⁸⁶⁶ TNA, FO/T/172/2093, «Chancellor of the Exchequer. Beveridge Report: Publicity. 19th November, 1942»

⁸⁶⁷ TNA, INF/1/683, «Reconstruction Secretariat to Ministry of Information. 19th November 1942»; See the correspondence between members of the government, and between Jowitt and Beveridge the month before the publication of the report, in TNA, FO/T/172/2093.

⁸⁶⁸ TNA, FO/T/172/2093, «Beveridge Report: Publicity. S.d.»

it had an extremely huge press coverage; from the detailed summaries on *The Times* to the local press, the media welcomed the *Beveridge Report* as the cornerstone of the reconstruction plans for post-war Britain.⁸⁶⁹ The recommendations of the government on how to “correctly” present the report were achieved. In the civilian distribution it quickly became a best-seller in Britain. In the first months, nearly 250.000 copies of the integral version of the plan and 350.000 of the official summary were sold; the plan had a certain success also in the US, where 42.000 copies were sold.⁸⁷⁰ The government disseminated the special editions of the report to the army; it became part of the programme of educational training; its guidelines were taught in the citizenship classes for the soldiers and the *Army Bureau for the Current Affairs* (ABCA) planned to publish its compendia in the official journals for the British army, *War and Current Affairs*. The government later stopped these publications, as it judged premature to present the *Beveridge Report* as the official stand on the matter.⁸⁷¹

Since the first days after its publication, the *War Cabinet* monitored the impact of the report to the public with polls throughout the country, with special reference to main industrial areas in England and Scotland. After two weeks, 95% of the population had heard of it; polls figured out that the most interested strata of the population were the poorer. There was general agreement on the rates of the benefits, with very few exceptions, and the «overwhelming endorsement of the proposal to include everyone in a comprehensive scheme of medical services»;⁸⁷² up to 88% of the public welcomed the free national health service. The British population hoped for the effective implementation

⁸⁶⁹ Only in the archives of the *London School of Economics*, collection *Beveridge*, 20 records named *Press Cuttings* are stocked, for the most part dealing with articles and commentaries on the *Beveridge Report* published on a large number of newspapers. LSEA/Beveridge/12/22-26.

⁸⁷⁰ W. Beveridge, *The Pillars of Security and other Wartime Essays and Addresses*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1943, p. 203.

⁸⁷¹ TNA, CAB/65/33, «Conclusions of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Friday, January 8th, 1943, at 11 a.m.», p.18.

⁸⁷² TNA, PREM/4/89/2, «*The Beveridge Report and the Public. What Britain Thinks of The Beveridge Report as shown by a Gallup Poll by The British Institute of Public Opinion*, London, 1942», p. 4.

of the report, the real chances of which, however, were met with scepticism. Such massive penetration of the general ideas of the *Beveridge Report* was considered the result of the publicity given by the press, by the BBC and by the other media. Other figures concerned the reasons of this general support; while the lower incomes hoped in the improvement of their economic conditions thanks to the reform, the British people «seem to have approached the questions from the angle of the public good.»⁸⁷³ The overall positive assessment on the report crossed classes and shared the view that the plan increased the war effort and constituted the basis for a comprehensive reform of social security. Churchill, for his part, considered Beveridge's «approach to social security [...] an essential part of any post-war scheme of national betterment.»⁸⁷⁴

Other independent inquiries, like Cole's survey of 1942, showed a less univocal scenario, where class divisions retained. Under the surface of the cooperation and consensus, the traditional bonds of class solidarity and self-help persisted among the workers. They seemed to be more interested in tangible material benefits and secure employment, rather than State-driven welfare reforms. The compulsory schemes were not disregarded, but the working class apparently still frightened the loss of the unions' prerogatives in the matter of social protection.⁸⁷⁵ Unofficial surveys like this, although articulated for their content and extension, did not invalidate the agreement of the British society as a whole on broad principles and guidelines.⁸⁷⁶ The general appreciation for the report did not mean its immediate reception in political terms. Its examination involved a detailed work in the different departments; the government, in the first months, maintained

⁸⁷³ Ivi. p. 10.

⁸⁷⁴ TNA, PREM/4/89/2, «Note of the Prime Minister on the Beveridge Report. 14th February, 1942», p.1.

⁸⁷⁵ J. Harris, «Did British Workers Want the Welfare State? G.D.H. Cole's Survey of 1942», in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Working Class in Modern British History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 200-214.

⁸⁷⁶ On Cole's survey, see also L. P. Carpenter, *G.D.H. Cole: an Intellectual Biography*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1966, pp. 197-200.

an ambiguous stance, without committing itself in a complete endorsement of the report.⁸⁷⁷

This caution did not match the common feeling of the population; already few days after the publication, the Home Office recognised that «the Chief home topic of the past week has been the Beveridge Report. This appears as something revolutionary in the social security of all citizens, and the first reactions seem to show unanimous approval of the scheme. Many members of the public are confidently looking to the Government to bring many of the suggested improvements contained in the report into being without waiting until the end of the war.»⁸⁷⁸ The report was seen also as the effective implementation of the principles of the *Atlantic Charter* that was judged too vague for an efficient propaganda by the same political warfare services. The report was accompanied – especially among the poorer – by some almost messianic awaiting for the poverty eradication and the freedom from want, especially in old age. The mood of the opinion rapidly changed, especially when facing the first political obstacles and delays since the very beginning of 1943.

The dispatches from the *Policy Duty Room* of the Home Office signalled that the public followed the parliamentary debates on the *Beveridge Report* (that the notes reported being nicknamed the “People’s Charter”)⁸⁷⁹ with great interests, being also «the main topic of conversation, of course.»⁸⁸⁰ The working class was apparently in favour of its implementation as soon as possible, even during wartime; the notes noticed that this resolution encountered some opposition in the higher social standings.⁸⁸¹ The quick implementation was regarded as the opportunity to avoid any tampering to the original proposals and to show how Britain was effectively struggling «for a better world».⁸⁸² The same notes remarked that in every section of the society –

⁸⁷⁷ TNA, PREM/4/89/2, «Draft Statement on Beveridge Report. 30th November, 1942»; TNA, PREM/4/89/2, «Not to the Prime Minister. 12th February, 1943».

⁸⁷⁸ TNA, PIN/8/162, «Home Office. Police Duty Room. 4th December, 1942».

⁸⁷⁹ TNA, PIN/8/162, «Home Office. Police Duty Room. 2nd February, 1943».

⁸⁸⁰ TNA, PIN/8/162, «Home Office. Police Duty Room. 28th February, 1943».

⁸⁸¹ TNA, PIN/8/162, «Home Office. Police Duty Room. 1st January, 1943».

⁸⁸² TNA, PIN/8/162, «Home Office. Police Duty Room. 27th February, 1943».

including the Armed Forces – the debate was followed with increasing scepticism and hassle; the common opinion was that the government was half-hearted towards the plan. The outcomes of the parliamentary debates brought people to think that eventually the vested interests sabotaged the reforms.

The delaying in putting into practice social security measures after the war made people believe that the government would have broken its promises, once the maximum mobilisation for the war was no longer demanded. General mistrust was expressed for the private insurance companies and the vested interests.⁸⁸³ The publicity made by Beveridge himself and the debates in the Parliament did not help restore confidence, as «the impression in the country is that the Beveridge proposals are not linked by the Government and that every effort will be made to see that they do not come into operation.»⁸⁸⁴ These feedbacks of a growing eagerness by the opinion accompanied the fear of a forthcoming Beveridge's work on full employment that might catch off guard *War Cabinet*.⁸⁸⁵ The governmental circles felt compelled to start working on the *White Papers*, expressing the official stand on the matter, backing up the spirit, if not the letter, of the *Beveridge Report*, mindful of the overall failure of the projects for the reconstruction after WWI.⁸⁸⁶

Since months before the publication of the report, the press and personalities fostered the attention on social reforms. They borrowed the lexicon that later characterized Beveridge's reforms, and supported the messianic await for the work, defined «one of the most memorable and exciting documents in our domestic history.»⁸⁸⁷ In September 1942, the future Labour's Prime Minister Attlee endorsed the works of the Committee:

⁸⁸³ TNA, PIN/8/162, «Home Office. Police Duty Room. 4th December, 1942»; TNA, PIN/8/162, «Home Office. Police Duty Room. 5th December, 1942»; TNA, PIN/8/162, «Home Office. Police Duty Room. 5th January, 1943».

⁸⁸⁴ TNA, INF/1/683, «Publicity on Reconstruction. 31.3. 43», p.1.

⁸⁸⁵ Ivi.

⁸⁸⁶ TNA, INF/1/683, «Publicity. 27th February, 43»

⁸⁸⁷ A.J. Cummings, «Spotlight», *News Chronicle*, 27th October 1942.

«All the various services which have been built up in this country, social, educational, industrial, and recreational, [...] have continued and been extended. That extension and amplification has gone on in war-time and, I would add, with added impetus and increased pace during these past two years. I hope before long that we may weave these various provisions into a coherent system of social security for all. We hope to establish freedom from want. We are awaiting a great report on this subject from Sir William Beveridge.»⁸⁸⁸

The public debate, before and after November 1942, inextricably linked the post-war economic reconstruction with the social reforms: not only the *Beveridge Report*, but also the works of the other Committees, such as the *Uthwatt* and the *Scott Reports*. The documentation suggested that the inclusive reform of social insurances was demanded by British society and that this was entangled with the effort of the war.⁸⁸⁹ The wait for the outcomes of the *Beveridge Report* was outweighed by enthusiasm and keen interest. The few criticisms were usually circumscribed to the financial sustainability of the report, rather than to the very principles.⁸⁹⁰ The report upstaged other reconstruction issues, also thanks to the active role played by Beveridge and his group in its promotion. From the local to the international newspapers, from the tabloids to the economic and political newspapers, social security was one of the major topics on the front pages. *The Times*, for instance, devoted single topic issues about the report, its principles and sustainability. The endorsement to the reform shines through the lines of these descriptive summaries.⁸⁹¹

⁸⁸⁸ «Looking to the future. Mr. Attlee on the tasks of peace», *The Times*, 7th September 1942.

⁸⁸⁹ LSEA, Beveridge/12/22/1, «Press Cuttings, c. March – October 1942».

⁸⁹⁰ TNA, PREM/4/89/2, «Angus Watson, «The Beveridge Plan», *Manchester Guardian*, 16th December, 1942».

⁸⁹¹ «The Beveridge Report – The Terms of Reference», *The Times*, 2nd December 1942; «The Beveridge Report – Work after the War», *The Times*, 8th December 1942; «Freedom from Want», *The Times*, 9th December 1942.

The government's cautions to fully endorse the Beveridge's reforms was overcome by grounds of political expediency by the departmental offices. The report was the only detailed piece of proposal for post-war reconstruction in the hands of the *War Cabinet*. It had the positive feedback in the population and the support of intellectuals, associations, and lobbies. Beveridge himself set up the *Social Security League* (SSL), with the aim «to promote the principles of the Beveridge Report».⁸⁹² It gathered important intellectuals, covering the whole range of political positions in Britain: besides Beveridge and G.D.H. Cole, many members of the Liberal or Conservative parties were at the head of the associations: Violet Bonham-Carter, close to Churchill, Sir Eric MacFadyen, Sir Ronald Davidson, Sir Ralph Wedgwood, or lifetime social reformers like Rowntree, Joan Clarke, or Barbara Wootton. They represented the transversal political area of consensus on the social reforms, which allowed the league to keep relations with political parties. At national level, the SSL mobilized intellectual forces into the discussion, deepening and promotion of the report through meetings, conferences, sessions in the universities, summaries for the publicity and the press. Its propaganda activity developed in synergy with the public departments, as for the translation and spread of the propaganda abroad.⁸⁹³ The SSL published and translated a huge amount of copies and summaries of the report in Hebrew, Japanese, Dutch, Greek, other than copies for the Southern and Northern American markets.⁸⁹⁴ The *Beveridge Report* had a fruitful circulation in the Spanish speaking world, and (unofficial) translations of the report were made by the Spanish national agency for the social insurances; besides, compendium of the report circulated in the US and broadcastings were given in the British Empire. Beveridge gave different speeches in the broadcasts for Britain or in the foreign services

⁸⁹² See the activity of the SSL, the correspondence, and conference reports in LSEA, Beveridge/8/52.

⁸⁹³ LSEA, Beveridge/8/52, «Letter from Sir George Young to William Beveridge, 24th August 1943».

⁸⁹⁴ Different copies of the *Beveridge Report*, and commentaries in various languages are in LSEA, Beveridge/8/58/3.

of the BBC, as for the speeches in the programme *L'Angleterre en Mouvement* of BBC's French Service.⁸⁹⁵

In many cases, the guidelines of the plan circulated thanks to the translation and summaries provided by the *International Labour Office* (ILO).⁸⁹⁶ There are only partial data on the reception of what was already considered one of the main documents produced during wartime. The correspondence stored at the LSE archives showed – according to whichever country – that the summaries were welcomed favourably by the audience they were headed, mostly experts and the academic environment. Beveridge weaved personally the threads with single personalities or institutions on the other side of the Atlantic, pursuing a relentless campaign at universities, associations and lobbies.⁸⁹⁷ The main effort still concentrated on Britain, with a precise strategy for propaganda to the home opinion.

Since 1943, the SSL tried to assert itself as the pivot of the vast range of the British associations committed with social progress; from the feminist leagues to the Christian organisations, from the liberal think tanks to the workers' associations. To do so, the SSL did not configure as a political organization, but as a movement to entrench universalistic principles to the people, especially striving to convince the middle classes that the plan was «a respectable piece of self-organised self-help and not a form of State charity.»⁸⁹⁸ The SSL tried to

⁸⁹⁵ LSEA, Beveridge/9B/57, «Feature Plan Beveridge. French Service. 24 octobre 1944». Various texts of speeches and broadcasts are stored in LSEa, Beveridge/9B/56-59.

⁸⁹⁶ Copies of the *Social Insurance and Allied Services* circulated in the enemy countries and their satellites, in the Allied countries, and within the British Empire. Many copies are in LSEA, Beveridge/8/58/2: «Plan de seguridad social. Informe por H.W.Beveridge, 1942»; «Memorandum on the Beveridge Report, Washington D.C., The National Policy Committee, 1943»; «*Social Insurance and Allied Services report by Sir William Beveridge*, New York, The MacMillan Company, 1942»; «*The Beveridge Plan progress in Kenya*, Nairobi, The Central Home, 1944»; «ILO, *Planes de seguridad social en Gran Bretaña*, Montreal, ILO, 1942».

⁸⁹⁷ The texts of Beveridge's speeches and lectures by Beveridge himself are stored in LSEA, Beveridge/9B/28/1-29/6; LSEA, Beveridge/9B/29/1-30/5; LSEA, Beveridge/9B/30/6-14; LSEA, Beveridge/9B/30/15-22; LSEA, Beveridge/9B/30/23-30; LSEA, Beveridge/9B/31/3-13; LSEA, Beveridge/9B/31/14-24.

⁸⁹⁸ M. Webb, et. al., *Beveridge Strategy. Report of the Spearhead meeting hold at the Livingstone Hall, London, on October 19th, 1943*, London, Social Security League, p.6.

lead back “conservative” constituencies to pro-welfare positions and to reinvigorate the morale of those classes which were normally in favour of the social provisions. To convince that the report’s implementation was in the making, the communication strategy linked it to other social provisions enacted by the government, such as family allowances. This would have conveyed the idea that the promised reforms were to be implemented; mostly, it gave the impression that political consensus led the government to fully endorse the report’s proposals, regardless this was true or not.

The efforts of Beveridge’s acolytes to promote the report to different constituencies eventually led to a self-perceived agreement on some general principles that were matter of concern for Beveridge: the spread of social solidarity; the synergy between self-relief and State’s action to ensure the minimum vital income for all the citizens *as a right*; the creation of a complete system of social security articulated in three main branches (social insurances, family allowances, national health system). Their general acceptance by the opinion would have got into trouble the government, compelling it to endorse the broader lines of Beveridge’s recommendations. While the offices of the Ministry of the Reconstruction were still studying the detailed proposals, the *War Cabinet* was mainly committed to manage and orient the circulation of the extracts of the report.⁸⁹⁹

By the end of 1943 the government was drafting the *White Papers* on social insurances and the NHS; as foreseen by the MOI, Beveridge shifted the focus of his action on the means to maintain full employment.⁹⁰⁰ The victory was considered matter of time and the debate moved to the retail of the wartime efficiency in peacetime economy. Beveridge used the expression of the “Five Giants – Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness” on the road of post-war reconstruction. It became an iconic formula, reproduced on cartoons, pamphlets, posters. Within governmental circles, these watchwords provided footprints for policy as well: while Want, Disease, and

⁸⁹⁹ TNA, CAB/195/2, «W.M. (43), 33rd Meeting, on 22nd February, 1943».

⁹⁰⁰ W. Beveridge, «Killing the Fifth Giant. On the Abolition of Unemployment», *The Listener*, 14th October, 1943.

Ignorance could be defeated by social insurances, the national health policies and the education reforms, Squalor and Idleness were more matter of urban, housing, industrial and economic planning policies.⁹⁰¹ Beveridge himself considered the Idleness, that is, large scale unemployment, as «the largest and fiercest of the five giants and the most important to attack.»⁹⁰²

The war allowed the State to plan the allocation of resources and to totally control the fluidity of manpower.⁹⁰³ After the war, the achievement of social security rested on the commitment to promote a peacetime policy of full employment. Beveridge called out the government to propose already during the war, for: «(a) That, subject to leaving untouched the essential British liberties, it will be prepared to use the powers of the State to whatever extent may prove to be necessary, in order to maintain employment after the war; (b) That it has set up an Economic General Staff (a body that doesn't exist today) to prepare a plan or plans for that purpose and to show just what will need to be done.»⁹⁰⁴ In his public speeches between 1943 and 1944, he lobbied for planning policy to secure full employment. This was a fundamental political goal both for the reconstruction *and* for the projection of Britain abroad during the war: «we shall have, if not a second front in Europe, what is at least important in winning the war – a second wind. We shall by that belief and purpose have energies beyond estimate released for war. We shall be united in combined attack on tyranny and savagery abroad and on Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, Idleness at home. Let us become united now for total war and for a peace different from the last peace abroad and at home.»⁹⁰⁵ The war brought about new ideas and tools to tackle mass unemployment; Britain could then wage the last phase of the conflict, and stepped in as a model of the socio-economic reconstruction.

⁹⁰¹ TNA, T/161/1165, «Note from the Advisory Panel on Home Affairs on Reconstruction Problems the Five Giants on the Road. 25th June, 1942».

⁹⁰² W. Beveridge, «Maintenance of Employment», in Id., *The Pillars of Security and other War-time Essays and Addresses*, pp. 41-52, p. 43.

⁹⁰³ Ivi., p.45.

⁹⁰⁴ Ivi. p.51.

⁹⁰⁵ Ivi. p. 52.

The struggle against unemployment was a settle outlook and a policy target.⁹⁰⁶ Since the appointment of the reconstruction committees, the success of any post-war plan was linked to the maintenance of full employment as first policy goal. No wonder, the 1944 Beveridge's work had a great success in Britain and abroad, even though it was carried out independently, if not in concurrence with, the official *White Paper*;⁹⁰⁷ Beveridge and the committees of the Ministry of Reconstruction worked on two distinguished papers. The former director of the LSE worked together with a group of Keynesian economists, such as Joan Robinson, Ernst Schumacher and Nicholas Kaldor, who previously collaborated with the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal.⁹⁰⁸ He also resorted to independent employment investigations, reports and surveys from the Fabian Society, the Independent Labour Party, the Labour Party, the Liberal Party, the Tory Reform Committee, the trade unions, the PEP and other organizations.⁹⁰⁹ The reports did not involve any governmental representative, public officer, or civil servant, who were prevented by the *War Cabinet* to participate.⁹¹⁰

When both the reports were published, Beveridge did not hold back on criticisms on the *White Paper* on employment policy, which he

⁹⁰⁶ LSEA, Beveridge/9A/14, «Fabian Lecture. Budgeting in the postwar world. 27th November, 1943»; AA.VV., *The Economics of Full Employment. Six Studies in Applied Economics prepared at The Oxford University Institute of Statistics*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1944; H. Molson, *Full Employment and the Budget*, London, Signpost Booklets on Post-war Problems, 1944; C. H. Ross, *The New Plan for Remedying Unemployment*, Buxton, Derbyshire Printing Company, 1945; H. Clay, *War and Unemployment*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1945.

⁹⁰⁷ See the correspondence in LSEA, Beveridge/9A/16/1.

⁹⁰⁸ See the report of the "Technical Committee" that worked with Beveridge in LSEA, Beveridge/9A/13.

⁹⁰⁹ LSEA, 9A/15/5, «The Prevention of General Unemployment by a Group of Fabians. 14th February, 1944»; LSEA, 9A/15/7, «Meeting with the Independent Labour Party. 19th January, 1944»; LSEA, 9A/15/9, «Employment Investigation Questionnaire (21.10.43)»; LSEA, 9A/15/10, «Memo. On Mobility of Labour. 17.12.43»; LSEA, Beveridge/9A/15/12, «Meeting with members of PEP. 2nd December 1943»; see also the meetings with the TUC Economic Committee in LSEA, 9A/15/14.

⁹¹⁰ See the press cuttings in LSEA, Beveridge/9A/19.

considered too much conjunctural.⁹¹¹ Under the surface of the consensus, the British politics was not so cohesive; the persistence of the different positions on the matter favoured the 1945 victory of the Labour Party, which showed to be committed to full employment more than the Conservatives. The suggestion to support full employment with forms of planning, public control and nationalizations gained the TUC and working class' endorsement.⁹¹² The memory of what happened after WWI played a role; the same actors that thwarted the wartime promises after 1918 (the Treasury, the right-wing of the war coalition and the employers' organizations), were the same to fear Beveridge and Labour promises to have "more vacant jobs than people".

The dynamics of the consensus on social policy in wartime Britain were less linear than how they went down in history. Presumably, the government was moved to overcome the initial hesitation and to accelerate on the path of social security by the positive domestic impact of the *Beveridge Report*. The parties had to take into consideration the aspirations of public opinion; the government had to keep the pace of the mobilization, while politics was already organizing for the general elections immediately after the war. The government tried to retain the sole management of propaganda, to calibrate it according to the political and financial workability of the *White Papers* proposals. On the other side, there was room for other actors to promote social reforms. The MOI tried to orient the press and the other medias, but the public debate was never completely erased.

In the end, Beveridge's own proposals were commonly identified with governmental official papers and assimilated to the wider effort of the British government to strengthen the home front through promises of social improvements. In the public narrative, and – to some extent – in the subsequent literature on the matter, the struggle for universalistic social reforms became part of the "British

⁹¹¹ T.S. Newman, *Guide to the Government's Employment Policy*, London, Hearths of Oak Benefit Society, 1944.

⁹¹² Labour Party, *Labour Party Annual Conference Report, 1944*, London, Labour Party, 1944, p.161.

epic” of WWII, just as Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain and the *Blitz*. A common ground on social policy was eventually found in the policy-making; what was relevant during the war, was to make believe to the widest possible audience at home and abroad that Britain had a detailed programme to secure the freedom from the Five Giants. At home, it served to garner the consensus of the population, especially the lower classes; abroad, it had also specific implications for the post-war international settlement.

6.2. *The Vichy regime: social pacification through collaboration*

The Vichy Regime built its public narrative on the military defeat perceived as a rupture with the previous political system.⁹¹³ Propaganda was fundamental to garner consensus and legitimize its institutions; it was managed by General Secretary for Information and Propaganda, which passed through different guidancies and goals from 1941 to 1944.⁹¹⁴ Vichy governance in this field is rather complex; in the South Zone the government also financed a vast network of non-governmental propaganda offices. In the North, they were not even authorized by the Germans. These organizations promoted of the *Révolution Nationale*, addressing to different targets. The *Service de la Propagande Ouvrière* (SPO), dependent from the Secretary, was charged of the specific propaganda in the factories. The *Légion Française des Combattants* (LFC) was also a fundamental tool of propaganda, chaired by Pétain himself. The governmental offices privileged the sectional propaganda, culminated with the creation of separate agencies addressing to the workers, the employers and the technicians. The LFC appealed to the whole “body” of the factories, adopting the typical techniques of the movement.⁹¹⁵ Besides the propaganda to the workers,

⁹¹³ H. Roussio, «Vichy, le grand fossé», *Vingtième Siècle*, n.5/1985, pp. 55-79.

⁹¹⁴ D. Peschanski, «Encadrer ou contrôler ?» in Denis Peschanski, Laurent Gervereau, *La propagande sous Vichy*, Paris, BDIC, 1990, pp. 10-32.

⁹¹⁵ I. Di Jorio, *Tecnica di propaganda politica. Vichy e la Légion Française des Combattants (1940-1944)*, Roma, Carocci, 2006, see the document A. Beauchamp, *Conseils d'un militant. II. L'organisation des réunions de propagande*, Union Départementale des Bouches du Rhône

documentation not directed to mass circulation (proceedings of meetings and conferences) suggests that the regime tried to hold the ranks of its different political trends.

The Vichy regime adopted mixed methods of propaganda to reach vast sectors of the population. The systems of the word-of-mouth and the massive use of pamphlets allowed to spread Vichy's watchwords facing objective difficulties in the reorganization of State machinery. The British services intercepted a communication from the French Secretary of State in 1941, which explained the Vichy's propaganda methods:

«Our propaganda is word-of-mouth. This, discrete, so to say anonymous, allows to present to the same persons to accept our arguments that they will not listen or read if they would address to them with the explicit purpose to "convert" them. We try therefore to convince the mass of our ideas and topics, some information useful to establish a political "climate" and an interpretation of the events, or even of the History, suitable for make easier and clearer the action of the Government. For this, we gathered the elite of the patriots who belong to all the social classes»⁹¹⁶

The regime, however, did not neglect the screening of documentaries or the LFC's broadcastings on Vichy's social policy.⁹¹⁷

de la Légion Française des Combattants et de Volontaires de la Révolution Nationale, Marseille, 1942, pp. 152-164

⁹¹⁶ TNA/FO/371/28586, «Paul Banon. Le Bulletin de France – Organe du Comité de Propagande sociale du Maréchal. 11 septembre 1941», p.1.

⁹¹⁷ See the reports stored in AN, AG/2/546/C.C.149A ; see also AN, F/22/1776, «Projet du film relatif à la Charte du Travail. 1943» ; *La Légion des Combattants vous parle. Emissions radiophoniques. Mai, Juin, Juillet, Aout 1941*, St. Etienne, Editions de la Légion Française des Combattants, 1941 ; *La Légion des Combattants vous parle. Emissions radiophoniques. Septembre, Octobre, Novembre, Décembre 1941*, St. Etienne, Editions de la Légion Française des Combattants, 1942 ; *La Légion des Combattants vous parle. Emissions radiophoniques. Janvier, Février, Mars 1942*, St. Etienne, Editions de la Légion Française des Combattants, 1942. The broadcasting on the Labour Charter are in AN, F/22/1776, «Légion. La Légion Française des Combattants et la Charte du Travail (1941-1942)».

Not unlike the Fascist regime, the regime built a house of word on the commitment to enact a true social revolution, which in reality never consistently took place.⁹¹⁸ It encompassed education, family welfare, social assistance, the “corporatist” celebration of the Labour Day.⁹¹⁹ From 1941 onwards, the social propaganda focused almost exclusively on the Labour Charter, which embodied the communitarian principles of the *Révolution Nationale*. Still after three years, when all the promises were betrayed, the Labour Charter was the cornerstone of Vichy’s public narrative:

«Only authority will guarantee real freedom within the framework of labour. Only authority will make it possible, when France is freed from the constraints of war, to bring down privileges and achieve the social programme I put forward at St. Etienne and Commentry. This may be summarised in one sentence – to eradicate the proletarian condition. That is the aim of the Labour Charter. It was also my will to give land workers an organisation that would be their own: the Peasant Corporation has been achieved. I am fully aware that the application of the laws has not always answered your expectations and that blatant social inequalities still exist. The extraordinary circumstances in which we now live are severe. Do you think I do not carry my full share of disappointments and sacrifices? Examine your conscience loyally: you will then join those who have understood and who, to save the country, now work with me to awaken the indifferent, rekindle the courage of the

⁹¹⁸ A wide documentation on Vichy’s social propaganda is stored in IHTP, ARC 074-45, État français 1940-1944, Charte du Travail; other propaganda documents in AN, F/41/288-289 ; AN, F/41/297 ; AN, F/41/298 ; AN, F/41/305 ; AN, F/41/306. The overview of the most important documentary production of Vichy propaganda in the different essays in D. Peschanski, L. Gervereau, *La propagande sous Vichy*, pp. 148-223.

⁹¹⁹ IHTP, ARC 074-26, État français 1940-1944, Famille, Eglise, Société ; R. Dalisson, «La propaganda festive de Vichy. Mythes fondateurs, relecture nationaliste et contestation en France de 1940 à 1944», *Guerre mondiales et conflits contemporains*, n.3/2002, pp. 5-35, see pp. 13-16.

lukewarm and break the resistance of the selfish and the profiteers.»⁹²⁰

Immediately after the launching of the law, the Secretary of the Labour organized meetings and speeches involving the organization of workers and employers, as well as Vichy's movements and governmental authorities.⁹²¹ The regime also structured appropriate offices and centres of information and propaganda; the main concern was to reach capillary every single productive category, like for the 1943 *Conseil Supérieur du Travail* (Higher Employment Council), a three-headed structure that provided information to the employers, the technical frameworks and the workers.⁹²²

The governmental information network operated mainly targeting each specific category. The *Centre d'Information des Employeurs* (CIE, Information Centre for Employers) was the transmission belt between the government and the whole of the enterprises, in the professional and inter-professional branches of the corporative organization, working with the Industrialist Federation. The CIE provided official and "unofficial" documentation, collected economic data and surveys from the local economic organizations, e.g. the Chambers of Commerce, and granted the link with the local professional employers' organizations.⁹²³ The *Centre d'Information des*

⁹²⁰ TNA, FO/371/36074, «Petain's Broadcast to Vichy and Radio Paris Networks, 4.4.1943», p.2.

⁹²¹ AN, F/22/1775, «La fonction sociale du patronat ou le patronat cadre naturel de la Nation. Conférence de M. Terray du 1^{er} Juin 1942 au Centre des Jeunes Patrons de Nancy» ; AN, F/22/1775, «Conférence de M. Terray du 16 Janvier 1942 aux représentants de la Légion Française des Combattants à Vichy» ; AN, F/22/1775, «Conférence de M. Terray du 7 Janvier 1942 aux Préfets» ; AN, F/22/1775, «Conférence de M. Terray du 17 octobre 1942 aux membres de la Commission Patronale de l'Office des Comités Sociaux».

⁹²² «Loi du 23 décembre 1943 portant création d'un Conseil Supérieur du Travail et de trois centres d'information», JO, 24 décembre 1943. In fact, the *Conseil Supérieur du Travail* started to be operational by mid-1944. It mainly provided some provisional proposals for the reform of the Work Councils and on the role of the trade unions in the corporative order. See AN, F/22/1837.

⁹²³ AN, F/22/1839, «Centre d'Information des Employeurs. S.d.» ; AN, F/22/1839, «Note sur le rôle des Délégations Régionales du Centre d'Information des Employeurs. 12.7.44»

Ouvriers (CIO, Information Centre for the Workers) had training and information tasks. It was even more important, as it addressed to the workers, the main target of Vichy's narrative on "social collaboration" and of an incremental, although often hazy, legislation that the regime needed to publicise as much as possible. In comparison with the CIE, the CIO provided a more consistent information folder and propaganda, concerning family allowances, social insurances and labour legislation.⁹²⁴ It had two distinguished branches; production of information on social legislation, and diffusion of brochures, bulletins, booklets, meetings, studies via the corporative structures and the professional trade unions.⁹²⁵

The task was ascribed to the role of the public institution of labour, as «after 1940, the social life is characterized by the precariousness of the existence of the salaried workers, main victims of the conjunctures subsequent to the state of war, and by the deployment of a new Labour order. The Labour Inspectorates, without forgetting their traditional tasks of control, dedicated themselves more specifically to relieve the workers' misery and to put in place the new social institutions.»⁹²⁶ But these structures combined information tasks with the need to ensure the grip of the regime in the factories:

«Everyone knows the insurmountable difficulties faced by the workers who find information. They are in front of an imprecise and changeable legislation, and the documentation, especially the economic one, has not been present in an accessible form so far. In fact, scattered in a huge number, something difficult to hand on, and often written in abstract form, this documentation could be proficiently used only by the experts. [...] It will be the task of the CIO to collect the laws, the research studies, the statistics,

⁹²⁴ AN, F/22/1840, «Centre d'Information des Ouvriers. Fiches sociales» ; AN, F/22/1840, «Brochures»

⁹²⁵ AN, F/22/1840, «Organisation des services du CIO» ; AN, F/22/1840, «Listes de diffusion de la documentation du CIO (mars 1944)»

⁹²⁶ AN, F/22/1840, «Le Ministre Secrétaire d'Etat au Travail à Mm. Les Directeurs des Services Particuliers d'Allocations Familiales. 21 Juin 1944», p.9.

and all the economic and social information, to purge them of all is superfluous to their understanding, to merge and to present them in a clear form that can be assimilated. But its role is not limited to the INFORMATION. Its role is – so to say – dual: the centre collects and scrutinizes information, news, reactions that the correspondents deliver. The intelligence obtained, alongside with the survey of the Ministry of Labour will be useful for the Public Powers to know the situation in each region and each profession and to tack stock of the overall condition of the workers.»⁹²⁷

Even before the creation of the Centres for the Information, a plethora of other collateral organizations existed; most of them were direct expression of the constituencies within the regime. This was the case of the abovementioned Central Office of the Social Committee, which was not a public authority but was coordinated by the Secretary of Labour and had the tasks of «spreading information concerning the application of the Labour Charter».⁹²⁸ The Office worked in liaison with the other structures for the propaganda, «to inform and train the directors of the Social Committees of the Enterprises and the propagandists.»⁹²⁹ It published booklets, brochures and monthly bulletins directly delivered to the organisms of the workers and the employers.⁹³⁰

The groups in the Occupied Territories had greater autonomy from Vichy's establishment; it was the case with the *Centre Syndicaliste de Propagande* (CSP), which was financed by the Germans. It gathered some important personalities of the interwar trade unionism, like Marcel Roy, Georges Dumoulin and Georges Yvetot. In the beginning, the CSP acted like a cattle prod for the deployment of the Labour Charter as quickly as possible; later, it became explicitly critical on the

⁹²⁷ AN, F/22/1840, «Le centre d'informations des ouvriers est à votre service. S.d.» p.4.

⁹²⁸ AN, F/22/1841, «Le Secrétaire d'état au travail à Messieurs les Préfets. Rôle de l'Office des Comités Sociaux. 25 juillet 1942», p.1.

⁹²⁹ AN, F/22/1791, « Emile Girard. Office des Comités Sociaux. 15 mars 1942 », p.4.

⁹³⁰ See different copies of brochures and bulletins in AN, F/22/1791.

results of corporatism.⁹³¹ This became “counter-propaganda” between 1943 and 1944, as the Labour Charter was reduced to a State’s tool to carry out the struggle *against* the working class and to a bureaucratic degeneration of the industrial relations.⁹³² The CSP was close to Déat’s *Rassemblement National Populaire* (RNP), the pro-Nazi movement that harshly criticized the outcomes of the Labour Charter as well. The fragmentation of the propaganda agencies, similarly to the RSI, led also to the use of social policies to conduct struggles of power within the regime itself.

According to Marion, the overlapping of different tendencies resulted in a lack of consensus, as the workers were «almost completely hostile to the ideas of the National Revolution. [...] easing the work of the communists, who exploited the difficulties of the defeat of 1940, to encourage the social unrest, and to create a mood of systematic opposition.»⁹³³ Since 1943, the regime tried to coordinate the different groups and to set up new offices, like the *Service de la Propagande Ouvrière* (SPO); to contrast the Communists and to highlight the pro-worker action of the government, the regime even resumed the classist rhetoric. The Secretary of Information recommended to the Prefects and the local agencies to shift the propaganda from the projects still on paper (Labour Charter) to the effective achievements of the regime: collective agreements, social insurances and pensions, family allowances, wage increases, which were enacted «following a

⁹³¹ The revue *L’Atelier* was the official media outlet of this group. The articles on the Labour Charter are countless. A survey of the main articles on this subject from 1941 to 1944, however, conveys the idea of how the disappointment towards governmental policies arose in this area. M. Roy, «Que devient la Charte du Travail ?», *L’Atelier*, 1 Février 1941 ; G. Dumoulin, « Nous allons avoir la Charte du Travail », *L’Atelier*, 23 Aout 1941 ; Id., « La Charte du Travail. Ce qu’il faut admettre, ce qu’il faut rejeter », *L’Atelier*, 8 Novembre 1941.

⁹³² «Opinions sur la Charte», *L’Atelier*, 15 Novembre 1941 ; « Les travaux de la Conférence », *L’Atelier*, 22 Novembre 1941 ; G. Dumoulin, «Nous ne devons pas torpiller la Charte du Travail», *L’Atelier*, 2 Mai 1942, A. Rey, « Pourquoi nous sommes collaborationnistes ! », *L’Atelier*, 21 Février 1942.

⁹³³ BDIC, Mfm 273 (5) N 268, «Ministère de l’Information, *Circulaire sur la propagande ouvrière à MM. Les Préfets Régionaux et Départementaux et à MM. Les Délégués Régionaux et Départementaux à l’Information*, Vichy, Information de l’état français, 1943», p.5.

revolutionary procedure that broke with the law of the bourgeoisie.»⁹³⁴ The SPO, directed by the former Communist and Socialist François Chasseigne, was put under the joint control of the Secretaries of Information and Labour. It kept government informed on the situation in the factories and promoted social policy through specialized press, posters, brochures.⁹³⁵ The propaganda policy opted for the opposite strategy than the British one; instead of massively relying on the new media, the regime chose the traditional channels, whose dissemination had nonetheless to be capillary.

These public/private organizations carried out sectional propaganda, considered the most efficient way to promote the new socio-economic organization, even if this latter pretended to have overcome class distinctions. The LFC put in place an alternative form of vulgarisation. They refused class-oriented propaganda, which would recognize the resilience of the “proletarian condition”, and deployed the propaganda according the general guidelines of Vichy’s social doctrine.⁹³⁶ Besides the broadcastings, since 1941 the LFC created the *Groupes Légionnaires d’Entreprise* (GLE), to accomplish the mission of the movement to promote in «*all the domains, the principles of the Révolution Nationale*»⁹³⁷ Their action in this field was exclusively directed and limited to the propaganda: «to the trade unions, to the Social Committees, to the Corporative Authorities, are delegated the social and professional tasks. To the *Groupes Légionnaires d’Entreprise*, are delegate the *civic action*, the propaganda of the National and Social Revolution.»⁹³⁸ The GLE attributed the dual task of informing and spreading the propaganda to the workers, and pointed at creating a national network of agents to promote a capillary inter-

⁹³⁴ Ivi. p.5

⁹³⁵ BDIC, Mfm 273 (6) N 268, «Note concernant l’ « information ouvrière ». 15 Septembre 1943».

⁹³⁶ AN, F/22/1776, «Légion des Combattants. Charte du Travail. Février 1942» p.43-54 ; AN, F/22/1776, «Comité Social 17 novembre 1941» ; AN, F/22/1776, «Rapport général du premier congrès des groupes légionnaires d’entreprise. S.d.».

⁹³⁷ AN, F/22/1776, «Légion des Combattants. Charte du Travail. Février 1942», p. 2. The italics is mine, underlined in the original text.

⁹³⁸ Ivi. p. 3. The italics is mine, underlined in the original type-written.

class propaganda. While the plethora of information agencies corresponded to the different constituencies of the regime, the GLE promoted an univocal ideological vision: “hierarchy and community” opposed to class struggle, socialism, communism and paternalism.

The typical limits of the propaganda of the *Légion* lied in the lack of concrete achievements by the regime, rather than in the methods of organization, which were extremely precise.⁹³⁹ The GLE recognized that neither the workers nor the technicians showed interest for the new dispositions, due to their vagueness and to the presence of different organizations, as the trade unionists, that tried to penetrate the factories with their own propaganda, which did not necessarily convey the “official stance” on the corporatism. To remedy this overlapping of contrasting propaganda, the GLE proposed to rely on «a group of three or four people, having the real spirit of the MARSHAL, of the government, and of the ministry in charge of the new institutions, which is able to reply in a very short time to all the questions arising in relation to the application of the Labour Charter.»⁹⁴⁰ The report suggested the use of selected personalities, picked up among the technicians, ideally the intermediate group that joined workers and employers, and relatively less involved in the class struggle. These agents had to be completely devoted to the *Révolution Nationale* and their propaganda should have deployed to informal channels, such as conversation face-to-face with the single workers of the factory. The regime had a hierarchical – but at the same time “informal” – structure that could convey the propaganda’s topics to every professional milieu.⁹⁴¹ The general principles of LFC’s propaganda partially clashed with the regime’s general information, which tended to adjust the topics of the propaganda according to its targets. According to the LFC, without further improvements of the

⁹³⁹ AN, F/22/1776, «Henri Pinaud. Rapport complémentaire sur quinzaine effectués pour la Charte du Travail. 14 mars 1942».

⁹⁴⁰ *Ivi.*, p.1.

⁹⁴¹ The content of their propaganda was usually taken from the *Bulletins de France*, published by the governmental department, with information, press release or official declaration to be exploited for propaganda. TNA, FO/371/32080, «Official Bulletins published by the Vichy Government».

corporative doctrine, this kind of propaganda «falls into the class struggle again. That is the reason why a general propaganda Employers, Workers, Technicians may be pursued.»⁹⁴²

Vichy's propaganda relentlessly promoted the replacement of the class struggle «with the compulsory and generalized collaboration.»⁹⁴³ The Ministry of Information usually linked the social legislation to the principles of the *Révolution Nationale*: the cult of the Marshal Pétain, the social collaboration and solidarity, the demographic and pro-family ideology.⁹⁴⁴ For instance, the AVTS were related to the image of the Marshal who «kept the promises, even those of the others, if these are grounded on the fairness.»⁹⁴⁵ The promotion of the new social legislation was also justified as a necessary measure of social solidarity facing the French declining birth-rates: «it is not possible in a country devastated by the war, affected by falling birth-rates, to achieve great things. [...] in order that the older generations are allowed to have a good end of their life, it is necessary that the younger generations relentlessly work.»⁹⁴⁶

More articulated information was addressed to the movements of the regime, in order to deepen the features of the “corporatist revolution”, hold ranks of its supporters and provide ideological coherence to the *Révolution Nationale*. This was the case of the IECS or the *Ecole d'Uriage* which trained the civic and professional frameworks. But this was also the case of the *Journées du Mont-Dore*. Periodically organized by the *Conseil d'État*, they gathered the different constituencies of the regime, to fix the principles of the communitarian revolution: Catholics, trade unionists, corporatists, traditionalists,

⁹⁴² AN, F/22/1776, «Henri Pinaud. Rapport complémentaire sur quinzaine effectués pour la Charte du Travail. 14 mars 1942», p. 2.

⁹⁴³ R. Belin, *La politique sociale du gouvernement. La Charte du Travail*, Bulletin Spécial de Propagande, 1941, p.9

⁹⁴⁴ Brochures, and other documents of propaganda are stored in IHTP, ARC074-46, État français 1940-1944, Corporatisme; IHTP, ARC074-47, État français 1940-1944, Corporatisme (2);

⁹⁴⁵ IHTP, ARC 074-26, «P. Pétain, *Message sur la retraite des vieux*. 14 mars 1941, St.Etienne, Editions du Secrétariat Général de l'Information, 1941», p.1.

⁹⁴⁶ Ivi. p. 2.

participated to the meetings.⁹⁴⁷ Similarly, the creation of the *Ecole d'Uriage* testified the aims to promote a dual spreading of Vichy's ideology, where the indoctrination of the civil servants and the intellectuals had the same importance than the propaganda for the masses. The cases of the IECS and the *Ecole d'Uriage* are somehow illustrative of the failure to create a "new State". Bouvier-Ajam forgot about his wholehearted support to Marshal Pétain to become Communist in 1946, and the IECS disappeared with the crumble of the regime, while many of the members of the *Ecole d'Uriage* passed to the Resistance after 1942.⁹⁴⁸

The Vichy regime did not have better luck with the mass propaganda. Even the LCF could not effectively penetrate into the French society.⁹⁴⁹ They paid the inaction of the social projects of the regime and the inextricable link between the *Révolution Nationale* and the Nazi occupant. In spite of the many efforts to promote the "social collaboration", the regime did not achieve these aims; the British reported that «never in the history of France has disunity been so strong or the hatred between Frenchmen so violent. At present France is not merely divide into two zones.»⁹⁵⁰ Already in 1941 a real hatred set up against the regime, and many French opposed both the policies and ideology of Vichy, as «they want to take us back to the Middle

⁹⁴⁷ A. Cohen, « «Vers la révolution communautaire». Rencontres de la troisième voie au temps de l'ordre nouveau », *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, n.2/2004, pp. 141-161; AN, F/22/1776, «Actes des Journées de Mont Doré. 10 au 14 avril 1943» ; AN, F/22/1776, «Actes des Journées de Mont Doré. 16 au 23 septembre 1943» ; J. Paillard, *L'A.B.C. du corporatisme*, Lyon, Centre d'Etudes Corporatives, s.d. ; *La Communauté professionnelle. Deuxième Session des Journées d'Etudes de Mont-Doré. 16-23 Septembre 1943*, Vichy, Secrétariat Permanent des Journées du Mont-Doré, 1943 ; *La Communauté du travail. Deuxième Session des Journées d'Etudes de Mont-Doré. 16-23 Septembre 1943*, Vichy, Secrétariat Permanent des Journées du Mont-Doré, 1943 ; *Extraits des Conférences prononcées par M. Bichelonne à l'Hôtel de Ville de Paris les 5 Aout et 12 Octobre 1943*, Paris, 1943.

⁹⁴⁸ J. Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France. Uriage 1940-1945*, Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 1993.

⁹⁴⁹ M. Cointet-Labrousse, *Vichy et le fascisme. Les hommes, les structures et le pouvoirs*, Paris, Editions Complexe, 1987, pp. 69-81.

⁹⁵⁰ TNA, FO/371/28432, «BBC Monthly Surveys of European Audiences. France. 15th August, 1941», p. 17.

Ages, to the days of feudality. [...] At the present there is an underground revolution, a real hatred against the rulers of Vichy. There are here 95% who do not approve of this government.»⁹⁵¹ In spite of all the efforts of the regime to gather the classes together, the cleavages tightened-up: «class is set against class by an unavoidable consequence of the policy of June 1940 and the errors that followed. The bourgeoisie is terrified to find that, in the working class, “nearly all are Gaullists”, especially in Occupied areas, and combine “a desire to drive out the invader” with “a fear to see the Popular Front return”.»⁹⁵² The working class organizations opposed to Vichy’s provisions, especially to the compulsory trade unions, at the core of corporatism: «labour shows unwillingness to “co-operate” in Pucheu’s plans for its future, [...] a deputation in one region of unoccupied France of Free, Christian, and Nationalist (La Roque) Trade Unions have recently made a statement to Minister of Justice, emphasising their right to independent existence.»⁹⁵³ While Vichy’s propaganda failed to garner workers’ consensus, regime’s collateral movements demonstrated to be the long arm of the repressive machinery:

«an adverse effect upon the workers whom Vichy is trying, without success, to placate as well as upon these supporters of Vichy who are in despair at the failure of the social side of the Révolution Nationale. The Légion has always, because of its overtly reactionary character and unpopularity with the workers, been out of favour with the Paris press and radio which omitted all reference to the ceremony. It may be recalled that (I.R.42) Tixier-Vignancourt, Secretary-General of the Central Committee for Social Propaganda, in his letter of resignation, spoke bitterly of continued interference by the Légion. Recent evidence indicates the Gestapo-like character of the Service d’Information of the Légion which carries out

⁹⁵¹ *Ibidem.*

⁹⁵² *Ibidem.*

⁹⁵³ TNA, FO/371/28432, «Intelligence Report No. 47 for French Section, M.O.I. Advisory Committee, 19th August, 1941», p.3.

secret enquiries into the activities of Civil Servants and is consulted by the Prefects on the appointment of Mayors and Municipal Councillors.»⁹⁵⁴

The dispatches of the Prefects on the situation in the factories also reported the disconnection between regime and population.⁹⁵⁵ Monthly reports accounted that since January 1942 the Labour Charter was received with different feelings by employers and workers. The former welcomed it as a way to regulate the class struggle in their favour and as «a tool of social revenge.»⁹⁵⁶ The huge majority of the workers were indifferent or hostile, more for pragmatic reasons than for ideological opposition. The setting-up of the corporatist structures delayed, while the workers were afraid of the drop of salaries and by the supply shortage: «in the urban environments, as well as in the industrial workers' communities, the only worry concerns the food supply.»⁹⁵⁷ The penetration of the propaganda was stronger in the area under Vichy's administration than in the Occupied Zone: in the North, the rationing of essential goods was stronger than in the South and the regime's social action was limited by the German presence (the LFC was not allowed to operate). The Northern factories constituted the battlefield of a creeping struggle between the Communists and Nazis, who tried to convince the French workers to move to Germany. By the end of the year, the daily conditions (unemployment, falling salaries, food supply, the announced *relève* proclaimed by Laval) were still the major concern, leaving room for the Communists to «take advantage of the dismay that crosses the working class, exploiting at most the

⁹⁵⁴ TNA, FO/371/28432, «Intelligence Report No. 50 for French Section, M.O.I. Advisory Committee, 2nd September, 1941», p.2.

⁹⁵⁵ Comité d'Histoire des Administration chargées du travail, de l'emploi et de la formation professionnelle (CHATEFP), *Extraits des synthèses mensuelles des rapports des préfets de Vichy relatif aux questions de travail, emploi et formation professionnelle*, Paris, Ministère du travail, de la solidarité et de la fonction publique, 2003.

⁹⁵⁶ «Janvier 1942. Résumé de la synthèse des rapports mensuels des Préfets», in CHATEFP, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁹⁵⁷ «Mai 1942. Synthèse des rapports mensuels des Préfets de la Zone Occupée», in CHATEFP, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

discontent arisen from the two great current problems: the *relève* and the food supply.»⁹⁵⁸ In 1942 and 1943 the importance of the Labour Charter as tool of propaganda dwindled, as also governmental priorities shifted from corporatism to the STO. The only leftovers of the regimes' corporatist narrative that showed to have some appeal for the workers were the Social Committees of the Enterprises, which efficiently worked for the social welfare within the factories.⁹⁵⁹ Not only, they were among the few social institutions of the regime stranger – if not opposed – to the STO and the forced labour displacement to Germany, which in turn delayed the implementation of the Social Committees.⁹⁶⁰

By mid-1943, the Labour Charter had increasingly lesser space in the reports to the government; the general distrust for Vichy's social policy resulted from endogenous and exogenous factors: the mobilization of the manpower for Nazi "total war"; the lack of information on the industrial joint organizations (which the government tried to remedy with the creation of the CIE and CIO in the end of 1943); the absence of trade union organizations to support the propaganda and the corporative structures; the delays in the implementation of the corporatist organisms. With some differences between the Occupied and the Free Zone, the whole of the French social classes was not united by the ideology of the *Révolution Nationale*, but by the worries for the rise of the cost of living, matched with the stagnating wages and by the fear for the occupying measures on forced labour.⁹⁶¹ Lagardelle's resignation from the Secretary of Labour and his substitution with Bichelonne, the "architect" of the STO, only alienated the working classes from the regime. By the end of 1943, the climate in

⁹⁵⁸ «Octobre 1942. Synthèse des rapports des Préfets de la Zone Libre», in CHATEFP, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁹⁵⁹ «Décembre 1942. Synthèse des rapports mensuels des Préfets de la Zone Occupée», in CHATEFP, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁹⁶⁰ «Mars 1943. Synthèse des rapports des Préfets de la Zone Occupée», in CHATEFP, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁹⁶¹ «Juillet 1943. Synthèse des rapports des Préfets de la Zone Occupée», in CHATEFP, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

the factories was considered pre-insurrectionary, due to the action of the Resistance parties and to the attempts to lock-outs and strikes.⁹⁶²

In 1944, the Social Committees were established in almost every industry; yet, the unravelling of the corporatist structures did not positively affect the industrial relations: «on the one side, the large employers who already achieved undeniable social improvements even before the war, considered that the Labour Charter will not provide any further advantage in comparison with their past initiatives; from this, the instinctive resistance to relinquish social organisms that are their own. On the other side, the workers tend to consider that the Social Committees are completely useless as long as they are not platform for their quests.»⁹⁶³ Until the end, the regime addressed unevenly the propaganda topic to breach the workers. The “social collaboration” and the Labour Charter were expected to be the means to conquer their consensus. From the territories, instead, it was increasingly more evident that «the issues of the manpower continues to be the first main concern of world of labour.»⁹⁶⁴ The STO became a relevant policy area from 1943 onwards, when the French production was increasingly integrated in the reconversion of German economy for “total war”; the government devoted many efforts to encourage the transfer of French manpower in Germany.⁹⁶⁵ This commitment was perceived as a lack of autonomy from the German occupation, undermining even more the weak foundations of Vichy’s popular consensus.

Something similar occurred with the farmers, considered the main constituency by the regime. From 1943, the dispatches signalled that the difficult economic conditions, the forced requisitions and deportations alienated the favour of the peasantry. The agricultural corporation lost the grip to the farmers, while even in the countryside the Communists took advantage of what was defined a situation of

⁹⁶² «Novembre 1943. Synthèse des rapports mensuels des Préfets de la Zone Nord et de la Zone Sud», in CHATEFP, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-83.

⁹⁶³ «Janvier 1944. Synthèse des rapports mensuels des Préfets (Zone Nord et Zone Sud)», in CHATEFP, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93.

⁹⁶⁴ «Mars 1944. Synthèse des rapports mensuels», in CHATEFP, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁹⁶⁵ See *infra* n. 390.

«psychological heeling and general dismay.»⁹⁶⁶ The propaganda failed due to the limits of Vichy's rural social policy; the Agricultural Corporation proved to be extraneous to the peasantry, considered inadequate to provide supply, and control the black market and the widespread frauds to social benefits.⁹⁶⁷

Also the agricultural sector suffered from the STO, from the economic and the moral point of view. The French manpower was drained just when the supply contracted the most, demonstrating the incapacity of the regime to pursue an autonomous political agenda.⁹⁶⁸ The ranks of the supporters narrowed down simultaneously with the increasing penetration of Communist propaganda and *Radio London* broadcastings, which decisively affected the morale of the French countryside.⁹⁶⁹ The information services recognized that this was due to the incapacity of the regime to get rid of the wartime conditions: «there was for the Marshal a fervour that made possible the unity of the peasantry [...] If this zeal would have been exploited with some measures to achieve the doctrine and the directives of the Marshal in every detail that concern the agricultural life, we could have now in them [*the peasants n.d.a*] some collaborators so loyal and dedicated to the governmental action that no propaganda could tear down their morale.»⁹⁷⁰ While in the factories the propaganda faced an objectively hostile milieu, in the countryside the regime was not able to hold the consensus of social strata that were not prejudicially antagonistic. The initial adherence to Vichy clashed against the reality of the material constraints; the expectations of the peasantry were disregarded as the occupation carried on, and this led to lose their.

⁹⁶⁶ AN, AG/2/548/C.C.149A, «Rapport sur la situation politique à l'intérieur du Pays. Mai – Juin 1943», p1.

⁹⁶⁷ AN, AG/2/548, «Rapport moral pour le mois d'avril et mai. Situation politique. 31 mai 1943» ; NA, AG/2/548, «Rapport moral pour le mois d'avril et mai. Situation économique. 31 mai 1943»

⁹⁶⁸ NA, AG/2/548, « Rapport Moral. Partie Economique. 15 novembre 1943 ».

⁹⁶⁹ NA, AG/2/548, « Rapport sur la situation actuelle de l'état d'esprit des masses paysannes. Ses conséquences possibles – et les moyens de la redresser. 20 février 1943»

⁹⁷⁰ Ivi, p.1.

While the pillar of its doctrine was the overcoming of the class struggle, Vichy addressed its propaganda along classist lines, and to different productive categories. Among the workers, bombed-out by the campaigns in favour of the Labour Charter, the “social collaboration” never appealed; the constraints of the German occupation and the STO – as for forced displacement of manpower in Italy – made evident the limited autonomy of the regime. While its actions antagonized the population, the Resistance prepared social programmes for the reconstruction, owing some elements to the coeval Anglo-Saxon debate on social security.⁹⁷¹ Also the construction of a new State according to the principles of the *Révolution Nationale* proved to be impossible. Without a real popular basis, Vichy could not even rely on a solid intellectual class. The groups that supported the regime were lumped together by the myth of corporatism and were divided on almost everything else. Corporatism was differently intended by each constituency, and the doctrinal synthesis was difficult. The regime could not create a loyal administrative class; while the Vichy participated to the Nazi Order to legitimize its political power, this condition turned out to be a weakness. Good part of the French frameworks had “technical” and “a-political” expertise that proved to be useful and adaptive to the democratic institutions.

All in all, Vichy’s political agenda and narrative was tied to the success of Nazi’s European plans. The politics of “State” and “social collaboration” aimed at guaranteeing to France to remain a power within post-war Nazi Europe. Once the fortunes of the Third Reich reneged, there was no room for a successful mass political mobilization, nor for the creation of new State’s structures and personnel according to the doctrine of the regime.

⁹⁷¹ Henri Michel, Boris Mirkine-Guetzévich (eds.), *Les idées politiques et sociales de la Résistance (documents clandestins, 1940-1944)*, Paris, PUF, 1954.

6.3. *The RSI and the socialization: the “State of Labour” and the collapse of consensus*

The British services fully grasped the propagandistic scope of RSI's social proclaims. They caught the qualitative leap of the Fascist social programme and its weaknesses, inherently linked to the wartime emergency:

«Leaders of the new regime have emphasized its representative and revolutionary character, but have been unable to conceal its lack of any genuine legal basis. [...] The central aim of the neo-Fascist leadership is to prolong their political domination of Italy. This aim is elaborately but ineffectually disguised by the proclamation of radical political and social aims, which are set forth in the Verona Manifesto and summed up in the official name of “Italian Social Republic”. This propagandistic effort has failed to conceal the fact that the regime rests solely upon force. Strikes, guerrilla warfare, and clandestine political opposition clearly demonstrate that the Italian people have no confidence in their present rulers.»⁹⁷²

The British considered the puppet government completely «bound up with the fate of the German Army in Italy»⁹⁷³, but they frightened the heritage of the “revolutionary” regime for the post-war settlement, as «the Fascist social legislation may be a source of embarrassment to any future regime of a more conservative character.»⁹⁷⁴ The report underlined how the republican ruling class was split on its scope and aims, but was overall united in the attempt to give «the regime an advanced democratic and socialistic appearance

⁹⁷² TNA, WO/204/12324, «Office on Strategic Services – Research and Analysis Branch, The Italian Social Republic (The Fascist Puppet Government). 15th March 1944», p.1.

⁹⁷³ *Ivi.* p.2.

⁹⁷⁴ *Ibidem.*

and stressing its permanent achievements.»⁹⁷⁵ With the *Verona Manifesto*, the Fascist regime also tried to close the ranks of the movement. The dispatch devoted particular attention to the social programme advanced by the Fascists: «as for the new Fascist party, it will, above all, be a workers' party, a proletarian party, creator of a new social cycle. [...] we shall accept the social ferment brought about by the war and voiced by the people. We shall make it ours and give it life.»⁹⁷⁶ The Fascist propaganda represented its social policy as «the most revolutionary measures to be taken by any government since the Bolshevik revolution.»⁹⁷⁷ The British stressed the hiatus between “socialist” declarations and the reality:

«The general disparity between announced neo-Fascist policies and their realization is particularly evident in the social field. [...] In effect, however, the socialization decrees are so hedged about with provisos and conditions that they give much more actual control to the State than they do privileges to the workers. Locally and partially, some of the provisions have been put into practice, but no general order to this effect has been issued. As an instrument to gain the support of the labouring masses, the neo-Fascist social policy has been a complete failure. The widespread strikes which occurred in northern Italy during the first week of March have been widely interpreted as an express repudiation of the Italian “Social Republic” by the North Italian working class.»⁹⁷⁸

According to the report, the emphasis put by the Fascists on the social provisions became vital for the regime, pressed by the war.

⁹⁷⁵ Ivi. p.16.

⁹⁷⁶ Ivi. p.17 (the report mentioned the official declaration of the Secretary of the PRF Pavolini).

⁹⁷⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁷⁸ *Ibidem*.

While politically fledged, it recognized how sneaky the Fascist social narrative could potentially be:

«The Republican Fascist social program, thought it has failed to win the allegiance of the Italian working class, is an important enemy weapon against the Badoglio government and the Allies. Notwithstanding the fact that the Italians have gained no real advantages from the new social legislation, it is doubtful whether the industrial population of the north will be willing to accept any future government whose social policy appears less progressive than the one offered them on paper by the neo-Fascists. Thus, the prospect of having to accept a conservative regime after the defeat of Germany may tend to mitigate the opposition to the present Social Republic.»⁹⁷⁹

This could have created troubles during and after the military operations, as the Fascist social policy opposed the socially conservative Southern part of Italy, controlled by the Allies, and the revolutionary RSI in the North. A revolutionary jargon was essential for the Fascists to legitimize the new regime; few days after the fall of the regime in 1943, the governmental authorities loyal to Fascism were aware of the first organized unrest in the factories and the growing support to Communism among the working class.⁹⁸⁰ The reports coming from the biggest Northern industrial cities marked out how the power vacuum after the 25th July created a situation that was pre-insurrectional and revealed the Communist hegemony over the popular classes. The “left-wing” revolutionary turn of the RSI was not merely due to considerations of public order; yet, the awareness of the growing radicalization of the masses probably pressed for more radical solutions.

⁹⁷⁹ Ivi. pp. 25-26.

⁹⁸⁰ ACS, MinCulPop – Gabinetto/143/ 982, «Milano – Manifestazioni Varie», see the different reports of the prefects from July 26th to the end of August 1943.

In reality, what remained of the Fascist ruling class was more split than ever on the goals and extents of the socialization, the relations with the Germans, the ways to reorganize the State and to conduct the war. In such frantic context, the propaganda played an ever more prominent role and its organization was matter of intense concern. The RSI relied on its older structures to carry out a renewed social propaganda. The strategy deployed through three channels: the press; the assistance agencies; the *Ministero della Cultura Popolare* (Ministry of the Popular Culture, usually called MinCulPop). The reorganization of the propaganda machinery was led by the MinCulPop around the *Nucleo Propaganda* (NP, the Propaganda Unit), directed by Giorgio Almirante, leader of the *Gruppo Fascista della Cultura Popolare* (Fascist Group of Popular Culture).

The MinCulPop was reorganized under the supervision of Ferdinando Mezzasoma, who strengthened the departmental structures, ensured the loyalty of the employees and radicalized the directives for the propaganda. By mid-1944, the MinCulPop took over the major Fascist news agencies and newspapers. Mezzasoma wanted all the mass-media realigned with the Fascist «revolutionary intransigence.»⁹⁸¹ Yet, the formal control did not mean the effective capacity to impress autonomous policy. The Germans relentlessly interfered with the Fascist directive on propaganda, up to the highest levels; Mussolini's articles were also submitted to Nazi censorship, while the main part of the Fascist publications and broadcastings were forbidden in Germany.⁹⁸² Fascist propaganda had to compete with the Nazi one, which dispelled numerous pamphlets and other publications translated in Italian. In spite of the attempt to centralize the propaganda, the MinCulPop faced the centrifugal trends at local levels and the pre-existing structures of social assistance, which also had functions of propaganda, increased by the emergence conditions.⁹⁸³

⁹⁸¹ ACS, RSI – RSISPD, 66/640/2, «Relazioni e rapporti», cited in P. Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, Bari, Laterza, 1974, p. 464.

⁹⁸² L. Quartermaine, *Mussolini's Last Republic*, Exeter, Elm Bank Publications, 2000, pp. 53-77.

⁹⁸³ ACS, MinCulPop – Gabinetto, 143/1001.

The press had a fundamental role in the last years of Fascism, as the newspapers filled with proclaims the political void of the RSI in implementing real policies. The press also allowed to keep the link between the centre of the political power and the peripheries, which were undergoing a process of “feudalization”.⁹⁸⁴ In the reorganization of the republican structures, the taking-over of the press became important to hold ranks, restate the Fascist presence in the peripheries and establish a vessel between the government and the population, once PNF could no longer be a channel for the consensus.⁹⁸⁵ The press usually misrepresented the scope of the social reforms of the RSI, but became the most important place where political debate could develop.

Two trends emerged: the “intransigents”, like Farinacci, Pavolini, Mezzasoma, regarded at social policies merely as a way to regulate social unrest; on the opposite, the “left-wing” convincingly supported the Fascist new “socialist” deal. This faction was represented by influent figures, such as Pettinato, Spampanato or Giorgio Pini. This polarization characterized the RSI’s experience, contributing to weaken its whole doctrinal coherence. The “Fascitization” of the press only partially straightened out the divergences.⁹⁸⁶ The formerly socialist newspaper *Il Lavoro*, directed for some months by the hierarch Ernesto Daquanno fully endorsed the RSI’s social policy, supporting structural economic reforms and the overhaul of the compulsory schemes.⁹⁸⁷ On a first stage, the newspaper was stranger to the repressive policies of the

⁹⁸⁴ V. Paolucci (ed.), *I quotidiani della Repubblica Sociale Italiana (9 settembre 1943-25 aprile 1945)*, Urbino, Argalia Editore, 1989, pp. 5-19.

⁹⁸⁵ G. De Luna, «I “quarantacinque giorni” e la Repubblica di Salò», in Valerio Castronovo, Nicola Tranfaglia, *La stampa italiana dalla Resistenza agli anni Sessanta*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1980, pp. 5-89. For a detailed review of the newspapers and magazines of the RSI see M. Borghi (ed.), *La stampa della RSI. 1943-1945*, Milano, Guerini e Associati, 2006.

⁹⁸⁶ P. Murialdi, *La stampa italiana del regime fascista*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2008.

⁹⁸⁷ See particularly the articles of the first director of the newspaper, R. Massimino, «Il nuovo Stato», *Il Lavoro*, October 24th, 1943; Id., «Accento sul sociale», *Il Lavoro*, 18th November, 1943; Id., «Verso una nuova economia», *Il Lavoro*, 5th November, 1943; Id., «Politica Sociale», *Il Lavoro*, 7th December, 1943; Id., «Giustizia distributiva», 19th December, 1943; L. Pezzoli, «Per un’assicurazione integrale delle malattie professionali», *Il Lavoro*, 22nd September, 1943; Id., «Economia e politica sociale», *Il Lavoro*, 1st October, 1943; R. Massimino, «Il controllo della produzione», *Il Lavoro*, 21st November, 1943.

RSI and Germans, when the major industrial cities were boiling over. Later, the tone of the propaganda changed; the articles linked the Fascist social revolution to the war, as the conflict was represented as the doomsday between two models of society. The other clichés of the Fascist propaganda were also present: the republic based on the “proletarian forces”, the betrayal of the bourgeoisie, the revolutionary war, the references to the “Fascism of the origins”.⁹⁸⁸ The regime relied on these older newspapers of the working class to spread its revolutionary social policy.

The general press watered down these same topics, to reach the Northern industrial bourgeoisies and middle classes – those same classes relentlessly accused of betraying Fascism in 1943. Tarchi and Mussolini defined the socializations as a renewed “social collaboration”, rather than the deployment of a subversive social revolution.⁹⁸⁹ The former secretary of the Communist Party, Nicola Bombacci, claimed for a “national” way to socialism, opposed the Soviet collectivism.⁹⁹⁰ The “left-wing” supported non-classist socialism, pushing forward the communitarian republic of “workers” in opposition to the communist republic of “proletarians”.⁹⁹¹ Only the socialization allowed Italy to not be exploited by Anglo-American capitalism, without falling, in the same time into collectivism. Communism and capitalism were associated with the “Jewish plot” against the “proletarian Nations”; the “third way” was still the main feature of the Fascist social revolution.

⁹⁸⁸ E. Daquanno, «Fedeltà alle origini», *Il Lavoro*, 27th January, 1944; Id., «Combattere e lavorare», *Il Lavoro*, 28th January, 1944; Id., «Guerra di classe», *Il Lavoro*, 29th January, 1944; Id., «Terra bruciata», *Il Lavoro*, 3rd February, 1944; Id., «Questa socializzazione», *Il Lavoro*, 4-5-6 February, 1944; Id., «Un’idea portata dalle baionette», *Il Lavoro*, 16 February 1944; Id., «Si realizza una più alta giustizia sociale», *Il Lavoro*, 17th February, 1944.

⁹⁸⁹ Errerre [B. Mussolini], «Resistere e rinnovarsi», *Corriere della Sera*, September 14th, 1944; Id., «Constatazione e considerazioni», *Corriere della Sera*, April 3rd, 1945; A. Tarchi, «Stato del lavoro», *Corriere della Sera*, 14 maggio 1944; Id., «Dal discorso di Dalmine alla socializzazione», 21 settembre 1944.

⁹⁹⁰ N. Bombacci, «Dove va la Russia?», *Corriere della Sera*, 19 agosto 1944.

⁹⁹¹ E. Cione, «Repubblica di lavoratori», *Corriere della Sera*, February 4th, 1945.

The RSI was presented as the outcome of twenty years of Fascist social doctrines, freed from all external constraints thanks to the war. The achievements of the Fascist revolution were correlated to the tide of Nazi Germany in winning the conflict.⁹⁹² The press kept harping on the few points that constituted the lowest common denominator that gathered the RSI's ruling class. In reality, the "left-wing" and the "intransigents" argued on the nature of the socializations and the scope of the Fascist social policy. The leftists like Enzo Pezzato, Spampanato, and Manunta no longer hesitated in overlaying the RSI with "national socialism", opening-up to the mass left-wing anti-Fascist parties, and in the same time challenging the Communist hegemony over the industrial working class.⁹⁹³ These positions clashed with the right-wing area, headed by the pro-Nazi Farinacci, who lashed out at the "socialist drifts" of the socializations.⁹⁹⁴

In the years of consensus, other organisms fostered the regime's propaganda besides the party and the MinCulPop; this was the case of the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (OND, the Organization for Mobilization of the Workers). In the apogee of the regime, it contributed to the penetration of Fascist propaganda in the factories and to the mobilization of the working classes through leisure and recreational activities.⁹⁹⁵ During WWII, the regime used it to link the world of labour with the army, and after 1943 the only institutions that retained consensus among the population were the assistance agencies;

⁹⁹² C. Pettinato, «Prospettive liberali», *La Stampa*, 4 agosto 1944; Id., «Insipienza», *La Stampa*, 22 settembre 1944; B. Spampanato, «Guerra e proclami sociali», *La Stampa*, 23 agosto 1944; Id., «Perché combattere», *La Stampa*, 2 settembre 1944; A. Colombo, «Incertezze e orientamenti», *La Stampa*, 6 agosto 1944.

⁹⁹³ B. Spampanato, «Il nuovo ordine sociale italiano», *Il Messaggero*, 13 febbraio 1944; Id., «Perché siamo socialisti», *Il Messaggero*, 27 febbraio-2 marzo 1944; M. Giobbe, «Ordine Nuovo», *La Nazione*, 9 novembre 1943; E. Pezzato, «Il pericolo viene da destra», *La Repubblica Fascista*, 23 aprile 1943; Id., «Rivoluzione sociale», *La Repubblica Fascista*, 16 febbraio 1944; P. Parini, «Partiti e popolo», *La Stampa*, 4 dicembre 1944; U. Manunta, «Intransigentemente chiari», *Il Secolo*, 2 settembre 1944.

⁹⁹⁴ R. Farinacci, *Il Regime Fascista*, 15 gennaio 1944.

⁹⁹⁵ V. De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

the OND was still structured and had a genuine rootedness among the workers, as it was a moment of social interacting in the factories. With the suppression of the PNF after 25th July 1943, the OND passed under the direct control of the government.⁹⁹⁶ The RSI relied on its popularity among the workers to highlight the continuities between the older mass structures of Fascism and the new republican deal.⁹⁹⁷ The National Commissary of the OND, Ezio Pizzi, recognized «the current importance of the *propaganda weapon* [...] to contribute to the Victory and to conquer the Italian people to national, social, and political principles of the Republic.»⁹⁹⁸ The OND tried to promote this role in the social propaganda of the regime:

«The Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro is present and actively in the life of the Republic; it adapted to the need of the war, committing above all to the assistance: to the Army, to the former prisoners with the shipment of clothes and care packages, to the workers in Germany, to the displaced, to the disaster-stricken, to the refugees; without forgetting, however, the institutional activities, which are the foundations and the architectural construct of the O.N.D., which could not and would not reason to exist without them. Consequently, and given that in these last times it has been almost exclusively spoken of the assistance sector, it is essential – to not give the impression that we only do assistance, leaving all the rest to die – promote as much as possible via the press also the institutional activities: the

⁹⁹⁶ «Decreto legislativo del Duce 23 gennaio 1944-XXII, n.27 – Passaggio al PFR dei compiti e delle attribuzioni esercitate dall'Ufficio "Organizzazioni Fasciste" della Direzione Generale degli Italiani all'Estero del Ministero degli Affari Esteri», *GU*, 22 novembre 1944, n.43; ACS, OND/7/Propaganda e stampa, «Presidenza Nazionale OND. Ufficio Segreteria Generale. 28 febbraio 1045».

⁹⁹⁷ ACS, OND/1, «L'OND nella Repubblica Sociale Italiana. Numero Unico – Appunto di Ezio Pucci al Dott. Malgiovanni. 9/3/1945»; ACS, OND/2/Appunti e Prospetti vari, «20 anni dell'OND.s.d.»;

⁹⁹⁸ ACS, OND/2/Appunti e prospetti vari, «Propaganda. S.d.», p.1. The italics is mine, underlined in the original type-writing.

manifestos of the activities should be affixed to the most important and busy points, the “themes of the propaganda” should be made attractive, the photographic documentation should be exposed, and every kind of forms of promotion should be exploited»⁹⁹⁹

These objectives adapted to the new social order, to «potentiate the only free and active popular association remained through all the crises, and to contribute to lay the strong foundations of the elements that will allow to build the society of tomorrow.»¹⁰⁰⁰ The OND covered three policy-areas: the material assistance and leisure of workers and soldiers; the strengthening of the social fabric; the education and training of the workers. The internal directives recommended to promote the collateral activities (leisure, culture, sports) through the collaboration with the local and national press. Other channels were not neglected: leaflets and pamphlets to distribute mainly in the workers’ canteen and in the other public areas, loudspeakers, documentaries and cinematographic works, distribution of propaganda materials in the most crowded areas (e.g. in the bomb shelters), in order to reach the wider audience possible.¹⁰⁰¹ The directives wanted the agency to become structural part of the regime’s social policy, using the

⁹⁹⁹ ACS, OND/2/Appunti e prospetti vari, «Riservata personale – Ezio Pizzi, Commissario Nazionale Ai Direttori Provinciali dell’O.N.D. Ordinamento organizzativo per la Stampa e Propaganda. 24/2/1945», p.1.

¹⁰⁰⁰ ACS, OND, «Nota Riservatissima. Appunti per un articolo sul dopolavoro d’oggi- 2 febbraio 1945» p.3.

¹⁰⁰¹ The note suggested to carefully chose timelines and places, as «The distribution with the higher return are those carried out during launch time in the factory, public canteens, etc.» *Ibidem*. The directives recommended to canvass the popular neighbourhoods, reach the soldiers and the people in the occupied territories See ACS, OND/2/Appunti e prospetti vari, «Appunto per il Commissario – “Radio Dopolavoro”.7/1/1945»; ACS, OND/2/Appunti e prospetti vari, «Appunto per il Commissario.3/1/1945»; ACS, OND/2/Appunti e prospetti vari, «Appunto per il Presidente – Propaganda capillare nei quartieri popolari delle città industriali.5/6/1944»; ACS, OND/2/Appunti e prospetti vari, «All’Ispettore Generale per le Forze Armate – Propaganda del soldato. 10/3/1944»; ACS, OND/2/Appunti e prospetti vari, «Propaganda per la popolazione nei territori occupati. 28/2/1944»; ACS, OND/2/Appunti e prospetti vari, «Al Presidente dell’O.N.D. 13 maggio 1944».

«*propaganda weapon* [...] to contribute to the Victory and to gain the Italian Population to the national, social and political principles of the Republic.»¹⁰⁰² The war events led to a reconfiguration of OND's tasks, which came to fill a similar role to the charity associations in Britain, which were passing through the gradual replacement and coordination by the State.¹⁰⁰³

The assistance for the Army covered the biggest part of the activities and expenditure, as the OND organized the logistic of the assistance, leisure, training and educational activities, the distribution of food, basic necessities and care packages, collateral activities in the hospitals. Another relevant task concerned the Italian workers in Germany, providing canteens and other basic commodities. The OND also re-organized the assistance to the prisoners in the German Lagers and to the forced manpower to Germany, assisting nearly 180.000 workers by the mid-1944. Other assistance agencies, such as the *Ente Nazionale di Assistenza Profughi* (the National Refugees Assistance Authority) faced the emergency of the internally displaced people.¹⁰⁰⁴

While the regime decoupled from the Italian society, the OND retained the double function of assistance and consensus. On the eve of the defeat in 1945, its propaganda machine was working at full throttle, addressing primarily the factory workers and the front-line soldiers.¹⁰⁰⁵ The activities were coordinated by central and local offices, which had to «apply to the letter and in spirit the dispositions of the Centre for the Organization of the Propaganda to provide to the masses.»¹⁰⁰⁶ and to «adequate the OND to the measures that regulate the production and the labour in the Italian Social Republic.»¹⁰⁰⁷ The reorganization served

¹⁰⁰² Ivi. p.2.

¹⁰⁰³ G.D.H. Cole, «A Retrospect of the History», in A.F.C. Bourdillon (ed.), *Voluntary Social Services. Their Place in the Modern State*, London, Meuthen & Co., 1945, pp. 11-31.

¹⁰⁰⁴ ACS, OND/2/Appunti e prospetti vari, «Relazione sull'attività dell'OND nella Repubblica Sociale Italiana dal 1 luglio 1944 al 10 marzo 1945.s.d.»

¹⁰⁰⁵ ACS, OND/2/Appunti e prospetti vari, «Riservata Personale – Ai Direttori Provinciali. 11/2/1945»

¹⁰⁰⁶ ACS, OND/2/ Appunti e prospetti vari, «OND, Ufficio Propaganda. Appunti per il commissario. 16/9/44», p.1.

¹⁰⁰⁷ ACS, OND/7/Stampa e propaganda, «Adeguamento dell'O.N.D. alla struttura Sindacale della Repubblica Sociale Italiana. 12.2.1945-XXIII» p.1.

to control peripheral territories, to regularly «catch indicative episodes of the mood in favour or against the social policies of the RSI.»¹⁰⁰⁸ The workers' organization could become the backbone of the socio-political organization:

«Taking into account the principles of the Manifesto di Verona, the establishment of the trade union state, and the new direction of the national life expressed by the RSI, the OND should move with the times [...] The OND should renew according to the social principles of the Republic, aligning with the other innovative institutions, and be incorporated within the State. [...] The OND must encourage, in addition, under the revolutionary point of view, new laws and regulations in accordance with the current needs of the RSI and to protect the workers against the parasitical and exploitative capitalism of those activities that could, and should, be delegated, in the name of the new social spirit, to the OND.»¹⁰⁰⁹

It was recommended to set up a separate Ministry for the OND to avoid overlapping with the Ministry of Labour and the CGLTA.¹⁰¹⁰ This role would be consistent with the principles of the *Manifesto di Verona* on the “State of Labour”; not only the State recognized the citizenship according to the status of “worker”, but it also directly incorporated their cultural education. From party's emanation, the OND became a governmental organism, as the «levelling of the classes composing the social strata of the nation»¹⁰¹¹ required a totalitarian organization outside the workplace. The OND had to merge with local authorities and trade unions in the socialized industries, becoming the

¹⁰⁰⁸ ACS, OND/2/Appunti e prospetti vari, «Il Commissario Nazionale dell'O.N.D. ai direttori provinciali. S.d.», p.1.

¹⁰⁰⁹ ACS, OND/7/Stampa e propaganda, «Riunione del Commissariato Nazionale. Il “Dopolavoro” nella Repubblica S.I. 9.2.45XXIII», p.1.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ivi. p.3

¹⁰¹¹ ACS, OND/7/Stampa e propaganda, «Appunto per il Commissario. S.d.», p.1.

transmission belt between the government and labour.¹⁰¹² These directives remained statements of principles.¹⁰¹³ The administrative confusion led the various agencies to advocate power within the republic, overlapping functions with other departments. While the high rank officers speculated on the place of the OND in the revolutionary State, its daily activity was mostly reduced to the trade-off between social assistance and propaganda. The OND depicted quite well the decoupling between the RSI's political projects and the reality, got out of hand.

Fascism addressed its propaganda on the industrial and rural working class, as the salaried workers were mainly present in Northern Italy. Yet, in early 1945 the regime had to recognize the vacuum around it. The British reports agreed that the regime could strengthen its grip on the working class only with repression and the forced displacement of manpower to Germany.¹⁰¹⁴ Also the reporting from the prefects and the binders to the Italian Ministry of Home Affairs remarked the inefficiency of Fascist propaganda in the factories. They signalled unanimously the mistrust towards the socializations, the growing activity of sabotage and illegal industrial actions, the almost total workers' support to the Resistance and the hate towards Fascism and the conscription measures for Germany. The social propaganda revealed to be detrimental for the regime; it did not gather the consensus of the working class and antagonized the Northern moderate bourgeoisie, the middle classes and the small and medium-size traders: «the measures adopted against the restaurants and the aiding and abetting of the cooperatives did not meet the favour of the retailers. In the system of massive law-making in this matter [he] sees a

¹⁰¹² ACS, OND/7/Stampa e propaganda, «Adeguamento dell'OND alla nuova struttura Sindacale della Repubblica Sociale Italiana. 12.2.45-XXIII».

¹⁰¹³ ACS, OND/7/Stampa e propaganda, «Riunione per l'esame dell'attività dell'OND in relazione alla compilazione di uno schema di progetto di legge. 12/2/1945-XXIII»; ACS, OND/7/Stampa e propaganda, «Schema per un appunto di progetto di legge per la ricostituzione l'ordinamento e lo sviluppo dell'Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro nella Repubblica Sociale Italiana. Marzo 1945»

¹⁰¹⁴ TNA, GFM 36/597, «Special Report no.IV on Documents Found in the Offices of the Fascist Italian Socialist Republic. Reports on Various Provinces. S.d.».

serious threat to its class interests and [sees] the slip towards integral communism.»¹⁰¹⁵ The orientation of the population disregarded Fascist social programmes: «the working masses here in Turin, all left-wing oriented, have already 2.000 Communist activists and members, and 1200 Socialists. The others are waiting the events to decide, even if they are potentially oriented towards some forms of moderate communism. [...] the hegemony of the outlaws [*how the regime defined the anti-fascist militants and the partisans, n.d.a.*] is progressively spreading like a wildfire, favoured by the attitude of the population, that wants whichever end of its many sufferings.»¹⁰¹⁶

The brutal repressions and retaliations of Germans and irregular troops undermined the civilian morale. The difficulties in providing social benefits, the galloping inflation and the wage freezes due to the war conjunctures constituted an useful tool for the Communist propaganda, as denounced by the Fascist trade unions.¹⁰¹⁷ While the structures of political control and social protection of the regime were crumbling down, the Communist and, to a lesser extent, the Allied propaganda favoured by mid-1944 a diffuse deterioration of the relations within the factories, which led to symbolic or more concrete individual and collective gestures, as for lockouts, the refusal of the OND assistance card, sabotages of the machines directed to Germany and ambushes against Nazi troopers.¹⁰¹⁸

The dispatches to the Ministry agreed on the fact that «the publication of the decree on the socialization did not have any impression on the workers, but the employers made no secret of their

¹⁰¹⁵ ACS, MI-DGSPDAGR, 7/62, «Questura di Torino, Al Capo della Polizia, Torino 10 aprile 1944», pp. 1-2, p. 1.

¹⁰¹⁶ACS, MI - DGSPDAGR, busta 7/62, «Torino - Situazione politica nelle provincie, 1943-44. 2 settembre 1944», p.1.

¹⁰¹⁷Unione Provinciale Lavoratori dell'Industria di Torino, *Riunione straordinaria del Comitato Esecutivo*. 22 dicembre 1944, Torino, s.e., 1944.

¹⁰¹⁸ACS, MI - DGSPDAGR, 7/ 62, «Torino - Situazione politica nelle provincie, 1943-44. 21.12.1943», p.1; ACS, MI - DGSPDAGR, 4/29/1, «Genova - Questura Repubblicana di Genova. Situazione politica ed economica. 19 giugno 1944»; ACS, MI - DGSPDAGR, 9/02367/1, «Movimento insurrezionale sovversivo maestranze operaie»; ACS, MI - DGSPDAGR, 9/02367/2, «Movimento insurrezionale sovversivo maestranze operaie».

disapproval.»¹⁰¹⁹ The Allied propaganda could penetrate in this climate of social discontent, as French and British pamphlets circulated out in the open in the bookshops and in the booths.¹⁰²⁰ The relentless republican propaganda resulted ineffective and even ridiculed; the major concerns of the workers were not on the application of the socialization, but rather, as everywhere in Northern Italy, on inflation, wage freezes, the deportation to Germany.¹⁰²¹ As the traditional social and professional constituencies of Fascism unravelled, the socialization could not garner workers' consensus.

In front of this dual failure, the Ministry of the Interior invited the prefects to adjust the sight of the propaganda. To not worry the bourgeoisie, it recommended to specify how "socialization" was not "State's control"; once socialized «the "capital" will be neither "property of the State" nor its management will be assigned to "State's functionaries"». ¹⁰²² On the other hand, to wink at the working class, the socialization did not limit itself to simple profit sharing, but encompassed a wider «revolutionary process». ¹⁰²³ To workers, it was told that Fascism aimed at restructuring the management and production in the factories. This also justified the impossibility to enact in a short lapse of time such an important reform, which wanted nothing less than to transform the «the social and political structure of the State, if this corresponds to the supreme necessities of the new historical epoch that is looming on the horizon of the world.» ¹⁰²⁴

¹⁰¹⁹ ACS, MI - DGPSDAGR, 5/39/1, «Questore di Milano - Relazione sulla situazione politica della provincia nella seconda quindicina di febbraio. 29 febbraio 1944», p.1; similar reports in ACS, MI - DGPSDAGR, 5/39/1, «Questura Repubblicana di Milano - Situazione politica ed economica di Milano e provincia. Relazione settimanale. 17 luglio 1944», p.3; ACS, SPDRSI - CR, 79/650/4B, «Riunioni dei Capi di Province presiedute dal Ministro dell'interno (10 febbraio e 6 giugno 1944)», p. 7.

¹⁰²⁰ ACS, MI - DGPSDAGR, 5/39/1, «Questura Repubblicana di Milano - Situazione politica ed economica di Milano e provincia. Relazione settimanale. 7 maggio 1944», p.3.

¹⁰²¹ ACS, MI - DGPSDAGR, 5/39/1, «Questura Repubblicana di Milano - Situazione politica ed economica di Milano e provincia. Relazione settimanale. 21 maggio 1944»

¹⁰²²Ivi. p. 5.

¹⁰²³*Ibidem*. P. 50.

¹⁰²⁴Ivi. p. 6.

The working class was not considered to be prepared to such a reform, and thus it was the task of the regime to actively promote it. However, the same prefects and leaders seemed to not be very educated, since Buffalini admitted that «from the discussion emerged by the way some misinterpretation on the causes and goals of the political and social order that the act proposes.»¹⁰²⁵ The generic nature of RSI's social policy was due to the need to mediate among different constituencies and to target all the social classes. But it did not provide a unifying narrative. Fascism undertook the opposite path to the British *War Cabinet*; while Britain gathered through social security all the strata of the population, the RSI calibrated the propaganda according to each social group. They claimed each time for the “planned economy”, the “mixed economy”, the “self-management in industries”, or the “State of the trade unions”.

The population only welcomed the measures that alleviated the extremely difficult conditions for the supply of the essential goods and basic necessities.¹⁰²⁶ But quickly even the assistance agency lost their hold on the population.¹⁰²⁷ Unlike Britain in 1941–2, the RSI was losing the war, and the prominence of Soviet Russia among the Allied catalysed consensus to the Communists.¹⁰²⁸ The alarmed reports in 1945 indicated that the overwhelming majority of the workers looked forward to the Soviet advance, as a prelude of a wider insurrection to overturn the regime. The official commitment to socialize all the enterprises with more than 100 employees and more than one million of capital «has left quite an impression on the workers, but in turn it has not even excited them [...] While the employers were aware of the

¹⁰²⁵Ivi. p.5.

¹⁰²⁶ ACS, MI - DGPSDAGR, 5/39/1, «Questura Repubblicana di Milano - Situazione politica ed economica di Milano e provincia. Relazione settimanale. 11 luglio 1944».

¹⁰²⁷ ACS, MI - DGPSDAGR, 5/39/2, «Questura Repubblicana di Milano - Situazione politica ed economica di Milano e provincia. 29 gennaio 1945»; ACS, MI - DGPSDAGR, 5/39/2, «Questura Repubblicana di Milano - Situazione politica ed economica di Milano e provincia. 27 febbraio 1945»

¹⁰²⁸ ACS, MI - DGPSDAGR, 4/29/1, «Genova - Questura Repubblicana di Genova. Situazione politica ed economica. 1 luglio 1944»; ACS, MI - DGPSDAGR, 4/29/2, «Prefettura Repubblicana di Genova. 23 gennaio 1945»

act, but no actual information is getting out so far. It follows that they are waiting for the events as well.»¹⁰²⁹ There was general mistrusts for other measures announced, as for the extension of the programme of social housing for the workers to the mutilated, the veterans, the public employees. The regime could barely hold the grip on the so-called “most Fascist institutions”, like the INFPS itself; good part of the personnel was not loyal to the RSI and many of them daily listened to *Radio London*.¹⁰³⁰

Such attitude towards every measure of social policy could not be seen as isolated from «the current military situation, whereby among the masses persists, as said, a sense of hopelessness.»¹⁰³¹ The reports remarked how the fascist social propaganda substantially failed as the RSI never had any ascending over the working class.¹⁰³² All these notes passed in plain view of Mussolini himself, who lost every hold on the working classes.¹⁰³³ The dispatches highlighted that «the masses obey to the Communists, for some kind of Messianic wait for Great Moustache, as is commonly called Stalin» and that «the support for the Anglo-Saxons has continuously waned up to become nothing (these considerations, of course, apply only to the working class, even if also among the other classes the failure of the beachhead has seriously

¹⁰²⁹ ACS, MI - DGPSDAGR, 5/39/2, «Questura Repubblicana di Milano - Situazione politica ed economica di Milano e provincia. 29 marzo 1945», p.2.

¹⁰³⁰ ACS, MI - Gabinetto RSI (1943-45), 52/K.48/INFPS/P.372, «Ministero dell'Interno alla Prefettura di Treviso Atteggimento politico del personale dell'Istituto Fascista della Previdenza Sociale. 15 settembre 1944»; ACS, MI - Gabinetto RSI (1943-45), 52/K.48/INFPS/P.372, «Ministero dell'Interno alla Prefettura di Treviso, Atteggimento politico del personale dell'Istituto Fascista della Previdenza Sociale. 24 novembre 1944»; ACS, MI - Gabinetto RSI (1943-45), 52/K.48/INFPS/P.372, «Regia Prefettura di Treviso al Ministero dell'interno, Istituto Fascista della Previdenza Sociale. 21 febbraio 1945»; ACS, MI - Gabinetto RSI (1943-45), 52/K.48/INFPS/P.372, «Ministero dell'Interno. Atteggimento politico del personale dell'Istituto Fascista della Previdenza Sociale. 15 marzo 1945».

¹⁰³¹Ivi. p.2.

¹⁰³²ACS, SPD - CVB/21.3-1, «Strettamente riservata per Mussolini. La decisione di sciopero a Milano e i contrasti nel Comitato di Liberazione»

¹⁰³³ACS, SPD - CVBM, see notes, reports and antifascist propaganda leaflets from fasc. 21.3-1 to 21.3-2.23.

discredited the Anglo-Saxons).»¹⁰³⁴ Irrespective of the Anglo-Saxon plans of social reforms and their active propaganda in the enemy countries, the Italian working class, now framed in the ranks of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), was waiting for Communism as outcome of the war.

The British plans, in fact, affected firstly the political and administrative ruling classes. The penetration of this kind of propaganda had lesser impact on the popular masses. Yet, the RSI devoted some attention to the danger of the British propaganda on social matters also. The Fascist counter-propaganda appealed to the ideological divisions among the Allies, chasing the pro-communist radicalization of the working class and opposing the socializations to Anglo-Saxon capitalism. The regime equalized the Soviet social enhancements with those of the RSI, even encouraging the collaboration between Fascists and Communists in the name of common pro-labour faith.¹⁰³⁵ The prominent Prefect of Milan, Piero Parini, proclaimed that Anglo-Saxon capitalists undermined the Fascist social revolution; Soviet Russia, which was told having the only other socialist constitution except the RSI, abandoned Italy to the plutocracies: «London and Washington opposed to the socialization because they stand for the social conservatism. Moscow because it does not want that the Republic consolidates thanks to its concrete revolutionary action.»¹⁰³⁶ The victory of the Allied, both the Anglo-Saxons and the Russian, would represent «a triumph that would perpetuate the age of the exploiting capitalism.»¹⁰³⁷

The RSI passed under its direct control the social propaganda,

¹⁰³⁴ ACS, SPD - CVBM, 21.3-1, «Il contrordine del contrordine nello sciopero di Milano. 1 marzo 1944», p.l.

¹⁰³⁵ That was, for example, the content of different leaflets distributed to the workers in the factories in 1944, see Comitato Direttivo dell'Unione Provinciale Lavoratori dell'Industria di Milano, *Parole chiare ai lavoratori!*, Milano, 1944; see also Churchill, *nemico della Russia*, Milano, Nucleo Propaganda, 1945.

¹⁰³⁶ ACS, SPD - CVBM, 21.3-6.3, «Invito alla riflessione e al coraggio morale», pp. 2-3. This text would have been published in the national newspaper P. Pasini, «Invito alla riflessione e al coraggio morale», *Corriere della Sera*, 6 marzo 1944, p. 1.

¹⁰³⁷ Ivi. p.4.

but the spanning of the assistance agencies did not allow to consistently reach the workers. The press propaganda, although managed by government, did not convey unitary vision on social policy, as every constituency used it to strengthen its own position; the press did not start a debate as thorough as the British one. However, the reasons of the RSI's propaganda failure did not lie in the inefficiency of the propaganda machinery, which on the contrary was well-oiled. The Fascist elites were united around some vague watchwords that did not mobilize the working masses. The war turned out to be a social revolution, but among the Northern working classes the social change was not embodied by the Fascist socializations nor by the Anglo-Saxon social security, whose propaganda remained substantially stranger to the Italian industries. Unlike the British public opinion, the Italian working classes were radicalized and opted for the promises of the Communist revolution.

The RSI addressed differently the propaganda against the Anglo-Americans and the Soviets. The formers were the direct enemy on the battlefield, while the Communists were the ideological benchmark of the Resistance. Against the British and the Americans, the RSI did not neglect to consider the social and ideological structures of the countries; the propaganda resumed the topic of the "plutocratic imperialism" and the confrontation between social revolution and conservative capitalism; the cult of the Duce left room to the self-representation of the international social revolution against capitalism and communism.¹⁰³⁸ The Fascist narrative officially proclaimed the social collaboration, but targeted the workers, moving on the Communists in the revolutionary field. The prosecution of the war alongside the Nazis was linked to the confrontation between social enhancement and conservative reaction. Eventually, the RSI did not collect the workers' consensus and alienated the middle classes; instead of a unitary discourse to gather working classes and bourgeoisie, the RSI propaganda paradoxically proved to be "classist", and, unlike the British plans for social security, divided even more the country.

¹⁰³⁸ M. Isnenghi, «Parole e immagini dell'ultimo fascismo», in 1943-45. *L'immagine della RSI nella propaganda*, Milano, Mazzotta, 1985, pp. 11.41.

6.4. *Three home fronts: the struggle for victory, the demobilization, the civil war*

Britain, the Vichy regime and the RSI equally sought for political legitimization through social policies; all the sides in conflict understood that the war would have led to “revolutionary” outcomes and that the post-war political and socio-economic order would have to provide new forms social policy. Britain promoted “social security” in a free society, while the two regimes claimed for more “social equality”, refocusing priority on the social collaboration within a hierarchic national community. At home, social policy served to compact the different social classes justifying the wartime constraints in the light of a better future, and to affirm new “social pacts”. The efficiency of the agencies of propaganda played a fundamental role in conveying these messages. However, the different geo-political situations of the three countries determined the success of the social propaganda at home.

In Britain, accordingly to the global reorganization of the *War Cabinet*, the MOI, set up in 1935, assumed the tasks of propaganda.¹⁰³⁹ It sustained the morale of the British population through the publicity of the social progress already achieved during WWII and the plans for the reconstruction. The government judged fundamental to convince people that the war was necessary and just, and that after the unavoidable victory of the Allies a new fairer world was to come. The directives of the MOI were «translated into a three-fold policy: firstly, the replacement of free availability of news and information with a regime in which these would be controlled and managed; secondly, to provide reassurance of the certainty of victory and of official concern for the people’s needs; thirdly, to stimulate patriotic commitment to the war and the war effort.»¹⁰⁴⁰

The MOI was the centre of production, supply and transmission of information. The propaganda followed the traditional channels and the mass media; cinema, documentaries and mostly the

¹⁰³⁹ I. MacLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1979.

¹⁰⁴⁰ R. Mackay, *Half the Battle: Civilian Morale in Britain during the Second World War*, p. 142.

broadcastings of the BBC, which became an iconic aspect of the British psychological warfare, and which operated under the control of the MOI. The governmental control over the information did not prevent the public debate. The press had an important role to pave the way and to encourage to put on political agenda the policies for the reconstruction.¹⁰⁴¹ Beveridge himself appealed to the press to promote his report, competing to some extent with governmental propaganda. The press and the publishers vulgarised the technical content of the report; a huge documentation of summaries, commentaries, and compendia is stored in the archives. The MOI never implemented a “totalitarian” control of the propaganda. Its “pluralist” grip on information enhanced the policy-making. Even if the *Beveridge Report* initially went through some resistances, its popular success compelled the *War Cabinet* to provide by 1944 the guidelines of the post-war British social policy. Great Britain achieved the most efficient (“total”) propaganda; while the consensus in politics and society was not as solid as commonly regarded, the alternative centres of communication (trade unions, parties, the SSL itself) shared the support to the *War Cabinet*.

The organization of the propaganda under the RSI and in the Vichy regime was partly different. The RSI had the background of twenty years of Fascist cultural policy, which affected different fields of the Italian public and private life.¹⁰⁴² Until 1943, the Fascism propaganda was coordinated by the MinCulPop, created in 1937, and relied on different vectors that covered various sectors of society and topics. The regime wanted to provide the ideological elements of the propaganda to address to the soldiers, the workers, the peasants, the families, combining traditional propaganda and mass media.¹⁰⁴³ The MinCulPop and the OND remained the only two pivots, the latter

¹⁰⁴¹Ivi., pp. 221-240.

¹⁰⁴²P. Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso. Fascismo e mass media*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1975; E. Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2008.

¹⁰⁴³A. Mignemi, «La macchina della propaganda e la guerra fascista», in 1940-43. *L'Italia in guerra. Immagini e temi della propaganda fascista*, Brescia, Fondazione Luigi Micheletti, 1989, pp. 12-44.

tending to merge with State's structures: the intermingling between the workers' organization and governmental machinery was considered the outcome of the "State of Labour", and patched organizational leaks after 1943. The RSI redefined the methods of propaganda; the exploitation of mass media and the rallies ocean gave way to the press, leaflets, posters, etc. The penetration of *Radio London* was not countered by Italian broadcastings, completely under German control, and hegemonized by the "intransigents" like Farinacci, relatively not interested in any social change. The absence of the Mussolini's cult of personality was replaced by the myth of the regeneration through the war and by the shibboleth of the social revolution.

The Vichy regime adopted a flexible system to promote the *Révolution Nationale* and to create a new ruling class. The General Secretary for the Information had the monopoly of the official propaganda. The plethora of Vichy's organizations promoted the cultural deepening of the social doctrine, the training of the political and administrative elites of the new State and the general propaganda for the population. Workers and the peasants were the main target of the "mass movement" of the regime, the LFC, and its industrial branch, the GLE, which enacted its typical methods of propaganda, the "word-of-mouth" and the "guide of the opinion". There was also room for broadcastings, documentaries and – to a greater extent – pamphlets, posters, leaflets, essays, booklets, which testify the effort to reach the workers. While for the RSI the crumble of the former constituencies dissolved the unanimous consensus to Fascism, the Vichy regime lacked of support by mass parties and unions. In both cases, unlike in Britain, the regimes decoupled from the population

The different outcomes of the propaganda were mainly determined by domestic and geopolitical factors. The British public life, even during the war years, was mediated by parties and unions, that were the transmission belt between government and citizens. The Minister of Labour Bevin was typical; former trade unionist, he had the complete confidence of the workers. He could pass off the most coercive measures on manpower, by promising social rights after the

war and the levelling of social inequalities.¹⁰⁴⁴ The British government had to fully mobilize the society; the social policy cemented the pact among different sectors of British society, and between citizens and the State. On the contrary, while Vichy and the RSI claimed for a classless socio-economic organization, in reality both pushed forward class propaganda. In the Vichy regime, governmental bodies were specifically created for the propaganda to the workers, the employers, the technicians, the farmers. The RSI relied on major ideological concessions to the working class to restore consensus. Both the regimes did not garner popular support and gradually lost that of the upper classes, frightened by the radicalization of the Resistance movements and by the march of the Red Army to the West. The Anglo-Americans grounded their public narrative on the restating of democratic institutions, social reforms and liberal capitalism. They thus became the option to support for good part of the wealthier classes.

The ruling classes of both regimes were commonly identified as puppet governments in the hands of the Nazi occupant. Especially since 1943, both provided forced labour to feed the German war machine and could not prevent the Nazi retaliation against their own citizens. Vichy's propaganda stressed how the German shield was the only assurance to not be overwhelmed by the Anglo-Saxons, as «American policy would cause social unrest. [...] the American way of living is a counterpart of Bolshevism.»¹⁰⁴⁵ In both countries, contrary to what the regimes expected, Nazi occupation undermined their consensus. There was an increasing hiatus between the regime's promises of a fairer socio-economic order and the reality of the brutal exploitation and occupation by the German troopers and local paramilitary terror gangs. Especially in Italy, they repeatedly imposed summary justice out of governmental control. In Britain, instead, "total war" effectively mobilized the population; from 1941 on, the

¹⁰⁴⁴ S. Brooke, *Labour's War: the Labour Party and the Second World War*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992; A. Bullock, *The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin*. Vol 2. *Minister of Labour, 1940-45*, London, Heinemann, 1967; see also W. Taylor, *The Forgotten Conscript: a History of the Bevin Boy*, Bishop Auckland, Pentland Press, 1995.

¹⁰⁴⁵ TNA, FO/371/36074, «French Propaganda. Drafts Telegram to Minister of State Cairo analysing French Propaganda for week ending 21st August, 1943», p.1.

commitment to the war was identified with the struggle for a better world for all the British classes and for a leading role of the country in the new settlement.

Other reason why the British social propaganda succeeded, while failing in France and Italy, had to do with their very contents. In Britain, the promotion of the socio-economic reforms gathered the consensus of popular and middle classes, workers and employers. The British propaganda promised a fairer society, where the State secured the minimum vital income and committed to full employment; the deployment of social solidarity was eased by the wartime climate of national unity. The propaganda on the *Beveridge Report* and the other social provisions could merge different social and political sectors, in a process also described as «an attempt at “nation-rebuilding”: as part of the process of post-war reconstruction, extending and deepening already existing forms of welfare provisions in a far older nation state with a (at that time) comparatively homogenous population.».¹⁰⁴⁶

The Italian and French regimes were not able to pursue the same goals, for the nature of their social policy: Vichy claimed for the “social collaboration” in the factories; the RSI pushed prefigured the creation of the “State of Labour”. Not unlike Great Britain, in both countries the propaganda pointed at spreading national unity. Their message did not work, but had the opposite effect. In France, the “eradication” of the proletarian condition and the hierarchy in the factories were usually received by the employers as the restoration of social order after the years of the Popular Front.¹⁰⁴⁷ The workers never took seriously the message of Vichy propaganda; their major worries regarded the difficult daily conditions and the coercive measures imposed by the Germans, with the connivance of the regime. Something similar, but even more dramatically, happened under the RSI, where the messy formulation of the “social republic” also alienated the support of the former conservative interest blocs of the regime.

¹⁰⁴⁶ J. Pratt, «Citizenship, Social Solidarity and Social Policy», in Michael Lavalette, Alan Pratt, *Social Policy. Theories, Concepts and Issues*, London, Sage Publications, 2006, pp.124-140, p.127.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Jean Mersch, *Vers la fin du salariat*, Paris, Centre des Jeunes Patrons, 1942.

They felt threatened both by the socializations and by the retaliation promised by the most intransigent Fascist representatives. The RSI resisted only thanks to the Nazi military presence, while the proletariat swelled the ranks of the Resistance, led by the Communists, and the upper classes turned to the Allies for more moderate solutions. Italy, even more than France, was a breeding ground for Anglo-American influence. The social propaganda might not have a great appeal for the masses, but the British plans affected the political and technical debate.

The *Beveridge Report* and the reconstruction constituted a main piece of the British propaganda at home. However, its maximum potential was expected for the propaganda abroad, both to the enemies and allies. Almost one year after the publication of the report, the MOI considered that a new phase of the conflict was opened. It was no longer about convincing the public opinion that the Allies would have won the war. The task was to frame the British effort for the reconstruction and social reforms in the post-war settlement: «it became clear some months ago that opinion overseas no longer needed to be convinced that the war would be won by the United Nations and that interest was, therefore, turning to the views and policies of the protagonists. [...] How will Britain withstand pressure from U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.? [...] *The projection of Britain on a large scale becomes, therefore, an urgent item on the propaganda agenda.*»¹⁰⁴⁸

¹⁰⁴⁸ TNA, INF/1/683, «Director, Reference Division. The Function of the Reference Division in the New Phase of the War now Opening. 15/11/43». Italics is mine, underlined in the original writing-type.

7. Social policy and power politics

The British services defined November 1942 “the month that changed the war”, as major military events changed the inertia of the conflict; the publication of the *Beveridge Report* fell into this watershed lapse of time.¹⁰⁴⁹ The surge of enthusiasm generated by the report became a cog of the British war’s propaganda. Its most remarkable aspect was the importance that the British gave to the “projection” of its social model abroad, pointing at «showing the social and economic injustice of totalitarian rule compared with the imperfect but vastly better conditions under a free regime.»¹⁰⁵⁰ The report was part of a coherent narrative by the Anglo-Americans, started with the 1941 *Atlantic Charter* and continued in the years of recovery and reconstruction.¹⁰⁵¹ The *Beveridge Report* enshrined in the British policy legacy, but its most recent ideological background was the *Atlantic Charter*. For the propaganda abroad, the MOI ran at full strength: «the full implementation of the Plan would ensure that the British Social Security system, which already in almost every aspect compares very favourably with that of any other country in the world (save perhaps New Zealand), would easily outstrip, in all respects, that of all other countries (again with the possible exception of New Zealand).»¹⁰⁵² The information services stressed the importance of the plan in the Allied countries, and predicted the reaction in the enemy countries:

¹⁰⁴⁹ TNA, FO//898/41, «Draft Directive for the Week 29.11.42 to 5.12.42», p.1.

¹⁰⁵⁰ TNA, FO//898/41, «Propaganda to Europe during January, February and March. January, 1942», p.4.

¹⁰⁵¹ TNA, INF/1/685, «Britain and relief to Liberated Europe. 2.2.46».

¹⁰⁵² TNA, FO/I/172/2093, «Overseas Planning Committee (Special Issues Sub-Committee) Report of Beveridge Committee on Social Services. Treatment in Overseas Propaganda. 23.11.1942», p.2.

«While it is likely that the Report will receive favourable comment both in the home and allied Press, it is also probable that Axis propaganda will use the occasion, with distorted quotations from the Report, to draw attention to the inadequacies of existing British social services, and try to argue that Germany has long possessed services which we are only beginning to talk about on paper. Behind these arguments will be considerable nervousness about the moral effect of the Report in providing a means of filling in some of the daps in Allied war aims and exposing the sham of Hitler's New Order.»¹⁰⁵³

The British promotion of the *Beveridge Report* operated on a double channel; the mass propaganda and the intellectual circulation. Whether directly through propaganda services, or indirectly through the debate within the academic, political and cultural milieu, the report and the new principles of social security had an impact in the Resistance parties and in the societies. Both in Italy and in France, the post-war plans and studies for the social insurances referred, more or less explicitly, to the new “lexicon” of social security.

7.1. The British projection over Europe: winning the war and building the peace

The Atlantic Charter: propaganda for the post-war settlement

The *Atlantic Charter* was presented as a democratic revolution that promised to bring more social equality; Roosevelt's four freedoms were promoted as the standpoints of the United Nations and the achievement of a wider democracy was expected to come out of the battlefields of the people's war.¹⁰⁵⁴ The directives for the propaganda were clear: the war effort was bringing about faith and hope in the future, and the Allies were committed both to construct a “New

¹⁰⁵³ *Ibidem*

¹⁰⁵⁴ TNA, FO/898/41, «General Directives. 17th May, 1942», pp. 5-6.

World" and to disintegrate Nazism and Fascism.¹⁰⁵⁵ Until the second half of 1942, the different aspects of the *Atlantic Charter* were the main references of Allied propaganda in Europe.¹⁰⁵⁶ "Freedom from fear" and "freedom from want" were blueprints for further propaganda and elaborations on social security.¹⁰⁵⁷ The change of pace in 1942 was particularly required by the *Political Warfare Executive* (PWE), charged of the propaganda against the Axis and the countries occupied by their troops.¹⁰⁵⁸

After the end of the *Blitz*, the British were confident in the victory; they had to think about the post-war settlement: «our post-war aims must be positive and constructive. [...] in terms of primary human needs and aspirations. We must think not only politically of States as so many separate units, but socially of the individual within those States.»¹⁰⁵⁹ The Allies promoted international and internal security, which was also «security against those economic cataclysms which bring poverty in the midst of plenty.»¹⁰⁶⁰ Once defeated Nazism, the main tasks concerned the reconstruction of the international and social orders on renewed bases. The PWE recognized that «it is an undeniable fact that the Atlantic Charter was a flop in America, in the British Isles, in occupied territories and in enemy countries. We have done our best with it, but we cannot, if we are to do effective propaganda, go on plugging the Atlantic Charter with any hope of success. [...] If we are to have the more positive and dynamic propaganda, rightly demanded by the Minister, we can only do so if the Government will give us a lead.»¹⁰⁶¹

¹⁰⁵⁵ TNA, FO/898/41, «General Directives. 3rd May, 1942», p. 4.

¹⁰⁵⁶ TNA, INF/1/679, «Minister's Paper on Propaganda. 25th April, 1942», p.1.

¹⁰⁵⁷ The Regional Directors of the Propaganda for France, Italy, and Germany, however, considered the *Atlantic Charter* «too vague to have any marked effect on either the Latin or Teutonic mind.» The Minister of Information defined it «too academic and vague to make a good basis for propaganda.», TNA, FO/898/13, «Political Warfare Executive. Meeting of the Standing Ministerial Committee. 20th January, 1942», p.1.

¹⁰⁵⁸ TNA, FO/898/13, «Political Warfare Organisation. 27th July, 1942»

¹⁰⁵⁹ TNA, FO/898/13, «Political Warfare Executive. "Never Again....". 3rd February, 1942», p. 2.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁶¹ TNA, FO/898/13, «Political Warfare Executive. 30th January, 1942», p.1.

Initially, the PWE tended to variate propaganda accordingly to each national situation. This was the case with the Vichy regime; due to its ambiguous international status, it was treated as an occupied territory rather than a satellite of the Axis.¹⁰⁶² The British government opted for the collaboration with the *Provisional French National Committee* and with the French colonial authorities.¹⁰⁶³ They limited their initiative, with few space for direct social propaganda to France.¹⁰⁶⁴ The dispatches from France suggested a more moderate appeal to the working class, complaining the over-importance of the propaganda on workers with regard to the other classes, which feared the increasing weight of the Communists in the ranks of the Resistance.¹⁰⁶⁵ Throughout 1941, the advisory reports suggested to address the propaganda to some key points, as for the French forced manpower in Germany.¹⁰⁶⁶ While Vichy's propaganda identified the partisans against the occupation with the Communists, the British regional directors for France presented a different framework. The major aims in France were the material recovery, the end of German and collaborationist rules, the restoration of democratic system and the Empire, and «a lead from outside towards a better post-war world, but no imposition from outside of any particular political formula.»¹⁰⁶⁷ The PWE recommended to emphasize the British view in case Free France showed unable to implant in French opinion or the divergences

¹⁰⁶² TNA, FO/371/36070, «Constitutional Basis of the Vichy Government».

¹⁰⁶³ TNA, FO/371/28524, Foreign Office, «The Free French Movement, December 1941», p.1.

¹⁰⁶⁴ TNA, FO/371/28433, «Political Warfare Executive – Weekly Directive for BBC French Services. Week 19th – 26th October, 1941»; TNA, FO/371/28433, «Political Warfare Executive – Weekly Directive for BBC French Services. Week 12th – 19th October, 1941».

¹⁰⁶⁵ TNA, FO/371/28433, «Propaganda to France, 25th October 1941».

¹⁰⁶⁶ See the different reports in TNA, FO/371/28432 and TNA, FO/371/28429. See also TNA, FO/898/13, «Appendix. Principal Features of the German Economic Exploitation of the Occupied Territories. A. Northern and Western Europe. I. France», p.1; TNA, CAB/80/62, «War Cabinet. Chiefs of Staff Committee – Possible Action in View of French Situation. 26th April, 1942»; TNA, FO/371/28433, «Political Warfare Executive – Plan of Political Warfare for France. 28th October, 1941»; TNA, FO/371/28433, «Political Warfare Executive – Plan of Political Warfare for France up to Spring 1942. 13/11/1941».

¹⁰⁶⁷ TNA, FO/898/13, «Political Warfare Executive. 30th January, 1942», p. 3.

between the Allies widened: «there is need to plug as far as possible the idea of Great Britain as a leader of democratic and social thought and development»,¹⁰⁶⁸ and thus it was suggested to let autonomy to Free France in its own topics of propaganda.

The British propaganda did not reach the French working classes. The Intelligence Services for France reported that Vichy counterpropaganda stroke the right notes with lower classes, when they stressed the “totalitarian” character of the Anglo-American capitalism that was expected to be implanted in France and the unnatural alliances of capitalists and communists to crush the French social order.¹⁰⁶⁹ The informers in France stressed also the importance of «“more facts about social development in Britain” and that in particular talks “explaining how capitalist Britain can be an ally to communist Russia [...] we should show the French how Britain works on the “social side” and also on the “political side” and that this might help them to regain confidence in democratic institutions [...] it is essential that our broadcasts should ensure the French that they will themselves choose the internal policy of France.»¹⁰⁷⁰ The services of Free France proposed to direct the propaganda against the myth of the “social collaboration”, linking Vichy’s social and economic policies to the Nazi exploitation of French resources. Corporatism was presented as an imposition of the German model, functional to re-organize the production for Nazi demands, making complete the French subordination after the military defeat. The British propaganda moved in close connection with Free France directives, according to the principle that «the social feature of this current total war takes the form

¹⁰⁶⁸ TNA, FO/898/13, «Political Warfare Executive. Propaganda Policy. 30th January, 1942», p. 4.

¹⁰⁶⁹ The reports mentioned an extract from a Vichy’s broadcasting against Allies social propaganda: «“it would be useful if you explained exactly what England, the USA and the USSR represent socially and intellectually. Perhaps our compatriots would then understand that France has nothing to learn from Moscow, Washington or London. It might be of value”, this broadcast goes on, “to prove once again that these countries have no right whatever to play the role of educators in relation to France.» TNA, FO//898/41, B.B.C, «Bi-Monthly Surveys of European Audiences. Metropolitan France. 11th August, 1943», p.10.

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Ibidem*.

of the enemy's effort to conquer the masses. In Germany, Hitler came to power through the masses. [...] The demoralization of the French masses eased his victory. Fermenting the British working classes against the government, he hoped to conquer London.»¹⁰⁷¹

By mid-1941, the British propaganda tried to meet more consistently the instances of all social classes, without exacerbating their cleavages.¹⁰⁷² The British recalibrated their propaganda to the French industrial workers and urban middle classes, both submitted to a progressive pauperization, sticking to the general principles of the *Atlantic Charter*:

«The Atlantic Charter at the time it was announced was, as an event, powerful propaganda. It was very thoroughly plugged. Its major striking force, in our opinion, was its evidence of growing American participation in the war and growing American feeling of responsibility for the post-war world. Its points are, of course, timeless, but unless they are developed in greater detail and authoritatively, they have no longer sufficient sharpness. We do not think the Charter can be made “revolutionary”. Nevertheless, all projections of Great Britain in terms of existing democratic institutions and projected social development should be amplified as far as possible in order to meet 3(f) above. Projected social developments must be reasonably concrete and in line with representative progressive thinking in Great Britain. We do not, however, feel that this projection of Great Britain alone would serve to “compete” with the pull of Russia as a symbol of redemption and hope.»¹⁰⁷³

¹⁰⁷¹ TNA, FO/371/28429, «Suggestions on Anti-German Propaganda by Mr. Huntzburger. 18th March, 1941», p.1.

¹⁰⁷² TNA, FO/371/28429, «Intelligence Report No.33 for French Section (M.O.I.) Advisory Committee. 6th May, 1941».

¹⁰⁷³ TNA, FO/898/13, «Political Warfare Executive. 30th January, 1942», p. 4.

Similar considerations concerned the other European countries. Before the publication of the *Beveridge Report*, the efforts of the Anglo-American propaganda projected some general policies for the reconstruction. But the same 1942 report actually rooted in the very guidelines of the *Atlantic Charter*. These political warfare indications targeted primarily Nazi Germany, but, on the background, they foresaw a first contest with Soviet Russia. The Allied wanted to compete on the same ground of the Soviets, and challenge the Communists' hegemony over the working population,

«and especially the industrial working class, which are our best allies in the occupied territories and our best prospective allies in the enemy countries themselves. Our positive propaganda, therefore, should be largely addressed to the industrial workers and should deal largely with the economic future we intend to create. We must show that we seriously mean to satisfy the hopes of working people everywhere for a new and better social order after the war.»¹⁰⁷⁴

The 1941 memorandum of the Minister of Economic Warfare Dalton recognized that the points 5 and 6 of the *Atlantic Charter* (social security, improved labour standards and “freedom from fear and want”) lent themselves to an effective social propaganda. This was the kind of propaganda that Britain was expected to promote on the Continent:

«The B.B.C French surveys repeatedly refer to the desire of Frenchmen to be told “the broad outlines of a programme of economic reconstruction in which political liberty would be guaranteed”, to set against Hitler’s New Order. It is not the business of the P.W.E. to plan this brave New World. But it is very much our concern to see that those engaged on post-

¹⁰⁷⁴ TNA, FO/898/13, «Propaganda Policy (P.W.E.) – Memorandum by the Minister of Economic Warfare. H.Dalton 6th December, 1941», p.1.

war planning realise its immense importance for our propaganda to Europe. We should, therefore, make our great interest in the subject known to them, and we should be given an opportunity to “put over” to Europe, in a sufficient guarded fashion, any proposal of development in the sphere of post-war reconstruction which would help our propaganda. [...]Plans for improved social security, for large scale economic developments, for financial reforms designed to stabilise employment, will, if sufficiently concrete and extensive, be of great value in our propaganda to the European masses. On such plans, not only the Minister Without Portfolio and various departments of His Majesty’s Government, but also the I.L.O., are now working. Even better propaganda would be any steps which we take now, in war time and in our own country, to show that we really mean to go forward and not back when the war is over. Thus, to choose a measure backed as yet by no one party but by many in all parties, the introduction of comprehensive system of Family Allowances would impress the European workers more than any number of paper plans.»¹⁰⁷⁵

The main concern was to balance the Soviet military and popularity advance to Western Europe, rather than to counter the Nazi propaganda. The defeat of the Axis was matter of time, and the Anglo-American had to promote their view on post-war settlement: «many European workers believe now in Russia, only because they don’t believe in us. If they felt that we could offer some real alternative to Communism, which would combine the benefits of a rising standard of life and economic security with individual liberty and the right of self-government, they would turn to us more readily as a symbol of their redemption, especially as we succeed in showing increasing military strength.»¹⁰⁷⁶ The concurrence with Soviet Russia in 1941 concerned the leadership over the post-war world. The ensuring of the peace was

¹⁰⁷⁵ Ivi. p.2.

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

linked to the agreement on the new settlement, for its part linked to consensus on new social and economic “universal” principles. This worldwide endorsement was conditional to the reliability of both promoters of the *Atlantic Charter* in the implementation, in the shortest possible time, of these same reforms at home:

«But if we aim at a more positive and dynamic propaganda, this will make a call upon ourselves and will require a like effort in our home propaganda. We British must be prepared to show that after the war, as during it, we shall show leadership. [...] Only if the mass of the British people believe that social justice, more closely approached in war than in peace, will be maintained here, and even improved upon, after the defeat of the Germans, [...] we are to play an effective part after the war, we must give our own people more solid ground for pride in their country in the quiet less heroic days of peace which are to come. They too must have, in full measure, all the gifts of the Atlantic Charter. [...] They will feel this, if the case is put straight to them, and if they are conscious that a new world of social justice is being born, where there will be no more mass poverty and mass unemployment, and no more chronically distressed areas. Given these things, they will be willing, I believe, to lose some cherished liberties in return for a real prospect of a long period of peace.»¹⁰⁷⁷

Dalton proposed to re-direct the propaganda considering the workers as the driving force to overturn the Nazi power. The British could garner their consensus through post-war socio-economic projects, grounded on the principles of the *Atlantic Charter* but supported by the first effective outcomes to be published by the Minister for the Reconstruction, to «“put over” to Europe our proposals for the future and our achievements in the present in the field of

¹⁰⁷⁷ Ivi. p.4.

reconstruction.»¹⁰⁷⁸ This plans were originally meant to compete with the Communist ally, in a context of European co-operation where Britain exercised the leadership.

The view of the Labourite Dalton did not necessarily coincided with that of the government, even if his guidelines did not depart too much from the directives for the propaganda policy abroad. The Secretary of the State agreed on the appeal to the working class, as «in the occupied countries the broad masses have more of the stuff of resistance in them than the bourgeoisie.»¹⁰⁷⁹ The approach to these social classes, however, should avoid the traditional “pro-labour” propaganda, to promise a better future and support “socially enhanced” forms of democracy as an alternative to Nazism and Communism. The propaganda had also to better specify the kind of “enhancements” they prefigured: social security, education, freedom from fear and want were considered «excellent themes», as well as the appeal to the *Atlantic Charter*.¹⁰⁸⁰ The government refused references to the “social revolution”, whose extent could not be the same throughout all the European continent.

The central appeal to the industrial working classes and the urban “progressive” bourgeoisie did not work for the Nordic countries under German occupation, as their social stratification was not centred on the working class, or for Belgium and the Netherlands, whose main concerns regarded their territorial integrity to be defended from Germany in the future.¹⁰⁸¹ This did not reduce the relevance of the social propaganda also in those countries. As few months later the same Beveridge underlined in his report, the shared conviction was that «reasonable national and international security can be restored, and the road to social progress – planned this time on a generous

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ivi. p.5.

¹⁰⁷⁹ TNA, FO/898/13, «Secretary of State. Secret & Personal. 8/1/1942», p.1.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Ivi. p.2.

¹⁰⁸¹ TNA, FO/898/13, «Propaganda Policy (PWE). Some Notes on the Memorandum by the Minister of Economic Warfare. 26th January, 1942»; TNA, FO/898/13, «Low Countries. Memorandum by the Minister of Economic Warfare on Propaganda Policy. 26th January, 1942»; TNA, FO/898/13, «Notes from Mr. Murray to Mr. David Stephens. 24th January, 1942».

international scale – will again be open.»¹⁰⁸² The international co-operation should not dispute the British leadership in Europe: «the Minister of Economic Warfare stresses the fact that we have got to face up to Russian opposition. This competition makes a vigorous and creative post-war policy, exploited by propaganda, even more necessary. [...] In conjunction with the spectacular Russian war effort and with the Russian-inspired propaganda for revolutionary after-war changes in the social field, this does, [...] create a serious danger, unless it is offset by a more vigorous lead – both in relation to present behaviour and to post-war reconstruction – from here.»¹⁰⁸³

The ineffectiveness of the *Atlantic Charter* led the British to change the directives at the end of 1942, just a few days after the publication of the *Beveridge Report*. They were oriented towards the projection of Britain in term of “soft power”: political institutions, social progress, British way of life and commitment to the reconstruction of Europe: «what we need therefore is to bring to Europe a picture of the British, determined at last in their own interests to give Europe the same kind of human values and opportunities as they give to their own people. The conception of British policy must be made to approximate to the conception of the British character.»¹⁰⁸⁴ They should also convey the idea that security, peace and progress were firstly in the interests of the British power: «we can gain the confident leadership of Europe in a way that might astonish many people here.»¹⁰⁸⁵ Britain had to fully commit in the Continent, to implement all the social reforms prefigured in 1941: «the Atlantic Charter has evoked no response in Europe, not because its provisions are not admirable, but because nobody knows who is going to see that they are carried out. What people in Europe want to know is who is going to look after them. If they felt sure the British would do this, the response would be immediate and enthusiastic.»¹⁰⁸⁶ The British services considered the previous

¹⁰⁸² TNA, FO/898/13, «Low Countries. Memorandum by the Minister of Economic Warfare on Propaganda Policy. 26th January, 1942», p.1.

¹⁰⁸³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁸⁴ TNA, FO/898/13, «British Policy for Europe. 23rd November, 1942», p.1.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Ivi*. p.2.

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Ibidem*.

propaganda ineffective not for the topics (the promise of a *new social order*, as clearly stated in the first report of the Minister of Economic Warfare), but because «they bear no relation to policy towards Europe as a whole. The only good propaganda is that based on reality, on the knowledge that Europe is going to be united under somebody's leadership, a leadership which is experienced and trusted.»¹⁰⁸⁷ The suggestion was to carry out policies that were propaganda “by themselves”, showing how Britain could take the lead of post-war Europe through a set of ideas and policies to reshape European democracies and societies.

The new directives matched the turning tides of the war. By mid-1942, Britain had now to state a great design for the aftermath the war, providing «a definite indication of the rôle [*sic*] that Britain is prepared to play in Europe when the fighting ceases and of the steps now being taken during the war in preparation for that rôle [*sic*].»¹⁰⁸⁸ This was of crucial importance for Britain even more as it was between the US and the Soviet Union. The government should put forward policy areas to improve after the war, both in front of their domestic opinion and of the European ones under the German occupation: «by giving moral leadership to Britain it will counteract the feeling that we are in the background because Russia is providing the fighting and America the sinews of war.»¹⁰⁸⁹ The only way for Britain to retain its position of great power before the two raising giants was to take the lead of the other European countries, by providing international security and collective prosperity: «an announcement that H.M.G. were prepared to adopt certain standards as part of their domestic policy would serve two purposes in Europe: a) that we really meant what we said because we had a clear idea of the kind of new society that we are fighting for; b) that the standards we wanted for our own people were there that we wanted to see introduced in Europe, In order to appeal to the maximum number of people those standards cover four main

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁸⁸ TNA, FO/898/13, «Britain's Policy for Europe. 22nd April, 1942», p.1.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *Ibidem*.

questions – health, housing, nutrition and education.»¹⁰⁹⁰ These projects conveyed the idea that Beveridge expressed two years later in his *Full Employment in a Free Society*; the great challenge for post-war democracies was to maintain the socio-economic wartime measures in the context of the reconstruction:

«The background against which all these or similar pronouncements should be made is a continual insistence that we do not recognise any essential difference between the state of war against Germany's army and the "peace" during which we should continue to fight against the causes of war. [...] In fact, any declaration of policy such as the above could be summarised by saying that we intend to remain mobilised in all spheres, military, economic and spiritual, but after the armistice our mobilisation will be for a positive end.»¹⁰⁹¹

From 1942 onwards, the governmental policies reconsidered social policy as power politics, and the *Beveridge Report* could be presented as the major contributions for the post-war society: «Britain has mobilised a free people for total war, without destroying its freedom. She is determined to retain and adapt this mobilisation, and to extend this freedom, in the tasks of post-war reconstruction. It is Britain's mission to show how freedom and planning can be harmonised both on the national and the international plane [*sic*].»¹⁰⁹² Already by 1942, the confrontation for the hegemony in Europe between the Anglo-Americans and the Russians overshadowed the Nazi threat. Britain gave up the traditional estrangement to the European affairs, facing the spread of Communism over the Continent once Germany was defeated and the potential social unrest at home. The directives emphasized how the interests of the European countries was on the side of Britain, which in turn had to promise «the realisation of the age of plenty which science has made possible, we promise not to

¹⁰⁹⁰ TNA, FO/898/13, «Britain's Policy for Europe. 17th April, 1942», p.2.

¹⁰⁹¹ *Ivi.* p.3.

¹⁰⁹² TNA, FO/898/13, «Britain's Policy for Europe. 22nd April, 1942», p.3.

isolate ourselves from Europe and we foreshadow a social revolution as great as and more pleasant than that which Russia has experienced. This is the main point on which we can outbid the Russians and we should not hesitate to do so.»¹⁰⁹³

The Beveridge Report: circulation and propaganda

Since the very beginning, the information offices understood the relevance of the *Beveridge Report* and its dissemination became part of the military operations and of the ideological confrontation. Three main directions might be retraced: the first channel concerned its circulation across the Atlantic and in other Anglo-Saxon countries; the second involved the British Army, as summaries of the report were distributed to the soldiers themselves; the third was directed to the “traditional” propaganda against the enemy, to gain the support of the population of the Axis powers or under occupation.

The *Beveridge Report* contained explicit references to the principles of the *Atlantic Charter* and its innovation, being the first public report coherently inspired by the concept of “social security”.¹⁰⁹⁴ It impregnated also the debate and the reflections on this matter in the United States. According to historian Maurizio Vaudagna, the American reception of the report revived the autonomous and “endogenous” reformism in the United States, favoured by the recovery of consumptions set in motion by the war economy. This was not stranger to the rivalry between the two sides of the Atlantic, to such an extent that «Britons began to fear they would be “outbeveridged” by American reformers.»¹⁰⁹⁵ The struggle for social reforms cemented the so-called “Atlantic community”, and the *Beveridge Report*, as promoted

¹⁰⁹³ TNA, FO/898/13, «Britain, Russia and Europe – Some long-term problems of Political Warfare. 30th January, 1942», p. 2.

¹⁰⁹⁴ HMSO, *Social Insurance and Allied Service*, p. 171.

¹⁰⁹⁵ M. Vaudagna, «The United States and Social Rights at Home and Abroad: the Rise and Decline of “Freedom from Want” (1941-1952), in Id., *The New Deal and the American Welfare State. Essays from a Transatlantic Perspective* (1933-1945), pp. 247-274, p. 251.

in America, was one of the tools to re-define the “values of the West”, in opposition to Nazi social welfare.¹⁰⁹⁶

In the trans-Atlantic world, the report was something different than the “typical product of British social progress” that was presented in the European continent. Beveridge’s lexicon was shared in the US and the other Anglo-Saxon countries; from Roosevelt’s “four freedoms address” to the idea of making political freedom and economic security live together, the Atlantic dialogue affected ideas and policies. The *Beveridge Report* widely echoed in the American opinion; Beveridge himself was invited by universities, think tanks and talks overseas, while the press devoted wider room to his plan: summaries and copies of the report were delivered from Britain to the US, to reach the widest audience possible.¹⁰⁹⁷ At the end of 1942, the *National Resources Planning Board Report on Security Work and Relief Policies* published a document that moved on the same direction of the *Beveridge Report*.¹⁰⁹⁸ Both proposals internalized the principles of freedom from want, full employment, medical care and compulsory insurances to guarantee the minimum income. As stated in the reports of the US government: «both reports favour the widest possible use of social insurance as the means of assuring income maintenance. Both insist that an adequate system of public assistance is an INDESPENSABLE SUPPLEMENT TO SOCIAL INSURANCE; HOWEVER WIDE [sic] the scope of the latter.»¹⁰⁹⁹ Roosevelt advocated the discussion of the governmental plans for social reforms to the Congress: «because of their basic importance to our national welfare during the war and after the war, it is my earnest hope that the Congress will give these matters full consideration during this session. We must not return to the iniquities, insecurity, and fears

¹⁰⁹⁶ Id., «Social Protection and the Promise of a Secure Future in Wartime Europe and America», in Id., *The New Deal and the American Welfare State. Essays from a Transatlantic Perspective (1933-1945)*, pp. 275-293.

¹⁰⁹⁷ See TNA, FO/371/31533.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Committee on Long-range Work and Relief Policies, *Security, Work, and Relief Policies*, Washington, US Government Printing Office, 1942.

¹⁰⁹⁹ TNA, PIN/8/167, «Comparison of the NRPB report with the Beveridge Report. 26th December, 1942», p.3.

of the past, but ought to move forward towards the promise of the future.»¹¹⁰⁰

These projects rooted on the climate of generalized social insecurity of the Thirties and on the ideological confrontation of WWII, and owed something to a wider and mutual trans-Atlantic influence on the detailed plans during wartime. The circulation of the British plans in the United States and in the other countries of the so-called “Anglosphere” (that includes Canada, Australia, New Zealand) suggests a dual interpretation: a common view of the world to remould and the competition to take (the US) or to retain (Britain) the lead after the end of the war.¹¹⁰¹ A dispatch from the US Embassy in London recommended to highlight that the American plan was better defined in its details than the *Beveridge Report*; on the core area of unemployment, the American plan recalled the public work programmes of the *New Deal* era, while the British report remained purposely vaguer. The reactions of the British Foreign Office and Ministry of Information say something on the relevancy of social policy in the political debate:

«My Secretary of State thinks that Sir William Jowitt may be interested to see [...] points of comparison between the Beveridge report and a similar report which it is understood has been prepared by the National Resources Planning Board of the United States. [...] Sir William Jowitt might perhaps consider it desirable to discuss which with the Minister of Information ways of concerting the publicity lines it would be desirable to pursue when, as may soon be the case, the National Resources Planning Board report is published. The Beveridge Report has made a deep impression in the United States on Liberals and Conservatives alike, and in different

¹¹⁰⁰ TNA, PIN/8/167, «To the Congress of the United States. 10th March, 1943».

¹¹⁰¹ The British aspirations to counter the US hegemony were watered down by the “Atlanticism” pursued by Anglo-American analysts. See the classical N.J. Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*, New York, Brace & Company, 1942.

ways it has gained us credit with both. We must be prepared for attempts to show that the National Resources Planning Board report has out-Beveridged us in various respects [...].»¹¹⁰²

The British activism in the spreading of the report met different objectives. In the very framework of “total war”, it tied social changes to political reforms and linked the war constraints to the construction of a better world. Britain used the report to promote a specific model of social security and thus to assert itself in the post-war balance of power. These aims affected also the propaganda against the enemies. The regional branches of the PWE identified the key points of the political warfare, including socio-economic themes to be adjusted in accordance to each local condition.¹¹⁰³ Their note accurately analysed the possible ways to address British propaganda to the Italian masses:

«The majority of the Italian workers are agricultural, not industrial; and, in any case, I have seen no evidence from Italy which would suggest that “the working classes, especially the industrial working classes.... Are our best prospective allies”. All classes have been subjected to the Fascist Regime with its all pervading propaganda for twenty years; and it is impossible to deny that, during this time, the working classes as a whole have secured a certain, one might almost say a considerable, increase in their material standard of living. Fascist propaganda claims that the Regime “is going towards the people” and we know that this claim, never entirely unjustified, has been strengthened by legislation (e.g. with regard to rationing) during the war.»¹¹⁰⁴

The anti-British propaganda of the Fascist regime and the different conformation of Italian society suggested an attentive and

¹¹⁰² TNA, PIN/8/167, «Letter from Foreign Office to Mr. Daish. 18th February, 1943», p.1.

¹¹⁰³ TNA, FO/898/13, «Political Warfare Organisation, 27th July, 1942».

¹¹⁰⁴ TNA, FO/898/13, «Political Warfare Executive. 30th January, 1942», p. 2.

calibrated propaganda policy for the country. Social propaganda, at the beginning of 1942, was carried out in vague terms: «The Atlantic Charter if interpreted in terms of “improved social security, of large-scale economic developments and of financial reforms designed to stabilise employment” might, if these were sufficiently concrete and extensive, prove attractive to the Italian masses. But the Charter itself is couched in such general terms that without such interpretation it is bound to arouse that distrust to which I have already alluded.»¹¹⁰⁵ The PWE needed a solid piece of policy to counteract the increasing fascination for the Communist model. The value of the *Beveridge Report* was immediately caught by the information services: «first to use it to show that the *real leadership* in social ideas and the genuine “social dynamism” lies here, not in Germany; and secondly to use it as an example of the technique of social invention and efficient social engineering evolved by British democracy.»¹¹⁰⁶

The PWE presented Beveridge’s text as a *plan* rather than a *report*, setting the tone that the British government already presented a thorough plan for social security, rather than some guidelines for the policy-makers. The main part of the translated versions of the report referred to the *Beveridge Plan*, as it is nicknamed also nowadays. The reference to the “plan” as a Government-sponsored paper allowed to overcome abroad the troubles that the *War Cabinet* had before the domestic public opinion and to show the British contribution to the reconstruction with proposals potentially applicable by all countries. Other three features of the report were underlined for the propaganda abroad: the relation between revolutionary social change and the continuity of the liberal environment and democratic institutions (the argumentation was explicitly directed against Nazi and Fascist systems, but implicitly casted against Soviet Russia); the report as part of a wider policy against mass unemployment; the universalistic and inclusive features of social security, opposed to the totalitarian regimes,

¹¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁰⁶ TNA, FO/T/172/2093, «Overseas Planning Committee (Special Issues Sub-Committee). Report of Beveridge Committee on Social Services. Treatment in Overseas Propaganda. 23.11.1942», p. 3. Italics is mine, underlined in the original type-writing.

emphasising «the Plan's *impartial application to all classes of citizens*, irrespective of their income level or former contributions, and irrespective of any political conditions whatever (in contrast e.g. to schemes in Nazi Germany which make a number of security benefits conditional on adherence to party doctrine by administering them through the Party).»¹¹⁰⁷ The PWE foreshadowed the creation of specialised editions for special groups: compendia, summaries and technical analysis on the report for the foreigner countries, which significantly contributed to foster the debate on social security after the war.

The propaganda relied on the exploitation of all the media to reach the widest possible audience. The BBC, put under the coordination of the PWE, was considered the best way to «interpret Great Britain, British thought and the British way of life to Europe»,¹¹⁰⁸ in a context where the most part of the population was cut off from the news of the “free world”. The propaganda on social security and employment policies was also spread and vulgarised through broadcasts:

«The short-term and the long-term aims of British broadcasting to Europe and the best organisation to help us achieve those aims. The short-term aim is to assist the Allied forces to impose their will on the Axis countries and as quickly as possible at the cost of as few lives as possible. The long-term aim is to assist the British Government to impose their will on all countries and to win the peace, that is to bring about an ordered civilisation which is in accordance with British ideas, British values, and British needs. Britain's right to struggle to this end is based on the two factors which have given her preeminent position in the world, her contributions to the ordered progress of mankind and her

¹¹⁰⁷ Ivi. p.4. Italics is mine, underlined in the original type-writing.

¹¹⁰⁸ TNA, FO//898/41, «Note from Mr. Kirkpatrick to Mr. Bruce Lockhart. 31 October, 1942», p.2.

determination and proved ability to defend that progress.»¹¹⁰⁹

The British hegemony was identified with the progress of the world: «the Allies will certainly win the war, whether or not we continue to broadcast. We shall have enough tanks, planes and ships to do so. But when the peace comes, that is, when the struggle is translated into economic, political and other terms, and the word is more important than the bomb, broadcasting will be not an auxiliary weapon but one of Britain's major weapons.»¹¹¹⁰

The propaganda to Italy increased in magnitude in 1943, when the invasion of the country approached.¹¹¹¹ The guidelines of the political warfare wanted to convince the Italian people that the Nazis could not shore up the Fascist regime and to persuade them that only by collaborating with the United Nations they could secure better standards of living and «some dignity and prosperity in the post-war world.»¹¹¹² Yet, social policy proposals had lesser relevance in the first phase of the military campaign.¹¹¹³ Colonel Stevens – very well-known to the Italian audience as the voice of the broadcasts in Italian – suggested to undertake a more constructive propaganda grounded on the implementation of the principles of the *Atlantic Charter* and on the inclusion of Italy in this process.¹¹¹⁴ Massive social information was suggested since 1942 also by the regional directors for the propaganda in Italy, due to the peculiar features of the Fascist policy towards the industrial workers:

¹¹⁰⁹ TNA, FO/898/41, «Britain's Right to Speak. 10th May, 1942», p.1.

¹¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹¹¹ See the reports in TNA, FO/898/165. The directives to «get Italy out of the war.» are in TNA, FO/898/166, «Political Warfare to Italy. Aims and Results, March 15th – September 3rd, 1943. 16th October, 1943».

¹¹¹² TNA, FO/898/164, «Examination of Political Warfare Problems with regard to Italy in the Light of Military Events and the RAF Offensive. 8th January, 1943», p.4.

¹¹¹³ TNA, FO/898/164, «Intervention of Lord Strabolgi. Questions in the House of Lord. October 14th, 1943».

¹¹¹⁴ TNA, FO/898/164, «Letter from Colonel Stevens to Mr. Lesper. 11th February, 1942». This became a point of the political warfare in Italy, see also TNA, FO/898/164, «Political Warfare Executive. Revised Plan of Political Warfare Against Italy. 7th January, 1942».

«Until the war this class received material benefits from Fascism and there is little or no evidence that the loss of political rights was resented except by a very small number of the workers. The war and the disastrous results of the blockade have robbed them of the material advantages. At the same time the increasing bureaucratic control inseparable from war has brought home with a growing reality the essentially oppressive nature of the Totalitarian State. Fascist policy has always claimed to “go towards the people” and the tendency represented by this claim has been intensified in war-time, but in spite of this the fortunes reaped by leading gerarchi, the growing evidence of Fascist inefficiency and the increasing realization of the results of the present policy have all contributed to discredit the Regime. Discontent is known to be widespread and any propaganda able to bring home the truth of propositions outlined under aim A will increase this discontent. As regards aim B our propaganda will have less effect on this class, as it cannot at present develop this thesis on detailed and definite lines. In this connection I would point out the desirability of making available for the use of our propaganda to Italy (and elsewhere), all results of our own post-war planning as soon as they reach a form that can be made public.»¹¹¹⁵

The Allied relied on the support of the population after the armistice, as the civilians were expected to be hostile to the Germans.¹¹¹⁶ The presentation of detailed social reforms could help the British to reach the working classes. The task was not easy one as the Italian industrial working class «looks for a solution on Russian lines rather

¹¹¹⁵ TNA, FO/898/164, «Plan of Political Warfare for Italy. Regional Director's Appreciation. 9th February, 1942», p.3.

¹¹¹⁶ TNA, FO/898/168, «Political Warfare Executive. Appreciation of the Italian Situation. 19th September, 1943».

than in terms of the Atlantic Charter.»¹¹¹⁷ Similar considerations applied to peasantry and farm workers as well as intellectuals and progressive middle classes, who shared the fascination for the Russian model to the detriment of the Anglo-American solutions. The Information Offices for Italy pinned their hopes on the moderate/conservative middle class that could endorse the *Atlantic Charter*, which was the compromise solution in the social field. These classes were not considered necessarily democratic, yet they no longer supported the regime; the Allies relied on their fear of revolutionary drifts, then backing up the Anglo-American social projects.¹¹¹⁸ The watchwords of social progress, democracy and the “four freedoms” of the *Atlantic Charter* were vague enough to potentially reach all social classes and political groups, besides the Communists. In the Anglo-American new order Italy had a place; social progress and modernization could be achieved within the framework of newly shaped democratic institutions, as «in no European country more than Italy can the appeal of “the Century of the common man” be made effective: we can and must go beyond the internal social revolution, which, before the alliance with Nazism, took place under Fascism.»¹¹¹⁹

The *Beveridge Report* demonstrated to the Italians that the Allies ensured political, international, socio-economic security in post-war Europe.¹¹²⁰ They also provided a comprehensive vision that challenged

¹¹¹⁷ Ivi. p.4.

¹¹¹⁸ The British services actually also gambled on the aspects of the Atlantic Charter more related to the international status and guarantees to Italy in the post-war world. See TNA, FO/898/164, «Plan of Political Warfare for Italy. Regional Director's Appreciation. 20th January, 1942», p.3.

¹¹¹⁹ TNA, FO/898/165, «Cable from Washington to Mr. Carroll. Italian's Section Comments on your Draft Italian Plan. 21st March, 1943», p.3. In the beginning, however, the PWE recommended to not withdraw the OND and other fascist institutions and policies in favour of the workers, TNA, FO/898/165, «Policy and Planning Committee. Principles for the Control of Information and Publicity Services during the First Stage of Occupation of Italy with Special Reference to Sicily and Sardinia», p.5; see also TNA, FO/898/165, «Plan for the Control of propaganda and Publicity in Italy after the Cessation of the hostilities and during a period of occupation. 26th July, 1943», p.10.

¹¹²⁰ TNA, FO/898/167, «Political Warfare Executive. Italian Working Plan for the B.B.C. 21st May, 1943», but the concept was recurrent in British dispatches and notes».

the Fascist institutions as well as Bolshevik perspective, which – according to the PWE – was identified by the vast majority of the Italian population, especially in the South, with the “chaos”.¹¹²¹ With various shades, the topics of the British propaganda to Italy were addressed to the different socio-political sectors, which progressively decoupled from Fascism and the alliance with the Nazis.¹¹²² The British propaganda widened the rift between the regime and the Italians, representing the Allies as liberating force that proposed social solidarity and economic security:

«We know that the state of mind of the average Italian is largely a vacuum. If we seek to take away from him, as our negative task envisages, the present foundations of his life (and however corrupt, they do form a kind of foundation which he may not wish to lose), we must put something in its place. We must “project Britain”, emphasising both directly and by inference her future capacity as a leader of a new Europe. [...] There is endless scope for informing our audience of British affairs, in particular those which have a striking counterpart in Italy. [...] Give him the facts about British social insurance, for instance, and provided the presentation is correctly related to the known background of the listener, the comparison with the Fascist system suggests itself.»¹¹²³

These lines of propaganda were expected to circulate primarily thanks to the broadcastings of the BBC, which the PWE defined the “voice of Britain”.¹¹²⁴ Its task was to show that even in the midst of the war the British were committed to social inclusiveness, so differently

¹¹²¹ TNA, FO/898/166, «Political Warfare Executive. Basic Plan of political warfare against Italy – Spring 1943. 15th March, 1943».

¹¹²² TNA, FO/898/166, «Analysis of significant differences in cross-sections of the population. 1st March, 1943»; TNA, FO/898/167, «Information required for appreciation of Italy. 15th February, 1943».

¹¹²³ TNA, FO/898/166, «Working Plan for Italy: Presentation», p.2.

¹¹²⁴ ACS, Ministero della Cultura Popolare – Gabinetto, b. 143, fasc. 1004.

from the Fascist claims of having realized “the most advanced system of social protection”. The broadcasting not only presented the system of British values and institutions, but also that social progress could be “exported” abroad with the victory of the Allies. To the British social project and labour conditions were devoted various broadcastings from 1942 to the end of the conflict, in the Italian speaking section, called *Radio Londra*; from December 1942 to March 1945, the BBC transmitted 18 broadcasts on the British plans for social insurances and full employment.¹¹²⁵ They mainly concerned the social situation in Britain and the political principles of the social reforms.

Radio Londra presented Britain as a country that was coming out of the war fairer and more attentive to the “social question”; not only unemployment dramatically dropped, but the Anglo-Saxon countries also asserted that they fought a «people’s war, made to defend the people».¹¹²⁶ The *Beveridge Report* resulted from the popular mobilization, depicted as a «great social and political revolution».¹¹²⁷ The second half of the broadcasts concerned the legislative process of the *White Papers*. The BBC presented the report and the governmental papers as two complementary aspects of a unitary reformist process, even if in reality they resulted from two distinguished – if not sometimes competing – processes. *Radio Londra* designed a contraposition between British social “revolutionary” reformism and the “totalitarian” social systems of the Axis: «England will soon implement a plan of compulsory social insurances, which aims at eradicating indigence and to ensure to its population an adequate economic standard of life and of social security. Vice versa, Italy is not come out yet of the catastrophe that ran over it.»¹¹²⁸

The propaganda stressed the different mobilization occurred in Britain, which made “its” war revolutionary possible, with regard to

¹¹²⁵For an overview of the broadcastings of *Radio London* in Italy, see M. Piccialuti Caprioli, *Radio Londra 1940- 1945. Inventario delle trasmissioni per l’Italia*, Voll. 1 e II, Roma, Pubblicazioni degli Archivi Centrali di Stato, 1980, pp. VII-CXXXIII.

¹¹²⁶L.Z. Zencovich, «Full Employment», *Radio Londra*, 1st June 1944, 22.30.

¹¹²⁷P. Treves, «Beveridge and the House», *Radio Londra*, 17th October 1944.

¹¹²⁸L.Z. Zencovich, «Social Insurance», *Radio Londra*, 26th September 1944, 21.30.

Germany and Italy, which were condemned to lose the war. To win the popular masses over, the BBC actively fostered the image of a Britain that stood with social enhancement. Wide room was left to the Labour's representatives' speeches, giving the impression of a strong collaboration with the left-wing forces, comparable to the effective collaboration with the Resistance movements.¹¹²⁹ By 1943 the BBC propaganda via *Radio Londra* apparently reached only the urban bourgeoisie, in a smaller amount the young and the university students, and to an even lesser extent the working classes.¹¹³⁰ This observation was limited to the broadcasts in English, as further reports showed how «Colonel Stevens's broadcasts (which are, of course, in Italian) have a tremendous following in all classes of the Italian people.»¹¹³¹ The BBC reserved more detailed analysis of the social programmes for the broadcastings in English, considered the most suitable to project Britain to Europe to specific, educated, audiences.¹¹³² The topic of the social insurances was probably too complex for mass propaganda, which resulted in the vulgarisation of the main principles of the 1942-4 social reforms. Summaries were printed in the Italian territory for a narrower circulation; leaflets, pamphlets and booklets circulated more effectively only from the very last months of the war onwards.¹¹³³

By the end of the war, the Allies relied on a variety of channels for the propaganda, including Radio Services and press under the control of the *Psychological Warfare Board* (PWB), publications in Italian language, wall newspapers, leaflets, books, propaganda shops, documentaries and photography, film production and distribution,

¹¹²⁹ TNA, FO//898/41, «General Directive. 30th April, 1944».

¹¹³⁰ TNA, FO//898/41, «Extract from BBC Memorandum. From Mr. Shepley, Italian Intelligence Officer».

¹¹³¹ TNA, FO//898/41, «BBC Studies in European Audiences. The European Audience of British Broadcasts in English», p.10.

¹¹³² The broadcasts in English proved to be successful especially in the Nordic countries, where English was largely spread, and where the British tried to "persuade them that what they still believe to be Victorian England no longer exists". Ivi. pp. 34-35.

¹¹³³ See various copies and summaries in LSEA, Beveridge/8/58/3.

intelligence services.¹¹³⁴ This documentation kept circulating between 1943 and the first years after the war; the summary and translation by Lord Davison, for instance, dated to 1945-6. This was a concise but nailed description of the British wartime reforms, accompanied by pictures and graphs, extremely intuitive in its understanding; it was the direct translation of the edition for the home front in Britain, and the same pamphlet was also published in French.¹¹³⁵ These publications followed the principle of propaganda on reconstruction, which aimed at presenting “objectively” British policies, to «devote much more time to the projection of British life and British ideas on the many political and social problems which interest both countries [...] to debate general ideas, post-war problems, the working of democratic institutions, etc. In this feature, in particular, the greatest effort should be made to abolish any propaganda flavour.»¹¹³⁶

The Northern Italian proletariat was not reached by the Anglo-American propaganda, as the British services admitted in 1944. While registering the failure of the Fascist propaganda on the socializations, the Allies could not intercept their support neither with the propaganda nor with the assistance to the Resistance movement, regarded as ineffective; the sympathies of the workers, the PWE recognized, went to the Soviets.¹¹³⁷ The Allies encountered difficulties in fulfilling from the outset the promises of social security in Southern Italy. This problem, on a larger continental scale, could have affected

¹¹³⁴ TNA, FO/898/168, «Psychological Warfare Branch – Allied Force Headquarters. Re-organisation of P.W.B. Italy. 11th January, 1945».

¹¹³⁵ The British version was R. Davison, *Social Security: The Story of British Social Progress and the Beveridge Plan*, London, G.G. Harrap & Co., 1943; the translated versions are Id., *Protezione sociale in Gran Bretagna : lo sviluppo dei servizi sociali in Gran Bretagna e il Piano Beveridge illustrato con diagrammi*, London, G.G.Harrap & Co., 1944; Id., *A l'abri du besoin en Grande-Bretagne, historique du progrès social en Grande-Bretagne et exposé du Plan Beveridge*, London, G.G. Harrap & Co., 1944.

¹¹³⁶ TNA, FO/898/168, «Letter from Mr. Bruce Lockhart to the British Embassy. 2nd December, 1944», p.1.

¹¹³⁷ TNA,FO/898/168, «P.W.E. The political situation in Italy – Early March, 1944. 16th March, 1944».

the leadership that Britain wanted for itself.¹¹³⁸ The deepening of the British social security was matter of relatively smaller groups of experts, technicians, politicians and trade unionists; they were the prospected policy-makers after the war, and reach them was fundamental. Immediately after 1945, the social reforms put into practice by the Labour government were discussed in Italy. The debate, however, grounded on the wartime circulation and propaganda carefully operated by the British government and services. While the PWE and the other offices of the MOI did not successfully reach the mass of the workers, the ruling classes in charge of the political and economic reconstruction could simply not ignore the British experience. The spread of the *Beveridge Report* to these actors would have been extremely fruitful, especially in the elaborations after the war.

7.2. *The Beveridge Report and its circulation*

The Fascist reception of the Beveridge Report

The *War Cabinet* devoted particular attention to the dissemination of the plans of social security in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy; copies, translations, and schemes were addressed to personalities, parties, movements.¹¹³⁹ Fascist and Nazi establishments reacted to the British propaganda. Two Nazi dispatches on the report were found in Hitler's bunker after the end of the war, providing two distinguished views on the British reforms. The first compared the British and German systems of social insurances, while the second recommended some guidelines to contrast it in the most efficient manner.¹¹⁴⁰

The first document was written for internal circulation; the note explicitly admitted that «the Beveridgeplan is superior to the present

¹¹³⁸ TNA, FO/898/168, «Letter from Roger Makins to the Allied Force Headquarters. 6th January, 1944».

¹¹³⁹ N. Timmins, *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State*, London, HarperCollins, 1995, p.25.

¹¹⁴⁰ LSEA, Beveridge/8/59, «First German Views on the Beveridge Report. 17/7/61». Both the original German documents are attached to the note.

German Social Insurance at nearly all points.»¹¹⁴¹ Its scope and benefits overwhelmed the current German system, which was occupational and protected especially the lower incomes; the *Beveridge Report* instead prefigured the universal coverage of all citizens, with equal contributions and the increasing role of the State in the founding. The second document concerns Nazi counterpropaganda, which suggested to not deal with the topic unless the relevance of the plan would have assumed vital importance.¹¹⁴² Otherwise, the counterattack should stress that the report was the smokescreen to cover the real war-aims of Britain; that within the British society there was no consensus on the reforms; that Germany already had a 50 years old system of social insurances, while Britain had to wait for the war to address the “social question”. Nazi’s main argument, as expected by the MOI, underlined that the *Beveridge Report* borrowed German ideas and policies, and redeployed Britain to the Third Reich’s policies.

This guideline was retained by the German propaganda. The Italian translations of a Nazi booklet attributed to the Minister for Propaganda Goebbels scrupulously followed the directive of the German counterpropaganda set up in 1943. The document stated that «the national-socialist State [...] was not born during wartime due to merely propaganda aims, as the Charters and Beveridge plans, etc. to get left in the dust after the war.»¹¹⁴³ The British social provisions were overshadowed by the German “Socialist State”, as «England is by far the least socially progressed country in the world.»¹¹⁴⁴ The war opposed Nazi Germany and Anglo-American on the field of the confrontation between the old *laissez-faire* and the new “socialist” European order. The Nazi social policy addressed the “social question” not with the British pro-capitalist palliatives, but overhauling the labour relationships: «despite all the repressive measures of the British government, the British workers strike because they know that during

¹¹⁴¹ LSEA, Beveridge/8/59, «Annexe to PLS – Nr. 363/43 g. Basic Facts Relative to the Beveridge Plan. S.d.».

¹¹⁴² LSEA, Beveridge/8/59, «Annexe to PLS – Nr. 363/43 g. S.d.».

¹¹⁴³ J. Goebbels, *Nostro Socialismo*, Trieste, Deutscher Adria-Verlag G.m.h.H., 1944, p.1.

¹¹⁴⁴ Ivi. p.6.

the war, even more than in peacetime, they are exploited from their ruling classes and deprived of their most elementary rights. The German workers, instead, had no reason to strike at all. This war is his war; it is fought also and above all for the social progress of his country.»¹¹⁴⁵ Also the Nazi propaganda imaginary identified war and social enhancement, and the effort of the workers with the war effort. As suggested in the internal directives, the Nazi propaganda avoided specific references to detailed points of the report, and focused on vaguer comparisons:

«Some months ago, in England, there has been a lot of talk about the so-called Beveridge plan. That plan did not contain nothing more, but far less than the Bismarckian social legislation of the end of the last century. The assumptions of the Beveridge plan were already indisputable realities in the Whilelmine Germany, that is, when in England the kids still worked in the mines with 14 straight hours. If England adopted this line during this Second World War, it made it only to achieve what Bismarck implemented 60 years earlier. But the English plutocracy was not even capable of achieving these outcomes. The Beveridge Plan was debated with overblown seriousness in the Chamber of the Lords and the English press celebrated it as the Magna Charta of social progress, but then the business assurances intervened with their veto and the social project, baptized with such a lot of talk, miserably ended in the bin.»¹¹⁴⁶

The Nazi narrative grounded on the confrontation between two socio-economic models, where the Allies merely came on the Nazi positions. The Nazis rejected the principles of the British social security, defined a “comedy” as they historically spread individualism and

¹¹²⁰ Ivi. p. 7.

¹¹⁴⁶ Ivi. p.7.

social inequality, which the Nazi revolution opposed.¹¹⁴⁷

In Italy, the Fascist establishment reacted in a similar manner. There is no documentary proof of specific directives to response to the *Beveridge Report*, but the Italian government was likely to have early access to the report.¹¹⁴⁸ The presence of translated copies were part of the circulation of ideas and projects, like the studies on the European wartime social legislation or the pamphlets to propagandize the Nazi social legislation.¹¹⁴⁹ In 1942, the INFPS set up special committee to carry out a study «on the laws and on the regulatory system as far as the social provisions into force in Europe are concerned and on the results achieved from the social, moral, and financial point of view, on the trends manifested in Europe for the reform of the current systems, on the single issues shown up to the attention of the scholars.»¹¹⁵⁰ The committee included the higher representatives of the Fascist social agencies and workers' organization. It was part of the «remarkable flowering of institutions and initiatives of this kind; study centres for the social and economic post-war settlement are set up.»¹¹⁵¹ It mainly collected information and legislation concerning the social reforms abroad, and provided timely information on the project for after the war in each country. The network of observers, committees, labour organizations and civil servants helps to explain how the plans circulated across the continent.¹¹⁵²

¹¹⁴⁷ F.O.H. Schulz, *Komödie der Freiheit. Die Sozialpolitik der grossen Demokratien*, Wien, Wilhelm Frick Verlag, 1940, pp. 5-154.

¹¹⁴⁸ In the archives of the INPS is stored the complete typescript translation of the *Beveridge Report*. It has not be possible to retrace the office and the date of the translation, as there are not notes or other attachments. However, this was clearly a copy for internal distribution. INPS, «*Assicurazioni sociali e servizi connessi. Rapporto di Sir William Beveridge*, s.d.».

¹¹⁴⁹ B. Biagi, *La legislazione sociale di guerra*, pp. 9-41; P. Pini, *La politica sociale in Germania*, Roma, Uesisa, 1941; The Nazis published some translations for the Italian audience on the condition of the German workers, and the social features of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, see H. Schulz and L. Heyde, *La politica sociale del Terzo Reich*, Roma, Thule Italia, 2014.

¹¹⁵⁰ INPS, «Verbali Comitato Esecutivo INFPS del 10 giugno 1942», pp. 7-10.

¹¹⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁵² Unfortunately, there are no returns on the effective activities of this committee. However, this committee probably worked, at least by collecting data on the social

While the *Beveridge Report* was propagandized with the massive use of broadcastings, there are no documentary evidences of counterpropaganda campaigns with the mass-media. The EIAR, the Italian broadcast service, the military services, and even the Fascist news-agency *Stefani* did not emphasize too much the *Beveridge Report*, nor did they stress these aspects later.¹¹⁵³ Yet, the *Beveridge Report* was well-known; the newspapers and the more specialized press devoted great attention to it, belittling its scope; these articles were mainly summaries of the plan or commentaries regurgitating propaganda statements. The major criticisms did not depart from the German directives: the conservative features and limited scope of the report with regard to Italian social legislation; the propagandistic nature of the watchwords of the plan. Other elements were instead more typical of the Fascist general anti-British propaganda: the expansion of the British social security at the expense of the colonies; the emphasis on the “ideological war” between traditional imperialist powers and “younger” proletarian nations.¹¹⁵⁴ Later, the regime tried to highlight the cleavage between the promises of the Allied for social enhancement, and the difficulties to implement them in occupied Southern Italy. For the Fascist propaganda, this proved that the Anglo-Americans entered the war to overthrow Fascist social achievements.

Besides propagandistic trivialization, the *Beveridge Report* was object of more reasoned analyses in the specialist press of the regime. The President of the INFPS, Riccardo Del Giudice, developed the main “technical” argumentations against it. His analysis moved from the assumption that the plan was inherently conservative and tied to the need to strengthen the home front. It was conjunctural, without in-depth elaborations on the historical changes occurred in the interwar

legislation abroad, as the commission was mentioned in the minutes of the *INFPS* under the RSI. INPS, «Delibere Commisariali Uffici RSI – Dicembre 1943, “Compenso ai componenti il Comitato di Studio peri problemi della Previdenza sociale del 27.12.1942-XXII n.4”».

¹¹⁵³ACS, MINCULPOP, *RSI - Servizio Ascolto Radio Estere*.

¹¹⁵⁴ «Un cavallo di troia», *Costruire – Rivista Mensile di Pensiero e di Azione Fascista*, n.1/1943, pp. 12-13; see also the notes contained in ACS, SPDRSICR, 19/111/1, «Nota della Corrispondenza repubblicana – Churchill il conservatore. 18 marzo 1945».

period. The report misinterpreted the real nature of the “social question”, and how to address it. Social security was not a mere issue of economic stability or minimal income, but:

«an important problem of moral liberty, which overcomes the boundaries of every social legislation and point at a radical transformation of the society and of its economic and political organization, since the formal liberty of the liberalism and the abstract equality of the democracy [...], let the majority under the serfdom of a substantial economic and social inequality. The Beveridge Plan moved from such a society, but does not aim at transforming it, and yet tries to *safeguard it* against the danger of the transformation, with a conservative and capitalistic program of social security.»¹¹⁵⁵

The *Beveridge Report* did not redistribute wealth, but simply restructured the financial budget of social security, which Del Giudice pretended being even lower than the current annual Italian budget for social insurances. The flat-rate insurance was considered at the same time useless for the higher incomes, and – not without good reasons – a tool to weaken the redistributive capacity of the social protection. The principles of uniformity and universality failed both in providing social equality and in the effective usefulness to meet the needs of each social class. Del Giudice recognized that the *Beveridge Report* was part of a wider trend of unification and rationalization of compulsory insurance. But instead of implementing a system that could secure progressive contributions based on different incomes *and* contributory simplification, the report suggested simpler solution that neglected some of the core issues of modern social legislations. According to Del Giudice, Fascism tackled the same historical problem from a fairer point of view; without furnishing evidence, he declared that Fascism was moving towards the funding of the social insurance with the State

¹¹⁵⁵ R. Del Giudice, «Il Piano Beveridge “dalla culla alla bara”», *Assicurazioni Sociali*, n. 1/1943, pp. 1-17, p. 13.

budget. This exempted workers and employers from the fiscal burdens of their own social protection, as this was a matter of national social cohesion.

The *Beveridge Report* failed in understanding the new function of the social insurances; Fascism wanted them embedded within a broader reorganization of the structures and institutions of the State. The report still framed social insurances within the liberal capitalistic State, while in Fascist Italy social protection was part of the “corporative revolution”. As a consequence, the *Beveridge Report* «as a whole, is to be rejected, because it represents a step backwards in the politics and technique of the social insurances, because it testifies the too egalitarian and materialistic conception of the mankind and of the society, because it results in a charitable paternalism, which is linked to the legal charity of the non-contributory pensions, rather than the deep social transformation in the making nowadays.»¹¹⁵⁶ Some principles were nonetheless accepted: unification of services and authorities; creation of a national healthcare system; rationalization of contribution and benefits. Del Giudice saw in these measures the acknowledgement of the correctness of the German and Italian “totalitarian” policies. Fascist Italy was moving to similar solutions since the ‘30s; the institution of the EMF, he claimed, already had some embryonic elements of the unified healthcare service on national basis.

The former Minister of the Economy, De Stefani, made similar analyses. He criticized the limits in addressing the economic structures and the material bases of pauperism. The irrelevancy of the report, in line with the traditional British approach to the “social question”, was already solved by the Fascist social provisions; Beveridge «did not face [...] this issue in economic terms and he only mentions them superficially at the very end of his report; otherwise he would have dealt with a systemic problem that would have led him directly to recognise [...] the *right* and the duty to work, which constitute the consequential development of the corporative regimes.»¹¹⁵⁷ Like Del

¹¹⁵⁶ Ivi. p. 16.

¹¹⁵⁷ A. De Stefani, «Il “digesto” del prof. Beveridge», *Rivista Italiana di Scienze Economiche*, n. 1, January 1943, pp. 9-11. See the also the synthesis of the report in the same number,

Giudice, De Stefani also thought that the British report was part of a historic moment in social policy, where Fascists had the lead as they foresaw a system of social contributions based on the family units instead of the individual wage.¹¹⁵⁸ The British and Fascist social insurances differed in the ultimate goals rather than in the technical and administrative practices. While the *Beveridge Report* limited itself to the “freedom from want”, the Fascist social protection overcame the simple material needs, aiming at creating spiritual solidarity among the national community. To him, here laid the main ideological difference between Fascism and Liberalism; for the Fascists, the social insurances were not «a tool to secure the social rest in favour of capitalism or to allow its conservation, but they represent the corporative idea in the making *in one of its specific sectors*.»¹¹⁵⁹

All in all, Fascist criticisms failed in identifying the real extent of the Anglo-Saxon turn in social policy; the British plans, indeed, *equally* considered the social insurance only a part of a deeper renewal of the public policies (NHS and family allowances, full employment, housing, social services, urban, industrial and agricultural planning). The inaccuracy of De Stefani’s criticisms can only partially be explained by the fact that, in 1942, the *War Cabinet* had not published the papers on employment policy yet. Also the British social reformers were perfectly aware of the “economic dimension” of social security, and they also framed the whole plan of social insurances within a “reformed capitalism”; the British projects of social security became gradually part of a wider plan of structural reform of economy and society.

Slightly less ideologically biased were the contributions of the Catholic groups. They were not-aligned to the regime’s “orthodoxy”, as they endorsed the Catholic Social Doctrine. To these milieus were close some of the most prominent figure of the post-war left-wing Christian democrats, as for Amintore Fanfani, future Minister of Labour and Social Security from 1947 to 1950. The Catholics also framed the report

Id., «Il Piano Beveridge», *Rivista Italiana di Scienze Economiche*, n.1, January 1943, pp. 66-80.

¹¹⁵⁸ Like some supporters of the family policies claimed in Vichy France, *infra*.

¹¹⁵⁹ A. De Stefani, «Il “digesto” del prof. Beveridge», p. 10. (the italics is mine)

in the wider tendency towards the nationalization of social insurances. Britain had the lead in this process thanks to its imperial role, as it could drop the fiscal burden to the colonies. Social policies were – not incorrectly – linked to power politics, because the increase of British wealth was achievable only retaining the exploitation of other nations. This was one of the watchwords of the Fascist propaganda against the Anglo-American “plutocracies”, and one of the reasons why the Fascists pretended to be at war: the redefinition of the international power relations to ensure the access to the resources to the new “proletarian Nations”, to such an extent that «the war against Britain is the war of the proletarians.»¹¹⁶⁰ They also caught the attempt of Beveridge’s proposal to advocate to the State most of the tasks, which previously were the prerogative of a vast associative network. The project tended to the extensions of State’s power; it was not “totalitarian” in the Fascist sense of the term, but it showed nonetheless how the paradigm in the public policies shifted even in what was considered the most liberal European country:

«Indeed, the attempt to embed to the State ail the individual interests, and specifically those of the most numerous and centrifugal working categories, has its own logic; it is about to tie to the interest of the State’s structure the interests of all, including those of the underprivileged, merging them with the State’s policy, and taking them away from the control of the *Trade-Unions*, by opening different providers of many and generous forms of social security and social assistance. That project of the public central machine administrating day-to-day as much milliard every year as they are administrated by the government of a wartime Great Power, looks like the authentic product of a contractual, materialistic mentality; it is antithetic to the idealistic, moral, historical concept of Nation, in a

¹¹⁶⁰ C. Pettinato, *La guerra dei proletari*, Vicenza, 1944, p.14; see also Id., *Questi inglesi*, Bertieri, Milano, 1944, pp.329-368; *Perché combattiamo questa guerra*, Milano-Venezia, Edizioni Erre, 1944; *L’Inghilterra si autocondanna*, 1944.

totalitarian contractual relationship, which ties ail the citizens and the residents to the political-economic System, since ail would have interest not to lose something, and thus to support and strengthen the System.»¹¹⁶¹

The general Fascist view on the *Beveridge Report* combined ideologically biased assumptions and good insights on the “historical context” that gave birth to the British plans, e.g. for the renewed importance on the role of the State. Just on this last point and on the comparison with the Italian provisions that Fascist critiques lost most of their argumentations. De Stefani and Del Giudice identified the unification of the contributions and the funding between employers and workers in Britain with the Fascist system; in fact, the *Beveridge Report* established the crucial role of the State, much more important than in the Italian social insurances. De Stefani, like Del Giudice, also claimed that Fascism was moving towards more advanced solutions, as for the full financing of the insurances with State budget. In fact, not even during the “revolutionary” RSI, Fascism conceived an overhaul of the compulsory schemes comparable to the British one, as the reforms rather foreshadowed the shifting of contributory burden to the employers. The Fascists could proclaim the “superiority” of their system only by putting forward ideological points.

In that regard, the harshest campaign against the British plans was carried out by the *Critica Fascista*. This fortnightly review, possibly one of the more relevant in the Fascist press, had a keen interest for the social matters. Especially during the war, it accentuated its anti-British positions; the contraposition with the British model apparently was even more radical than the anticommunism.¹¹⁶² Bottai himself related the success of what he defined the corporatist «social and economic revolution»¹¹⁶³ to the “total war” against the Anglo-Americans: «the

¹¹⁶¹I. M. Sacco, «Considerazioni intorno al Piano “Beveridge”», *Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Sociali*, July, 1943, pp. 234-240, p. 239.

¹¹⁶²E. Sulis, «Democrazia, nemico n. 1», *Critica Fascista*, November 1st, 1942, pp. 10-11.

¹¹⁶³G. Bottai, «Ordine sociale e ordine internazionale», *Critica Fascista*, November 15th,

Anglo-Saxon liberalism and democracy are a doctrine and a philosophy to be exported. They are, within a country, or within a coalition of countries, an economic policy. Freedom in economy never means freedom for all, but freedom for the richest, for the strongest. Liberalism is, indeed, the economic policy of the wealthiest nations: the class policy of the richest nations against the poorer ones.»¹¹⁶⁴ Bottai dialectically compared, as socio-economic and political model, the Anglo-Saxon democracy «unable to solve the issue of the social justice»,¹¹⁶⁵ with the Nazi-Fascist new order, since «the Anglo-Saxons' defence of the democracy became inert and unsuccessful facing the revolutionary war carried out by the Axis Powers.»¹¹⁶⁶ This confrontation, according to him, marked in any case the Fascist victory over liberalism. The Allies could never come back to the older *laissez-faire*, as proved by the 1942 report, defined «reluctantly Fascist».¹¹⁶⁷ The plan of social reforms borrowed the main Fascist social protection, from family allowances to disability insurances, from unemployment benefits to old-age pensions.

The *Critica Fascista* considered the report more limited than the Fascist provisions. The flat-rate contributory guaranteed the “freedom from want” through the equal contribution of all the population to indemnify the workers/citizens who lost income. The Fascist compulsory insurances imposed equal provisions for income-related contributions of the insured. This feature of the Italian legislation – which in reality was the legacy of the liberal occupational schemes – marked the political difference between the two social systems, as the Fascist social policies pointed at «enacting the wealth redistribution outside the scope and even the goals of the British project.»¹¹⁶⁸ The *Beveridge Report* was accused of having a low level of redistribution; however, this was not the primary goal of the plan but a secondary

1942, pp. 14-16, p.14.

¹¹⁶⁴Ivi. p. 15.

¹¹⁶⁵Ivi. p. 16.

¹¹⁶⁶Ivi. p. 16.

¹¹⁶⁷Id., «E' vera democrazia?», December 15th, 1942, p. 3.

¹¹⁶⁸V. Zincone, «Certi piani», *Critica Fascista*, February 1st, p. 3.

effect of the social services funded by general taxation. The British social reformers delegated the tasks to create more social equality to other policies, while the report addressed the issue of the minimum vital income. The lack of understanding of the real aims of the plan helps to explain the Fascist criticism. The design of the *Beveridge Report* excluded more radical redistributive options, whereas «the social insurances are in Italy only one aspect, an attempt within a wider project of redistribution of the national income.»¹¹⁶⁹ The British reforms were inherently limited by a very poor social justice and by a lack of any redistributive principle, inbred to their own “universalistic” coverage: «the differences between the two systems: the English one tends to insure everything and everyone, and thus necessarily to water down the benefits of the social insurances, while ours [*the Italian n.d.a.*] to concentrate the advantages of the social security explicitly to the working class.»¹¹⁷⁰

The administrative rationalization was considered a Fascist measure borrowed by the British, as for the management of the contributions by a single public authority. The State equal contribution in the funding of the social insurances and the moderate redistribution through the general revenue were not as effective as the “direct” redistribution implemented by the Fascist State (which, in turn, was involved to a lesser extent in the funding of the insurances contributions). This was the case for the funding of the ONMI via the tax on the celibates, a disposed provision of social solidarity and demographic politics. Last, the unification of the categories and of the contributions represented «the last improvement of the principle of risk coverage»;¹¹⁷¹ but in 1942 the Fascist government already put into practice similar principles of administrative rationalization, like the reduction of the costs and the simplification of the services, by the unification of the work-related injuries within the INFAIL and by the creation of the EMF for sickness benefits.

The revue *Politica Sociale* carried out one of the most detailed

¹¹⁶⁹ Ivi., p. 3.

¹¹⁷⁰ Ivi. p. 6.

¹¹⁷¹ Ivi. p. 8.

critiques of the *Beveridge Report*. The plot did not differ from the usual topics, but the magazine captured the link between the British reforms, the war and the importance assumed by social policy in the confrontation between Allied and Axis, as well as between capitalism and Communism.¹¹⁷² The assessment on the *Beveridge Report*, however, was more articulated, as *Politica Sociale* distinguished the technical aspects of the plan from the socio-political doctrine underpinning the report. From a technical point of view, the set of provisions was regarded favourably. The review recognized that – after fifty years of incremental social policy – the national legislations came to a common ground on the administrative practices and coverage of the social protection: unemployment benefits, family allowances, old-age pensions became standard policy in all advanced countries in Europe. These trends seemed to be relentless, even if the Fascists claimed to have the primacy in this shift.¹¹⁷³

What really distinguished the Italian legislation from the Anglo-Americans was the political rationale behind the reforms. According to the revue, in the capitalist societies with liberal and democratic institutions, social policy accompanied the growth of the quantitative and qualitative weight of the industrial classes. The Anglo-American ruling classes were accused of tackling the “social question” only from the material point of view: «the social insurances as such imply paternalism or opportunism, and a purely materialistic content, which suggest this conservative concerns that clearly affect the Beveridge plan.»¹¹⁷⁴ Fascism, on the contrary, integrated the working classes on a different level; alongside social insurances, the regime also set up the institutions to frame the workers in the State’s structure. The main goal of the regime was to redefine the role of the workers in the life of the nation, that is, to solve the “social question” from the moral,

¹¹⁷² «Centomila parole», *Politica Sociale*, n.1-2, 1942, pp. 18-19, p. 18.

¹¹⁷³ «[...] the “revolutionary measures advocated by Beveridge by no means represent an innovation for Fascist Italy, where they have been implemented to such an extent and totalitarianism, that, in comparison with which, the provisions of the British plan are far behind.» *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁷⁴ «Il nuovo ordine sociale. Rivoluzione e antirivoluzione», *Politica Sociale*, n. 5-6, 1943, pp. 73-75, p. 74.

political and institutional points of view. While the Anglo-American plans merely mitigated the social struggle, Fascism solved the class' antagonism through "social collaboration":

«The social question, which, after a first essentially political phase of servants' uprising, dragged without ideals and outcomes on a purely and pettily economic ground, as for the claims for higher wages even at the risk of drying the sources of the income. [The social question] is eventually overcome by an established social order that composes the conflicting interests in a system of equilibrium and social justice, which are not enforced from the outside, but derived from within, from the same organization of the productive forces of the Nation.»¹¹⁷⁵

This approach encompassed all the aspects of modern social policy: the economic side (social protection) and the socio-political organization (the juridical framework of labour relations).¹¹⁷⁶ The corporatist model, with which Fascism identified its social policy, was in the narrative of the regime at the very foundation of the new European order, but «logically found the uncompromising opposition of the plutocratic countries, where under the surface of the very abstract principle of freedom and equality, typical lie of the demoliberal regimes, the wildest egoisms dominate, and the capitalist forces took over, in fact, the State.»¹¹⁷⁷ The defence and expansion of this model constituted, for the Fascist propaganda, the very core of the conflict. The war involved three blocks that represented as many ways to address the "social question". Against Anglo-Saxon liberalism and Soviet Communism, «the Fascist and Nazi social regimes represent, with their concrete provisions, the dawn of a new conception of social

¹¹⁷⁵ *Ibidem.*

¹¹⁷⁶ *Ivi.* p. 74.

¹¹⁷⁷ *Ibidem.*

relations.»¹¹⁷⁸

As the Fascist pretended to have set in motion a social revolution, they accused the *Beveridge Report* to be a tool of war propaganda, set up with a conservative scope. As the war polarised, such argumentation became stronger. The Fascist revolution, even in the event of military defeat, settled down in European history and culture: «we believe in the necessity of the overcoming of the supposed democracy of the 19th century (ideological and juridical fiction for the benefit of the strongest and the richest) into a real democracy resulting from the organization of all the social functions, [...] the most deeply innovative and closer to the contemporary social life revolutionary achievement, coming from the social and economic experience of the last century until the First World War, including of course Marxism.»¹¹⁷⁹ Fascism embodied the *Zeitgeist* and the social changes, while Britain was affected by the 19th century ideological paradigms, still permeating politics and society: «this conception according to which the individual is still at the very centre of the community, this later being conceived not like an organism with a value per se, but rather as a number of individuals.»¹¹⁸⁰ The Fascist understanding of the British social reforms, at the very bottom, moved along the line of the contraposition between corporatism and liberalism; the ideological premises of the *Beveridge Report* identified the common welfare with the individual interests and with the strengthening of the democratic institutions: «plan of social insurances tends to secure the individual, and, as a consequence, the State.»¹¹⁸¹ While the Fascist social policies resulted from a revolutionary process that pointed at shortening the social distance, the *Beveridge Report* was the product of the conservative liberal thought that crystallized the social inequalities:

¹¹⁷⁸ G. Mazzoni, «La guerra e le esigenze della giustizia sociale», *Politica Sociale*, n. 5-6, 1943, pp. 75-77, p.76.

¹¹⁷⁹ «Difendere la Rivoluzione per difendere l'Italia», *Critica Fascista*, February 15th, 1943, n. 8, pp. 1-3, p. 2.

¹¹⁸⁰ G. Engely, «Tutti contenti, ma tutti diffidenti», *Critica Fascista*, Febbraio 15th, 1943, pp. 11-12, p. 11.

¹¹⁸¹ Ivi. p. 12.

«In fact, there is no social evolution, and certainly not the “shortening of the distances”: that is because the project, if it will be ever implemented, prefigures the compulsoriness of the insurances for all: from the plutocrat to the miners. The project, after all, does not tend to solve at ail the real social crisis that upsets Britain, that is, the permanent unemployment. [...] As can be seen, it is always the criteria centred on the individuals, and not that of society, to be the guiding principle of the project.»¹¹⁸²

The accuse to secure the old-fashioned *laissez-faire* liberalism had mostly ideological reasons. Social security rejuvenated capitalism with political concessions to the working class and with social benefits to the citizens. In the Fascist analysis, this retained the capitalist exploitation with residual forms of social protection: «it is just impossible to eradicate the social ills generated by a certain system, without eradicating the system, which generated them».¹¹⁸³ The Fascists accused the report to not indicate structural solutions to unemployment. The Fascists probably underestimated the interwar debate in Britain on this matter and neglected the British social legislation against unemployment after the Great Depression. Shortly thereafter made their appearance two other important documents for the British projection abroad: *The Full Employment in a Free Society* and the *White Paper on Employment Policy*, whose translated copies are stored in the archives of the RSI.¹¹⁸⁴

With the transition to the RSI, the ways to counter the efficient means of the Anglo-American propaganda diminished.¹¹⁸⁵ The regime was unable to counter the Anglo-Saxon propaganda on social security. In their speeches, the RSI hierarchs often mentioned the British social

¹¹⁸² Ivi. p. 12.

¹¹⁸³ Ivi., p. 12.

¹¹⁸⁴ ACS, SPDRSICR/47/506, «Libro Bianco Inglese»; ACS, SPD - BVBM, «Bollettino n. 158 - D.P. 6 giugno 1944-XXII».

¹¹⁸⁵ ACS, MinCulPop – Gabinetto, b. 143, fasc. 1001, «EIAR».

reforms, without providing any consistent fresh insight to attack them, but rather regurgitating the older watchwords, accusing the British to not have implemented the promises of reconstruction, social security and freedom announced via broadcasting and pamphlets.¹¹⁸⁶ The “plutocratic” restoration in Southern Italy was exemplified by the anti-labour legislation and the lack of social reforms in the Badoglio government. The republican propaganda played on the theme of the capitalist plundering war to avoid the affirmation of Fascism as alternative model to capitalist imperialism; a war against the Fascist social policy, as «the plutocracy was terrified of the “higher social justice” announced on several occasions by the Duce.»¹¹⁸⁷ Recurrent topic was the confrontation between social models at the very foundation of the war. The Anglo-Saxons would have merely restored the older order and the social security concealed the dismantling of Fascist social protection.

The feeble counterpropaganda of the regime could not offset the massive Anglo-American campaign. The RSI could not even boast of the social policies deployed throughout twenty years to garner the consensus of the social classes that by 1943 had already turned their back on Fascism. Mussolini’s considerations on the silence (abroad and at home) about the Fascist social insurances, allowances, and authorities in front of the wartime British reforms sounded – in hindsight – like a concession speech.¹¹⁸⁸ It was as if the Fascist establishment trapped itself inside the house of cards built throughout the years. They received the British reforms through the lens of ideology. They compared them not only to the effective provisions enacted by the regime, but mostly in terms of the contraposition between socio-economic systems. They could not propose a credible alternative that could garner the consensus of wider strata of the population, and found themselves isolated and disconnected by the opinion and by the most innovative ideas in the field of social security, as well as by the spread of Communism.

¹¹⁸⁶ «Il carosello della menzogna», *La Corrispondenza Repubblicana*, January 1944.

¹¹⁸⁷ «Libertà di sfruttamento», *La Corrispondenza Repubblicana*, Febbraio 1944, pp. 135-136.

¹¹⁸⁸ «Il tanto calorosamente discusso “Piano Beveridge”», *Signal*, n.17/1943, p.25.

The “transnational total war” and social policies

On both sides, the perception was to be involved in a total conflict, in the sense that the war encompassed all the aspects of the societies. Both the British and the Nazis mobilized their societies from the ideological point of view, even before and even more than in “structural” terms.¹¹⁸⁹ To a lesser extent, Italian Fascism and the Vichy regime tried to do the same; social policy was part of a “trans-national” ideological confrontation. The socio-economic reforms accompanied the deployment of power politics, and the unity of the home fronts provided the evidence to “fight the good fight”.

The Anglo-Americans established the main principles that drove their action in the *Atlantic Charter*; the *Beveridge Report* itself borrowed the lexicon from the conjoint document, which also fixed the linchpins of the 1944 *White Papers*. Its aim was to «bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field, with the object of securing for all improved labour standards, economic advancement, and social security. [...] after the final destruction of Nazi tyranny, [...] all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.»¹¹⁹⁰ The document foreshadowed the creation of international organizations to ensure social security at home and trade co-operation abroad. The *Atlantic Charter* designed a post-war settlement opposed to the Nazi New Order drafted by the economic Ministries in Berlin. Although the Germans did not have univocal plans for the post-war settlement yet, the Nazi Empire –in the first years of the war – could rely on a relatively wide collaboration in the occupied countries, fostered by important parts of the

¹¹⁸⁹ M. Steber, B. Gotto (eds.), *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany. Social Engineering and Private Lives*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014; J. Echternkamp, *Germany and the Second World War. Volume IX/II. German Wartime Society 1939-1945: Exploitations, Interpretations, Exclusion*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

¹¹⁹⁰ *The Atlantic Charter*, London, National Peace Council, 1942, p.1.

establishments and public opinions.¹¹⁹¹ The core of the New Order was the hierarchical collaboration of the European nations under Germany's leadership; its social content was rather vague, without a coherent plan of social policy. Until 1942-4, however, also the Allies did not provide a consistent agenda, as the formulations of the *Atlantic Charter* were as vague as the Nazi-Fascist rhetoric.¹¹⁹²

The Anglo-American document resulted from the previous elaborations of national and international organisms. In the same time, it decisively affected the orientations of organizations such as the *International Labour Office* (ILO), which endorsed the new proposals.¹¹⁹³ In 1940, ILO moved its central bureau to Montreal, aligning with the Allies; among London, Washington and Montreal flew reports and ideas that fuelled the projects of social security.¹¹⁹⁴ The key concepts of the *Beveridge Report* resulted from the mutual exchange between the British policy legacy, the experiences of the countries of the so-called "Anglosphere" and the mediation by ILO experts.¹¹⁹⁵ The works of the British government on reconstruction usually went hand in hand with the American corresponding plans.¹¹⁹⁶

Between 1943 and 1944, the new "ideology" of social security was adopted by the international organizations that were expected to hold the fate of the new world led by the (Anglo-)Americans: the "consensus" linked freedom to social security and greater economic co-operation (one of the prerequisites at the basis of the 1944 *White Paper*

¹¹⁹¹ M. Mazower, «Hitler's New Order, 1939-45», *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, n.1/1996, pp. 29-53; Id., *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe*, 2009; E. Collotti, *L'Europa nazista: il progetto di un Nuovo ordine europeo*, Roma, Giunti, 2002.

¹¹⁹² J. H. Wiener (ed.), *Great Britain: Foreign Policy and the Span of Empire 1689-1971: A Documentary History*, Vol. 2, New York, Chelsea House/McGraw-Hill, 1972, pp. 1192-1196.

¹¹⁹³ LSEA, Beveridge/8/27, «ILO Conference – New York, Resolution Presented by Government, Employers' and Workers' Delegates of USA and adopted by the Conferences November 1941».

¹¹⁹⁴ M. Margairaz, «La guerre-monde, matrice du Welfare State?», in Alya Aglan, Robert Frank (eds.), *1937-1947 : La guerre-monde. Vol. II*, Paris, Gallimard, 2015, pp. 883-912.

¹¹⁹⁵ A. Roberts, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples Since 1900*, HarperCollins, New York, 2006, pp. 253-379.

¹¹⁹⁶ TNA, INF/1/683, «Post-war Reconstruction. October 19th, 1942»

on Employment).¹¹⁹⁷ The British plans were the most known documents that fixed detailed policies inspired by the new principles. The social welfare state intermingled with the new international order and the leadership over “Western Europe”, which assumed specific features and converging policies under the impetus of the US, in the framework of a future confrontation against the USSR.¹¹⁹⁸ The implications of the *Atlantic Charter* had important knock on effects on British society at war. Not that much in terms of direct propaganda; rather, its principles met the climate and hopes of important sectors of British society, which saw WWII as the ultimate confrontation between two irreconcilable models of society. This mind-set was equal and opposite to the rhetoric of the Axis powers.

The impact of the war events on social policy changes was cleverly amplified by the messages of the most important governmental representatives. The designated Minister of Social Insurances, the Laborite Jowitt, celebrated the *Beveridge Report* in these terms: «at a stage in this war when we stood all alone Mr. Greenwood appointed a committee to investigate this matter. [...] I do claim that the government is entitled to its fair share of credit in that among all the preoccupations of the war they have found time to address themselves to this fundamental problem.»¹¹⁹⁹ The Minister of Education, the Conservative R.A.B. Butler considered that «the great scheme the House was debating was not an entirely new plan but a logical development of a peculiarly British social experiment. [...] which involved a great new experiment in social democracy, and which would be some recompense for the effort and strain of war. I believe that no other country in the world has been able to introduce such a vast programme of social reform as we have, and, at the same time, defeat one of the greatest tyranny that has ever faced us in our

¹¹⁹⁷ M. Margairaz, «La guerre-monde, matrice du Welfare State?», pp. 905-912.

¹¹⁹⁸ W. Hitchcock, «The Marhsall Plan and the creation of the West», in Melvyn P. Leffer, and Odd Arne Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Vol 1. The Origins*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 154-174.

¹¹⁹⁹ *Social Insurance and Industrial Injury Insurance. Debates on the Government White Papers in the House of Commons 2nd, 3rd, 8th, and 9th November 1944*, cit., p.1.

history.»¹²⁰⁰ As the Home Secretary Morrison underlined, the *White Papers* marked a qualitative leap in the aims of the social insurances:

«the proposals embodied in the White Paper constituted a revolutionary advance in the whole structure of the workmen's compensation administration, which was fundamentally Victorian in its conception and out of keeping with modern ideas. The main and truly revolutionary feature of the new scheme is that, for the first time, it transfers to the community as a whole the responsibility for the casualties of industry, and I think and hope that the House will agree that it is right that the responsibility for the casualties of industry should rest broadly and firmly upon the community as a whole.»¹²⁰¹

While the "epic" of the British lonely confrontation against the Nazis was more a matter of "memory" than "reality", the war had a deep impact in public mind. The figure of William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury between 1942 and 1944, is quite indicative in this sense. He studied in Oxford and was closer to the Labour in the 1930s, and his whole life belonged to the sector of the Anglican Church attentive to the social reforms.¹²⁰² Few months before the publication of the *Beveridge Report*, he wrote one of the most important manifestos of the British welfare state, *Christianity and Social Order*.¹²⁰³ Temple criticized the former economic order and opposed the Nazi *warfare state*.¹²⁰⁴ He claimed for economic measures to support families, as well as policies against unemployment and economic insecurity, considered «the worst evil afflicting the working class in England». ¹²⁰⁵ He also wanted a more important role of the labour in the economic and industrial life,

¹²⁰⁰ Ivi. pp.13-14.

¹²⁰¹ Ivi. p. 23.

¹²⁰² J. Kent, *William Temple: Church, State and Society in Britain, 1880-1950*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

¹²⁰³ W. Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, London, Penguin, 1976.

¹²⁰⁴ S. Spencer, «William Temple and the Welfare State: A Study of Christian Social Prophecy», *Political Theologyn*. 3/2001, pp. 92-101.

¹²⁰⁵ W. Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, p. 95.

through advisory co-joint authorities and national-scale planning, built upon wartime organisms.¹²⁰⁶ Temple's proposals were a compromise between the a fairer control of the means of production and the retention of democratic freedoms:

«Actual Freedom is realized in fellowships of such a kind and size that the individual can take a living share in their activities. [...] This has led some Christian social reformers to favour the ideals of the "Corporative State". But this swings the pendulum too far. [...] every man is always more than can be expressed in all his social relationships taken together. The scheme of the Corporative State is therefore as unsatisfactory as either Individualism or Communism. Yet it contains some truth, as do the other two also.»¹²⁰⁷

Temple was one of the first public figures to use the word *welfare state* in opposition to the Nazi *power state*.¹²⁰⁸ His action was important in the spreading of the British debate on social policy, and, together with the coeval *Beveridge Report*, generated huge popular support for wartime reforms. Greenwood, one of the kingmakers of the Beveridge Committee, openly stated that without the war no political room would have been there for the unity required to implement such vast plan of social security. "Total war" did not merely orient the government towards new social policies. It was also a matter of a give-and-take relationship between State and citizenship. A promise subscribed by the government during wartime, which could not be betrayed after the war: «we have shown to the world the quality of our people, and I think we are right to be proud of the quality of the citizenship which they have shown during this war. Our people are

¹²⁰⁶ *Ivi.* p. 103.

¹²⁰⁷ *Ivi.* pp. 104-105.

¹²⁰⁸ *Id.*, *Citizen and Churchman*, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1941, p.36; D. Wincott, «Original and imitated or elusive and limited? Towards a genealogy of the welfare state idea in Britain», in Daniel Béland, Klaus Petersen, Bristol, Policy Press, 2014, pp. 127-142.

entitled to a better deal than they have ever had in the past. It is for us now to give them that deal.»¹²⁰⁹

Yet, the peculiar features of the war did not escape the Fascist narrative either. The channels of information were left open regardless the war. The civil servants analysed the different legislations of the countries involved in the conflict, noticing that «in some fields of both labour law and social insurances, there is almost the unification of principles and goals, while for other relevant rules, the wartime legislation presents some peculiarities that come directly from the different economic and social situation, and from the different criteria chosen to regulate the work.»¹²¹⁰ Since the beginning, Mussolini defined the conflict as a war between “proletarian” and “imperialistic” powers. The Fascists presented the war in opposite yet equal terms with regard to the British narrative. The British regarded Nazi-Fascist social policy as a combination of power politics and social provisions, while the Fascists considered social security the loophole found by the imperialistic powers to retain their leadership and exploit other nations. They explained “total war” as the effort to find Italy’s “place under the sun”; the replacement of the older European empires was seen as the opportunity to gain access to resources, manpower and markets needed to deploy Fascist social revolutions. The major part of their argumentation against the British plans stressed the link between social policy and power politics, as military expansion served to achieve domestic wealth and redistribution:

«The idea of Europe, or better of Eurafrika, meets the need of social justice, on the international level, as well as the corporative idea meets the need of social justice at home; the first requirement is a prerequisite for the second one, since without a unified Europe, at least morally and economically, it is not even possible to imagine a stable solution for the

¹²⁰⁹ *Social Insurance and Industrial Injury Insurance. Debates on the Government White Papers in the House of Commons 2nd, 3rd, 8th, and 9th November 1944*, Conservative and Unionist Party Organization, 1944, p.7.

¹²¹⁰ B. Biagi, *La legislazione sociale di guerra*, p.9.

social question within the single countries of the continent. [...] This war shows to us Italians that the solution based on force corresponds to a greater moral, both on the European and national level; this moral overcomes the assumptions of liberalism in the quest for an higher social justice for the nations, the social groups, and the individuals. It also overcomes Communism in the quest for the hierarchical international settlement, and for an autonomous and responsible social and individual personality [...]»¹²¹¹

Like in a mirror-image of the British account, the Fascists promoted their own narrative of the war for a fairer social and international order. This assumption gained momentum in the dynamics of the conflict, with the occupation, the Fascist republic and the civil war. This acknowledgement constituted directive for the RSI propaganda:

«It is not disputed that all the wars led to this outcome: elevation of the people, rapprochement of all the social classes, and, therefore, to some extent spiritual rapprochement of the distances. Since the very beginning of this terrible conflict, the Duce defined this war as ideological, but the victory of one of the sides in conflict, that brought with itself different ideas [...] could not eliminate the specific racial characters of the nations [...]. The Fascist recreational organizations, in their numerous tasks, and with an efficient merging of the social classes, point at giving to the Italian people – with the political concept of the Republic, with its regulation that is inspired by the regulation of the RSI – the racial factors to give to the Italian workers the strongest attachment to its Homeland, and complete in that way the education of the Italian citizen in the RSI.»¹²¹²

¹²¹¹ G. Mazzoni, «La guerra e le esigenze della giustizia sociale», *Politica Sociale*, n.5-6/1943, p.77.

¹²¹² ACS, OND/7/Stampa e propaganda, «Appunto per il Commissario. S.d.», pp.1-2.

The war merged different topics of the Fascist conceptualization of social policy: the contraposition between capitalism and social revolution; the link between power politics and social welfare; the achievement of the original Fascist programme. This explains the Fascist disregard for the British plans; Minister Tarchi considered the socialization a more important social achievement than any Anglo-Saxon plan for social security:

«The “premise”; therefore, explaining the fascist revolutionary thought, achieves the century-old aspiration of the world of Labour, opening a wide-ranging scope. It assure the workers much more than the hopes raised by the opulent England with that miraculous Beveridge plan, which in the very end is nothing but a program just technically more refined of what Italy had already achieved in the field of social assistance and insurances.»¹²¹³

The report was considered residual, while «the Italian Social Republic, therefore, presents to the workers a social programme that gives the only possible, real and fair solution to the social question.»¹²¹⁴ Specific aspects of the RSI programme recalled the British slogans for veterans and for the families of the workers. Instead of the 1917 MacMillan’s “home for heroes”, the Fascist regime proposed «the welcome home, the guaranteed food.»¹²¹⁵ While the *Beveridge Report* pointed at abolishing want, the project of the socialization wanted «not to abolish wealth, but the privileges of wealth.»¹²¹⁶ Fascist socializations pointed at boosting productivity in order to redistribute wealth, as «the enemy of the worker is capitalism, and not the capital.»¹²¹⁷ Fascism still

¹²¹³ Ivi. p.7.

¹²¹⁴A De Gherardi, *La questione sociale e la socializzazione*, Padova, Quaderni dell'Istituto Nazionale di Cultura Fascista, 1945, p. 37.

¹²¹⁵Ivi. p. 38.

¹²¹⁶Ivi. p. 38.

¹²¹⁷Ivi. p. 19.

sought for a solution to the “social question” that differed both from the Anglo-Saxon universalistic social security and from the Communist suppression of the private capital: «the social question does not mean the struggle against capitalism or against the employer as technician, but it rather means to avoid that both the former and the latter take it all for themselves, stealing more from the workers and the consumers than the just part, which they are entitled to thanks to their contribution to the production.»¹²¹⁸

Liberalism transformed labour into a commodity subjected to the market rules and set itself up as a religion and a model. It created the “social question”, and proved unable to solve it: «it is to put an end to all these unfairness that arose the collectivist theories, that is to say, communism, socialism, fascism.»¹²¹⁹ The RSI’s “third way” rejected State-driven economy, guaranteed private property and individual entrepreneurship and created a system of social protection, comprehensive of minimum wage, unemployment benefit, employment office, old-age pensions, sickness insurances, paid vacation, collective agreements: «the importance of what the fascist regime made in favour of the workers, can be evaluated when one may think to what the worker was before the coming of Fascism, and to what the worker is in the opulent Anglo-American plutocratic countries where almost none of these provision is implemented for him.»¹²²⁰ The RSI’s socialization shifted the paradigm from the “Labour-commodity” to the “Capital-commodity”. The corporate profits were shared in money or in social benefits and services, such as the housing: «far from abolishing the private property, it favoured instead its spread, trying to achieve the goal to turn all into proprietary, rather than the goal - humiliating and degrading, as the *other* collectivist parties - to turn all into proletarian.»¹²²¹ The workers were asked to not be swayed by foreigner models, as the Russian as the Anglo-American, but to be loyal to the fascist revolution: «nationalism

¹²¹⁸ Ivi. 21.

¹²¹⁹Ivi. pp. 23-24.

¹²²⁰ Ivi. p. 34.

¹²²¹ Ivi. p. 36. The italics is mine.

and social justice are the two fundamental bases of the most genuine Italian and Roman idea, which have been merged in the Fascism by Benito Mussolini.»¹²²²

The Vichy regime was also part of the transnational network of ideas that confronted from 1939 to 1945. The State collaboration meant also participation in the Axis projects for the post-war order.¹²²³ The documentation is not so consistent to infer the existence of coherent strategies to spread national revolutions under Third Reich.¹²²⁴ It rather proved the existence of an ideological common ground that unified the social policies of these regimes and the presence of channels to disseminate them.

The “left-wing” sectors of the regime identified the Nazi “total war” with new social and labour relations. Its aftermaths for France made social collaboration necessary, and wiped out the former systems of social representation: «can they retain their independence, by the way more in theory than in fact, in the world of tomorrow? We can answer without any doubt that no, and this independently from the struggle to death between the capitalist Britain and the proletarian Germany.»¹²²⁵ The Nazi compulsory schemes, the assistance and recreational associations, the provisions for the old-age persons and families were regarded as the utmost expression of a renewed national solidarity within the *Volksgemeinschaft*. These policies and ideas were expected to announce the rise of the new world:

¹²²²Ivi., p. 40.

¹²²³ Laval declared in broadcast of 1942 to put his trust in the German victory to save Europe «from Bolshevism», and to allow the establishment of «socialism, everywhere in Europe», see P. Laval, *Discours radiodiffusé du 22 juin 1942*.

¹²²⁴ The Italian MinCulPop tried to disseminate the French projects among the countries allied of the Axis, ACS, MinCulPop, Reports/32/89/ 1.1070, «La Charte du Travail - in lingua francese», where are contained the orders of different copies and pamphlets of the Charte du Travail, for the Italian press, and for the other countries satellites of the Axis. There is sparse documentary proof of the attempt of the Italian authorities to promote the Fascist social legislation and to counter the British social propaganda on the French territories, *Tout cela, en Italie, a déjà été fait*, s.l., s.d.

¹²²⁵ «J. Peschadour, «Indépendance Syndicale», n.7, a. 1, 11 janvier 1941, p.1.

«two concepts of government, of organization, of management of the human labour are facing and dividing – unfortunately, we must say – the world. One is older. We may say, it is outdated. [...] The other is recent. It is the strength and the faith of the young. It is the future. And it is already the present. In some countries – France is unfortunately some of them – more than one century of democratic experience allowed to assess the methods of the first, of the older, of the outdated. Five years of National-socialist regime, in the opposite direction, yielded positive results.»¹²²⁶

For the collaborationists, Nazi occupation allowed the deployment of the communitarian principles in France. But this was true especially for the Occupied Zone, where the pro-Nazi collaborationist milieu had more influence.¹²²⁷ The comparison between the most important revues in the Free and Occupied Zone would highlight the different takes on the social organizations: aligned with the *Révolution Nationale* the former, closer to the Nazi policy the latter.

Like in Italy, Germany promoted its social policy in the areas under control, with pamphlets and booklets to exalt the Nazi social order.¹²²⁸ The Germans tried to accompany the military campaigns with plans for reconstruction, new domestic policies and international settlement. Not even in this case, did the strategy of the Axis differ much from that of the Allies. While this documentation might be regarded as just another piece of propaganda, it in fact unveils the ideological frontlines of the war. All the contenders provided their

¹²²⁶ J. De La Hire, *Le Travail, Les Travailleurs et la Nouvelle Europe*, Paris, Editions du Livre Moderne, 1941, pp. 80-81.

¹²²⁷ See the serie of the collaborationist revue *La France Européenne* in IHTP, ARC 074-15, état français. On the French pro-Nazi *Groupe Collaboration* and its activities, see Julien Prévotaux, *Un européisme nazi. Le Groupe Collaboration et l'idéologie européenne dans la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, Paris, François-Xavier De Guibert, 2010.

¹²²⁸ O. Karstedt, *La politique social de la nouvelle Allemagne*, Paris, Fernand Sorlot, 1943. On the action of Germany in the promotion of its social policies, see K. K. Patel, «Welfare in the Warfare State: Nazi Social Policy on the International Stage», pp. 16-22.

solutions to the “social question” as it showed up at that time. The plans for the post-war settlement in Italy and France remained limited to the inner circle of militants and collaborationist milieu. There was not a mass follow-up to the propaganda and the ideas in the occupied countries and in the RSI. British society felt to a greater extent the collective mobilization, and built upon “total war” the “mystique” of the consensus.

The historian of the welfare state and biographer of Beveridge, Harris, recognized how enthusiastically the public at large received social security plans, while politics, business, labour and bureaucracies diluted their traditional criticisms against State-driven social policies. Unlike 1914-18, they regarded more favourably to welfare expansion and even to some forms of planning.¹²²⁹ This political process should not be oversimplified; yet, even some British conservative milieus accepted State interventionism in socio-economic matters, at least when it was clearly distinguished by “socialist goals”.¹²³⁰ In turn, the official British documents served as a “propaganda” tool and triggered a huge debate. While the Britain identified the war with the construction of a new “social pact”, in Europe the efforts of the Axis did not have the same outcome. The European public opinions, not even those under Nazi occupation, received nor interiorized the social propaganda of the Third Reich.

No one in Europe could deny the strong ideological feature of WWII; it called into question the relation between citizens and State, society and economy. All the sides of the conflict had to supply a new idea of citizenship that integrated the mass of citizens better into the

¹²²⁹ J. Harris, «Some Aspects of Social Policy in Britain during the Second World War», Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Wolfgang Mock (eds.), *The Emergence of the Welfare State in Britain and Germany, 1850-1950*, London. Croom Helm on behalf of the German Historical Institute, 1981, pp. 247-263.

¹²³⁰ The Tory Reform Committee stated that «high Protection and Free Trade, Nationalisation and Private Enterprise, and similar political shibboleths, which are so often elevated into principles, are to us simply tools to be used on a large or small case or to be discarded according to whether they promote efficiency or impede it.» Tory Reform Committee, *Tools for the Next Job – A Policy of Progress through Productivity*, London, Europa Publications Limited, s.d., p.57

State's life. This was true for the Anglo-Americans and democratic movements of the Resistance in the continent and for the Axis powers. A Belgian collaborationist wrote that:

«This is not an economic war, something that maybe does credit to the humanity. In the end is not even – at least, not exclusively – the titanic clash between two imperialisms: the dynamic imperialism of the Axis – Germany, Italy, Japan – against the static imperialism of Britain and the US, and neither the death match between two political ideologies: dictatorship against democracy. All these elements are part of this war, but its nature is deeper, and its scope wider. In summary, as Hitler rightly said, the issue at stake is the new order. This is the reason why this war is really a total war: total, under the point of view of the effort, as it mobilized all the human and material resources of the belligerent states; total under the geographical point of view, as the whole world is taking part, directly or indirectly; but it is total mainly with regard to its goals, as all the human and divine values and our conception of the life is involved. We can call it the war of the total revolution.»¹²³¹

Even if in Britain the utmost mobilization was directed to the war and no major reform was implemented between 1942 and 1945, the debate on social security projected the hopes of social enhancement over the reconstruction. The political consensus was not achieved in the terms of the altruist rhetoric expressed by Titmuss, but there is little doubt that “welfare state” was inseparable from “warfare state”.¹²³² Governmental dispatches reported that «since the beginning of the war there has been a constant demand for a clarification of “what we are

¹²³¹ P. E. De Rooy, *L'Ordre Nouveau de Hitler*, Toronto, Cahiers de l'Ecole des Sciences Sociales, Politiques et Economiques de Laval, 1943, pp. 3-4.

¹²³² R. Lowe, «The Second World War, Consensus, and the Foundation of the Welfare State», *Twentieth Century British History*, 2/1990, 152-182.

fighting for”»,¹²³³ asking for precise policy statements for the reconstruction. The extent of the political and social mobilization for “total war” prevented to simply return to the pre-war conditions: «in some respects this problem is likely to be far more difficult after this War than after the war of 1914-1918. This is owing to the more extensive mobilisation of the nation and its war resources, coupled with large movements of population for security reasons, whilst the extensive air raid damage has already resulted in a greater dislocation of normal life.»¹²³⁴ The demobilisation was expected to be problematic for its impact on the employment structure and on political issues that called into question the relations between citizenship and social rights, and their full enjoyment by social actors, like the poor or the women.¹²³⁵ Furthermore, the vastness of the reconstruction policies required to link the economic necessities of the recovery with social planning, as for instance the housing policy or the benefits to support unemployed and counter inflation.

The socio-economic impact of the war does not explain everything. Social security was also linked to the challenge of the Nazi-Fascist model from the 1930s onwards. Mass unemployment delegitimized political institutions and weakened the social fabric: «unemployment was more than a great and unavoidable waste. It was symptomatic of the breakdown of a whole economic system and one of the propagators of Fascism and of the war we are now fighting.»¹²³⁶ The British social reformers wanted to prevent the overextensions of governmental power, through a new pact between State and citizens.¹²³⁷ The “consensus” was weaker than commonly regarded, but

¹²³³ TNA, INF/1/683, «Ministry of Information. Post-war Reconstruction. 17th June 1942», p.1.

¹²³⁴ TNA, INF/1/683, «The demobilisation and resettlement of labour (Summary of the Second Interim Report of the Official Committee on Post-War Internal Economic Problems. 26th January, 1943», p.1.

¹²³⁵ S.O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003.

¹²³⁶ PEP, *Employment for All*, London, Europa Publications Limited, 1944, p. 1.

¹²³⁷ G.D.H. Cole, *The Means to Full Employment*, London, Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1943.

the war modified the British political culture and placed Britain in a supranational debate on post-war reconstruction.

This transnational network between the warring parties suggest a thinner dividing line than the one depicted by wartime propaganda; the Nazis devoted comparative studies to the German and British social legislation which escaped from mere propaganda.¹²³⁸ *War Cabinet's* endorsement of "social security" principles was not merely farce consensus; it proved the commitment to recast British democracy on a new basis. The trend was general, but the British case is a pivot in any comparison between the wartime social policies for many reasons: the pace and consistency of the post-war reforms; the myth of the 1940-1 resistance as cradle of all the further enhancements in British policies; the pure observation that Britain won the war and could foster its own social system. Other models existed and their promotion was a "chapter" of the war. Harris stated that:

«nearly all the structural changes that occurred in Britain during the Second World War were paralleled by comparable changes in all other Western European countries, both Allied and Axis, both combatant and neutral. Such comparisons can be over-stressed, and each country has had its own unique institutional and cultural history. But no country in Western Europe has escaped the impact of mass social welfare, advanced health care, ethnic migration, consumerism and fiscal management; and in many cases such trends have been far more extensive than in Britain. The wider history of Europe provides an indispensable backcloth against which to weigh the extent, meaning and significance of social trends and developments in Britain between 1939 and 1945.»¹²³⁹

¹²³⁸ M.-E. Krohn, *Staat und Sozialversicherung in Grossbritannien und Deutschland*, Berlin-Leipzig-Wien, Deutscher Rechtsverlag GmbH., 1942.

¹²³⁹ J. Harris, «War and Social History: Britain and the Home Front during the Second World War», *Contemporary European History*, 1/1992, pp. 17-35, p.35.

The historical conditions in 1939-45 were not the same as in 1914-18; the reconstruction plans were wider in their scope and more coherent in their political rationale: «the aim of these plans seems to consist of the strengthening of the national interest and binding the largest possible number of people to the States' institutions, in order to establish within the State a social community and a solidarity of interests among social classes.»¹²⁴⁰

Fascist sought for similar solutions, when they stated «only War and Labour can save us»;¹²⁴¹ Tarchi considered the plans for the restructuration of socio-economic structures under the RSI Tarchi as the results of the «struggle that occurs Italy for 20 years [...] aiming at achieving at home and on the international stage a new order that shortens the [social] distances between individuals as well as among people, that implements a more equitable distributive justice in the social relations and in those among the States.»¹²⁴² These outcomes were linked to what Tarchi defined “revolutionary war”. The war freed allowed to fully deploy “revolutionary” social policy and to drive forward the social unrest under new forms of industrial collaboration. But the war was “revolutionary” also because redefined the international power relations, as «much greater inequalities and unfairness in the redistribution of the international political forces.»¹²⁴³ To achieve social justice at home, it was necessary to resettle the international order according to the Nazi-Fascist policies.

This was not dissimilar to the recommendation and hopes of the British to rebalance post-war social and economic policies to favour the achievement of full employment, in order to restore the international trades and to make social security sustainable. Allies and Axis shared also the same Messianic and Manichaeic jargon. Beveridge himself, in a 1944 broadcast for the Italian audience, said that:

¹²⁴⁰I. M. Sacco, «Considerazioni intorno al Piano “Beveridge”», p. 235.

¹²⁴¹«Lavorare e combattere», *La Corrispondenza Repubblicana*, January 1944, p.101.

¹²⁴² A. Tarchi, *Premesse per la creazione della nuova struttura economico sociale*, Milano-Venezia, Edizioni Erre, 1944, pp. 3-4.

¹²⁴³ Id., p. 6.

«The war in which the United Nations are engaged is I believe ideological in the sense that it is a war, not so much against particular peoples, as against evil spirits of aggression, violence and injustice abroad and of arbitrary power at home, of which the Germans and the Japanese have become the servile instruments. The victory of the United Nations will, according to the declarations of their leaders, be used to establish a world order in which these evil spirits can never again find scope. In that world order, I hope that Italian people will, early rather than late, take their part in showing that social justice can be reconciled with freedom for the individual, that international justice can be reconciled with the political independence of nations, that security can be reconciled with progress.»¹²⁴⁴

7.3. *The extent and limits of the “universalist shift” in Italy and France after the war*

The British plans and the attempts to reform the Italian social insurances

Neither Fascist nor British propaganda succeeded among the population prostrated by the war; the myth of the Red Army prospected the coming of Communism. As the Fascist alternative crumbled, the moderate solutions proposed by the Allied could not replace the promises of the Communist “Heaven on Hearth”. The British plans, however, had a deeper circulation to the elites of the continental countries; in this way the *Beveridge Report* entered into the Italian debate between the war and post-war years.

From 1943–4, “social security” was put on the political agenda in the liberated part of Italy. In 1944, Badoglio Government set up the *Commissione Reale per la riforma della previdenza sociale* (Royal Commission for the reform of social security), which in reality never drafted comprehensive reforms.¹²⁴⁵ The provisional government tried to

¹²⁴⁴ LSE, Beveridge/9B/57, «Broadcast Message to Italian People (Sent at request of Foreign Office, 29th December, 1944)», p.1.

¹²⁴⁵ «Regio Decreto del 15 marzo 1944, n.120», *GU – Serie speciale*, 29 aprile 1944, n.23.

rearrange the compulsory schemes, passing a relatively large number of legislation.¹²⁴⁶ This is illustrative of the importance gave to this policy-area by the Allies. Immediately after the war, the contributions of the democratic parties and the study of the foreign models led to an important debate on how to overcome the “inadequate” Fascist schemes, whose «big picture looked structured, but under the surface was hidden an incoherent and ineffective system.»¹²⁴⁷ The British social reforms were fundamental in this debate; they were received by all the parties, but none of them fully appreciated their scope. They served mostly as touchstone; the proposals of the Italian democratic parties were either more limited, or oriented to a more substantial redistribution.

Italian Liberals remained stranger to the innovations coming from the Anglo-Saxon world; the liberal Beveridge regarded at social security as the achievement of «more true liberty for all the people.»¹²⁴⁸ Italian Liberals wanted occupational social schemes limited to the salaried workers, excluding some risks from the compulsory insurances, e.g. family allowances, which Beveridge considered one of the pillar of social security. They endorsed some general principles of solidarity, accompanied by those of personal responsibility, while State intervention had to be limited to cases where the loss of income did not result from the will of the individual. The Liberal major representative was Luigi Einaudi, economist, Minister of the Budget, Governor of the Bank of Italy, and President of Republic. He was, according to the Keynesian economist Federico Caffè, an advocate of the «rough individualism of the pioneers.»¹²⁴⁹ Yet, his “anti-welfare” stance did not neglect the theories on social security, which Einaudi criticized for the fears of welfare-dependence of the poor. Beveridge himself feared this drive, but Einaudi’s take on the matter was biased by the old-fashioned

¹²⁴⁶ INPS, *Atti ufficiali – Anno 1944*, Roma, 1944.

¹²⁴⁷ E. Cabibbo, «I partiti politici e la previdenza sociale», *Rivista degli infortuni e delle malattie professionali*, Fascicolo Unico gennaio-dicembre 1944, pp. 13- 48, p.14.

¹²⁴⁸ W. Beveridge, *Why I am a Liberal*, London, H. Jenkins, 1945, p.33.

¹²⁴⁹ F. Caffè, «Nota Introduttiva», in L. Einaudi, *Lezioni di politica sociale*, Torino, Einaudi, 1972, p. XIX.

liberal moralistic view on poverty. He rather supported the social market economy theories for the achievement of more social equality without State welfarism.¹²⁵⁰

Einaudi's criticism of the *Beveridge Report* suggested a certain knowledge of the text. In his view, its main limit was the conception of the minimal income as a *right* of citizenship rather than as a *possibility* of social mobility. He questioned the real existence of such right, whose enjoyment in any case depended on the social behaviours of the poor. On the other side, he recognized that the universalistic setting was more liberal in comparison with the continental legislations, centred on occupational insurances and relied on social paternalism. His evaluation of social security plans was ideologically biased by the traditional liberal views on the matter; for instance, he accepted the principle of the industrial injuries benefits, as private insurance principle, but strongly opposed any form of unemployment benefit, which encouraged the laziness and distorted the principles of free competition, to such an extent that «it seems obvious that the State's insurance against unemployment is one of the most dangerous and uncertain elements of the whole system of social insurance and assistance.»¹²⁵¹ His remarks on the universalistic reforms were significant, as Einaudi had an important political role in the post-war governments and in the implementation of the social and economic policies in Italy between 1947 and 1955.¹²⁵²

Substantially different was the approach of the major political component of the post-war Italian society, the Christian Democrats (DC). The *Istituto Cattolico di Attività Sociale* (Catholic Institute of Social Action, ICAS) was a group of clergymen, intellectuals and politicians; the future Ministers and Prime Minister Guido Gonella and Aldo Moro participated in its activities. This group elaborated in 1943 the most important Catholic manifesto for the redefinition of the post-war

¹²⁵⁰L. Bonini, *Economia sociale di mercato*, Bologna, Edizioni Studio Domenicano, 2012, pp. 217-234.

¹²⁵¹ L. Einaudi, *Lezioni di politica sociale*, cit., p. 110.

¹²⁵² P. Barucco, *Ricostruzione, pianificazione, Mezzogiorno: la politica economica in Italia dal 1943 al 1955*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1978, pp. 134-137.

social action; the so-called *Codice di Camaldoli* combined the Christian values of brotherhood with the modern forms of social solidarity.¹²⁵³ The Catholics tried to apply the Catholic Social Doctrine not *against* the modern States, as in the original intentions of Pope XIII.¹²⁵⁴ The *Codice* redefined the relation between the Christian social commitment and the State. The public institutions had to achieve social justice as ultimate goal; the social rights were declared inalienable and at the democratic foundations of post-war Italy: right to work, fair salary, minimum income, social security, healthcare, family allowances, housing and full employment.

It is difficult to retrace explicit references to the British plans, but it is unlikely that the ICAS did not know the report. From Beveridge, they borrowed the interclass social solidarity; in their effort to modernize the Catholic Social Doctrine, they found in the British elaboration the most relevant example of liberal and moderate reformism. These social reformers opted for the coexistence of public insurances and mutualist associations (especially in the field of the healthcare), while endorsing the idea that the State had to guarantee the minimum income facing up to any loss of income. The Christian principles of social solidarity finally matched the modernity, abandoning the charity-like policy to be incorporated within the public policies of the modern State.

Immediately after the war, when the circulation of the *Beveridge Report* and mainly of *Full Employment in a Free Society* spread out, the Christian doctrine was decisively and directly affected by the British debate.¹²⁵⁵ The influence was clear for the “left-wing” Catholics; Giorgio La Pira carefully studied the British texts, and participated in the drafting of the *Codice di Camaldoli*. Later, he was deputy at the constituent assembly and undersecretary in the Ministry of Labour and

¹²⁵³III *Codice di Camaldoli*, Roma, Edizioni Civitas, 1984.

¹²⁵⁴D. Menozzi, «La Chiesa cattolica», in Dino Menozzi, Giovanni Filoramo (eds.), *Storia del cristianesimo. L'età contemporanea*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1997, pp. 131-257, cfr. pp. 146-171.

¹²⁵⁵P. Roggi, «La Pira e la storiografia», in Id. (ed.), *L'attesa della povera gente. Giorgio La Pira e la cultura economica anglosassone*, Milano-Firenze, Giunti, 2005, pp. 3-23.

Social Security. He also participated to the drafting of the social principles in the Italian republican Constitution. He looked at the British economic and social policies, considering Keynes and Beveridge the two pillars upon which the Anglo-Saxon reformists were creating what he defined «the new State: it is the democratic State, where there is a place for everyone: where there is freedom for everyone: freedom of work, freedom of speech, freedom of dignity for everyone.»¹²⁵⁶ The British reforms changed the meaning of social policy from the degrading and charity-like assistance policies to a comprehensive policy of employment and social security. For La Pira, these ideas reformulated the democratic pact; the British reforms overcame *laissez-faire* capitalism opening up to economic planning and social solidarity, without falling into collectivist solutions. The pre-existing Christian doctrine was integrated with Keynesian elements, as re-interpreted by Beveridge; in this original synthesis, Catholicism met Beveridge's lexicon on the "freedom from want" and the aims to wage the recovery retained the wartime policies and tools. The Christian rhetoric met a modern understanding of the contemporary issues and political tendencies, which overcame what La Pira defined the "agnosticism" of the 19th century States towards the "social questions".¹²⁵⁷

There was a common "mystical" humanitarianism at the very foundation of the new social policies, just as for the British Labour's "New Jerusalem"; for his part, La Pira was confident that the social protection would solve the "social question" «in tomorrow's society: and on this worldwide action of human goodwill cannot just not come down the peacefully blessing of our Father in Heaven.»¹²⁵⁸ Social solidarity penetrated outside the Anglo-Saxon world and took root in different cultural milieus and socio-economic contexts. Social security merged with other cultural strands unified by the awareness of the new role of the State in public policies. The impact of the British plans remained limited to a cultural influence; they mobilized intellectual

¹²⁵⁶G. La Pira, *Giorgio La Pira Sindaco. Scritti, discorsi e lettere. Vol. I., 1951-1954*, Firenze, Cultura Nuova Editrice, 1988, p.26.

¹²⁵⁷G. La Pira, *1 problemi della povera gente*, Firenze, Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, 1951.

¹²⁵⁸ Ivi. p. 13.

resources and reformist projects, but they had no immediate legislative carryover in post-war Italy.¹²⁵⁹ The resistances to more consistent social reforms did not come exclusively from the liberal and conservative milieus, but also, if for opposite reasons, from the Socialists and Communists.

The influence of the British “social security” was present in the social programme of the *Patto d’Unità d’Azione* (Unity Action Pact), with which socialists and communists strengthened their cooperation in 1943 and 1944: wage increase, indexing of pensions and allowances to inflation, legislation on labour protection, minimum income, housing, education reform, public healthcare and universalistic social insurances covering all the risk categories. A very similar social programme was restated two years later, in a different context, after the transition from the clandestine activity to the tasks of the reconstruction. Not without ambiguity, the Unity Action Pacts regarded the USSR and the «Anglo-American working class organizations» as the leading forces in the reconstruction.¹²⁶⁰ This did not necessarily mean the full endorsement of the British solutions. The Italian Socialist Party (PSIUP) proposed the unification of the compulsory schemes (INPS) and the industrial injuries (INAIL) in a single institute, with the correspondent unification of the contributions. But the Socialist proposal consistently departed from the British scheme; they wanted the *Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro* (CGIL, the Italian trade unions) to control all the aspects of social security: authorities, investment of the fund of the insurances, management, reforms. The former Fascist institutions were turned upside-down; during the regime, they represented the State’s utmost centralization, while the Socialists proposed to delegate their direction to the unions, and opposed to State-centred reforms that excluded the

¹²⁵⁹A. Magliulo, «La politica della massima occupazione», in P. Roggi (ed.), *L’attesa della povera gente. Giorgio La Pira e la cultura economica anglosassone*, pp. 104-137.

¹²⁶⁰Partito Socialista Italiano, «Patto d’Unità d’Azione col Partito Comunista Italiano»; Id., «Patto d’Alleanza fra Partito Socialista e Partito Comunista. 8 agosto 1944», both in Ufficio Stampa PSI (ed.), *Cinque anni di politica unitaria. Documenti del PSI*, Roma, PSI, 1948, p. 5 and pp. 6-7.

workers' organizations. The PSIUP was also against the extension of the benefits to all the population regardless their status, coherently with their conception of social security, according to which «the workers' solidarity is the basic principle of the social insurances. Their structure and management has to correspond to the needs and interest of the working class.»¹²⁶¹ Solidarity was limited to the workers; it did not involve all citizens of the national community, but spread along class-oriented lines.

The Communists shared the general lines of the Socialist proposals, even if they promoted a more inclusive approach, in line with its aspiration to become a "people's party". For the PCI, the "freedom from want" concerned all categories of workers, to achieve social solidarity and a better redistribution of the wealth. In their first proposals, the Communists advanced the idea of a bipartite funding of the social contributions: the employers and the general revenues should constitute the tax bases of the social insurances. This hypothesis was clearly unsustainable, and even more in the case of the adoption of a universalistic system that covered with flat-rate benefits the whole working population. The Communists wanted to accompany social solidarity as political principle with a dramatic redistribution of the national wealth. For this reason, the PCI departed from the political goals of British universalism, retaining some technical solutions in the administration of the insurances.

Since the war years, the application of the universalistic system was particularly difficult in Italy, due both to ideological reasons and to a different socio-economic structure. The democratic social reformers in Italy recognized that, after 1945:

«The analysis of the problem of social security in its current orientations and in its future evolution cannot be conceived without the study of the fundamental document called "Beveridge Plan", thanks to which Great Britain, first country in the world, concretely put in place the fight against want. [...] There is anyway an assumption of the plan that seems

¹²⁶¹ E. Cabibbo, «I partiti politici e la previdenza sociale», p.33.

nowadays undisputable, and this is the need that every democratic legislation shall address the problem of the social security, as a whole, for all the citizens, to secure, with their cooperation and within the national possibilities, the protection against extreme destitution.»¹²⁶²

The most important effort towards the universalistic turn fell within the scope of the Constituent Assembly, through the establishment of a Commission chaired by the reformist Socialist Ludovico D'Aragona.¹²⁶³ The tasks of the Commission were limited to set basic guidelines for the legislator, referring to the principles of the *Beveridge Report* and the Declaration of Philadelphia. The Commission proposed the all-inclusive reform for retirement, injury and sickness, opening up to free healthcare for limited categories of citizens. Other administrative innovations – as for the flat-rate benefits, or the national public health system – were not taken into consideration, due to the strong differences between categories of workers and geographical areas. Any universalistic reform could not ever meet the needs of the better-paid job categories.¹²⁶⁴ The *D'Aragona Report* was an important reference for the reform of social policies in Italy, but remained a statement of principles, never transformed into legislation due to financial issues and to political resistance.¹²⁶⁵ The debate on the reconstruction was inseparable from the issue of social rights, and from the re-foundation of democracy on a new basis. The General elections of 1948 polarized Italian politics, and delayed the implementation of a

¹²⁶² M.-A. Coppini, *Prime valutazioni sul costo di un Piano Beveridge per l'Italia*, Roma, SELI, 1947, pp. 5-6.

¹²⁶³ A biography of D'Aragona does not exist yet, although he was among the founder of the Italian trade unions in Italy. Together with Rinaldo Rigola, in 1927, was among the trade union leaders who disbanded the CGIL, and tried to find an agreement with Fascismo. Unlike Rigola – who also supported the Labour reforms in 1945 – he never collaborated with the Fascist regime, and Ministry in the democratic Republic. See C. Cartiglia, *Rinaldo Rigola e il sindacalismo riformista in Italia*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1976.

¹²⁶⁴ Ministero del Lavoro e della Previdenza Sociale, *Relazione sui lavori della Commissione per la riforma della previdenza sociale (4 luglio 1947 – 29 febbraio 1948)*, Roma, Atel, 1948.

¹²⁶⁵ G. Silei, «Una occasione mancata? La questione della riforma dello Stato sociale in Italia nel secondo dopoguerra», *Storia e Futuro*, n. 4/2004.

thorough universalistic reform. The PCI diverted attention from the reform of social security, claiming for the “structural” reforms (instead of the “social” reforms, which were considered a gradualist mid-step that did not affect the power relations between classes) and the “progressive democracy”.

The Socialists spent the months before and after the elections of 1948 in anguish over the nature of the party; the subsequent split divided the Italian socialism in two areas, the left-wing PSI and the reformist PSDI.¹²⁶⁶ The reformists tried to hark back to the most advanced principles of social security; besides D’Aragona or Rinaldo Rigola, the most important formulation and support to the reforms came from Ezio Vigorelli, who was Minister of Social Security between 1954 and 1957.¹²⁶⁷ Vigorelli admitted that Italy was not in the condition to implement a plan of the same extent than the *Beveridge Report*. This was due to policy legacy and economic reasons; Italy was a poorer country compared to Britain, with limited resources and relatively higher unemployment.¹²⁶⁸ This did not prevent to tackle the social scourges with a comprehensive approach that coordinated assistance and insurance institutions. Vigorelli wanted the Italian social security integrated in the European post-war trends, of which Britain had the lead: the creation of a Ministry of Social Security, the single contributory card for all the insurances, the tripartite contribution, the coordination of the insurance/assistance authorities. Also Italy could implement a modern social security in order, at least, to relief from the complete misery of part of Italian population.

The reformist area quickly became politically and ideologically irrelevant; the majority of Italian socialism moved social policy to the background. The controversy on social security rather became the

¹²⁶⁶ P. Moretti, *I due socialismi. La scissione di Palazzo Barberini e la nascita della socialdemocrazia*, Milano, Mursia, 1975; M. Donno, *Socialisti democratici. Giuseppe Saragat e il PSli (1945-1952)*, Soveria Mannelli, Il Rubettino, 2009.

¹²⁶⁷ G.B. Maglione, «Sicurezza sociale, condizione umana», *Critica Sociale*, 16 giugno 1946; R. Rigola, «Il riconoscimento giuridico dei sindacati», *Critica Sociale*, 31 gennaio 1946; Id., «Il lavoro nello Statuto della Repubblica», *Critica Sociale*, 16 giugno 1946.

¹²⁶⁸ E. Vigorelli, *L’offensiva contro la miseria. Idee e esperienze per un piano di sicurezza sociale*, Milano, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1948, pp. 17-18.

pretext to attack head-up the Labour party and the setting of the British social security. The PSI characterized Attlee's social reforms as a reactionary intervention that deviated the working class from their real objectives. In a way, the criticism of the left-wing Socialists was diametrically opposite, yet similar, to that of the Fascists:

«they prefer to stiffen the social relations in a climate of security for all: security for capitalists [...]; security for consumers [...] security for workers thanks to full employment, insurance, etc. "Security for All" [...] That security for all that is a natural expression of a s system of solidarity, artificially sought in a capitalist regime that is by nature based on social contrasts and the consequent instability of class relations. [...] they aim to ensure a certain "social security" for workers, but never bothers to make workers become a political class capable of self-empowerment and self-government.»¹²⁶⁹

While Fascism interpreted the universalistic reforms in the ideological terms of the contraposition between "plutocratic" Anglo-Saxon democracies and corporatist "third ways", the Marxists regarded at social security as a way to regulate the social struggle and, in the context of the bipolar war, to split the Socialist International.¹²⁷⁰ In spite of the wartime considerations of the British policy-makers, the promise of social security did not persuade the left-wing parties to align with the Western world. The governmental area operated a political breakthrough, with the exclusion of the left, and with the support of the Liberals. The social Catholics more committed to the social reforms became minority in the centrist government, even with Fanfani as

¹²⁶⁹ «Laborismo e socialismo», *Quarto Stato*, Febbraio 1950.

¹²⁷⁰ G. Baldi, «Socialismo britannico e socialismo internazionale», *Quarto Stato*, Luglio 1946; L. Basso, «La politica dei ceti medi», *Quarto Stato*, Marzo 1946; M. Matteotti, «Limiti della politica e dell'azione dei laburisti», *Iniziativa Socialista per l'Unità Europea*, Giugno 1948.

Minister of the Labour and the Social Security.¹²⁷¹

Structural change, full industrialization and economic modernization constituted the major targets of the Italian ruling classes, who sacrificed social security reforms and wage increase to the formation of national savings that could be transformed into investments in infrastructure and key industries.¹²⁷² The limits of the universalistic turn in Italy were more ideological than practical. Already before the failure of the different commissions set up until 1947, the *Beveridge Report* clashed against resistances in the two major cultures of Italian politics: the Catholics and the Marxists. Both prefigured a different society than the liberal Britain, where the social rights were embedded respectively within the *Societas Christiana* and within the “progressive democracy”.¹²⁷³ None of these ideas had liberal features, while the liberals themselves, increasingly irrelevant in electoral terms, were culturally far from the Anglo-Saxon innovations in social security. Yet, the politics of solidarity penetrated in the reformist sectors of the Italian elites and stood in the background to every attempt at reforming the Italian social policy. The modern social security was not implemented immediately after the war; yet, this political aim resurfaced every time the Italian governments tried to dip into social reforms.

The French “sécurité sociale”: limits and extent of the universalism

Between 1945 and 1946, France passed the main texts on social security. The French social reformers promoted the plan even before the Attlee Government, which enacted the core of the British social

¹²⁷¹ F. Malgeri, *La stagione del centrismo. Politica e società nell'Italia del secondo dopoguerra (1945-1960)*, Soveria Marelli, Rubettino, 2002, pp. 91-109.

¹²⁷² V. Zamagni, *Dalla periferia al centro. La seconda rinascita economica dell'Italia (1861-1990)*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1990, pp. 409-428; R. Petri, «Dalla ricostruzione al miracolo economico», in Giovanni Sabbatucci, Vittorio Vidotto (eds.), *Storia d'Italia. Vol. 5. La Repubblica*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1997, pp. 313-349.

¹²⁷³ L. Di Nucci, «Lo Stato sociale in Italia tra fascismo e Repubblica: la ricezione del Piano Beveridge e il dibattito alla Costituente», in Carlotta Sorba (ed.), *Cittadinanza. Individui, diritti sociali, collettività nella storia contemporanea*, Roma, Ministero per i Beni e per la attività culturali – Direzione Generale per gli Archivi, 2002, p. 161-188.

legislation between 1946 and 1948. According to Nicole Kerschen, «there are neither documents nor official declarations, which testify the use of the Beveridge report as work tool during the drafting of the social security French plan. The fact that the report was never completely translated reinforces doubts about its direct influence.»¹²⁷⁴ The biographer of Laroque also underlined how there is no documentary evidence of major influences of the *Beveridge Report* in the elaboration of the French plans, whose drafting initiated by the end of 1944, when all the three *White Papers* were published in Britain. On the other side, Free France did not operate in a glass house. Laroque and Parodi had the opportunity to read the original version of the *Beveridge Report*;¹²⁷⁵ they could study the basic guidelines of social security and full employment policies from the very sources.¹²⁷⁶

By 1942, Free France in London drafted the first plans for the reconstruction, establishing different Commissions for the study of post-war issues. Social policies fell into the scope of the Third Commission, which dealt with economic, financial and social matters.¹²⁷⁷ The first reports on economic policies, drafted by the National Commissary to Domestic Policies and Labour, André Philip, proposed the “economic governance” that had less to do with «the authoritarian States before the war or the States at war: [...] We cannot therefore point at achieving dirigisme or planned economy as such, but at creating the general environment, the climate, the limits of the minimal control of the economy on the direction considered optimal for the achievement of social goals.»¹²⁷⁸ Free France sought for organizing the economy refusing corporatism as ideology, but retaining “neo-

¹²⁷⁴ N. Kerschen, «L'influence du rapport Beveridge sur le plan français de sécurité sociale de 1945», *Revue française de science politique*, n.4/1995, pp. 570-595, p. 572.

¹²⁷⁵ P. Laroque, «Le plan français de Sécurité sociale, sa conception, ses deux premières années», *Colloque vingt ans de Sécurité sociale, 1945-1965*, Nancy-Vandoeuvre, 13 mai 1997, pp.2-20.

¹²⁷⁶ E. Jabbari, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-118.

¹²⁷⁷ AN, 72/AJ/546, «Commission d'études des problèmes d'après-guerre. III. Commission économique, financière et sociale»

¹²⁷⁸ AN, 72/AJ/546, «Note du Commandant Bernard. S.d.», p.1.

corporative” forms of social conciliation in the factories.¹²⁷⁹ The economic programme pointed at full employment, redistribution of income, nationalisation of the key industrial sectors, production planning and measures for the “physical health” of the population.¹²⁸⁰

Between 1942 and 1943, the Social Section of the Economic, Financial and Social Commission looked into incorporating new tools and policies in the French pre-war social legislation.¹²⁸¹ The Commission provided working proposals to elaborate the official stance of Free France in social matter, and detailed policies in accordance with the statement of principles of the *Atlantic Charter*.¹²⁸² Among its members, there were some of the “Founding Fathers” of the plan of social security: the Socialist trade unionist Georges Buisson; the directors general of the miners, Laurent Blum-Picard and Tony Mayer; De Gaulle’s counsellor Henri Hauck; representatives of the women’s organizations like Magdeleine Leroy. The works of this Commission ranged from social insurances to public hygiene, preventive medicine and vocational training. The discussion inevitably referred to the ongoing debate on the social insurances in the Anglo-Saxon world, and notably in Britain, Australia and New Zealand. The publication of the *Beveridge Report* did not go unnoticed; the session of 3rd December 1942 recommended to deliver documentation on it to the study groups on French territory, and carried out an analysis of its principles and mechanism. Apparently, the group did not receive any copy via official or unofficial channels, as the research was mainly based on the summaries published by the press. Two members of the commission, Vangrévelinghe and Jacques Leyv Jacquemin, provided a summary in French with explicatory notes for the French audience.¹²⁸³

¹²⁷⁹ AN, 72/AJ/546, «Compte-rendu de la réunion de la Section Sociale et du Sous-Comité économique. 25.8.42»

¹²⁸⁰ Health policies were still related to demographic concerns and the need to preserve the imperial role of France after the war. AN, 72/AJ/546, «Problèmes économiques d’après-guerre un point de vue français. Juillet 1942»

¹²⁸¹ AN, 75/AJ/546, «Commission d’études des problèmes d’après-guerre. IV. Section Sociale de la Commission économique, financière et sociale»

¹²⁸² AN, 75/AJ/546, «Compte-rendu. 24.4.1942»

¹²⁸³ AN, 72/AJ/546, «Procès-verbal. Section Sociale – 3.12.42».

The French Commission devoted many accounts to the *Beveridge Report* in the very beginning of 1943, even if few of these annotations were grounded on the direct study of the original document.¹²⁸⁴ Some specific technical innovations and political principles were considered to be of general interest outside Britain: the universal scope of social security extended to all the citizens through flat-rate benefits; the coordination of insurance authorities with assistance and healthcare services; the creation of a single political centre to manage social security. The acknowledgement of these principles did not imply an a-critical adoption of the same model by the French;¹²⁸⁵ the Commission also pursued a broader study of the pre-war French legislation and of Vichy's main social measures, some of which «in another context, would constitute without any doubt a step forward. On the other hand, others are so fuelled by such retrograde mindset, that it is impossible to put any trust to the whole building.»¹²⁸⁶ Some of the reforms pursued by Vichy, as family allowances, might be retained, even if the Commission mostly referred to the pre-war complex body of legislation. Even if considered relatively wide also in comparison to the British one, it had to be updated to the new political principles: «firstly, that the principle of social security was not recognized as a right for every worker and his family. [...] the law on the Social Insurances did not recognize it at all. Therefore, the legislator only tried with this law to relieve the worker during the harshest time..., to ensure just the slightest bit of security.»¹²⁸⁷ The war set in motion a structural and political change in the Anglo-Saxon countries, to which the French social reformers had to make reference: «a great number of politicians of the Allied nations, even prime ministers, wanted now to give answers to the questions of the world of labour. On the American side, as well as on the British one, among the ideas

¹²⁸⁴ AN, 72/AJ/546, «Rapport Beveridge sur les assurances sociales et les services sociaux Allies et Connexes (Traduction de l'article du News Chronicle du 2 décembre. 1942)» ; AN, 72/AJ/546, «L'opinion anglaise devant le Plan Beveridge. Janvier 1943» ; AN, 72/AJ/546, «La législation actuelle en Grande Bretagne. Le plan Beveridge. Janvier 1943».

¹²⁸⁵ AN, 72/AJ/546, «Observations sur l'envoi du Rapport Beveridge. Janvier 1943».

¹²⁸⁶ AN, 72/AJ/546, «Rapport de Chauvel sur les lois sociales de Vichy. 10/5/42».

¹²⁸⁷ AN, 72/AJ/546, «Rapport sur les Assurances Sociales en France», p.22.

now rising, the main part has a fundamental principle to ensure *social security for all*.»¹²⁸⁸

All the provisions foreshadowed by the *Beveridge Report* required unitary action to reform the different branches of the social protection. This meant to override the mutualist resistance of assurance businesses and vested interests, stratified by the incremental French legislations, and to reformulate social policies on the basis of the national social solidarity. Unlike the *Beveridge Report*, this was not achieved by equal contribution irrespective of the individual income, but through compulsory and progressive contributions by all citizens; in the proposals of the *Centre Syndical Français*, accomplish social solidarity and security was accomplished through the redistribution of wealth. The report of Jean Gendrot proposed to combine the British universalistic features with redistributive solutions stranger to British plans, as for the commensuration of contributions to the personal incomes, or for the “minimum wage”.¹²⁸⁹ This differed from the “minimum vital income”, which was bone of contention also in the British debate. The French resolutions departed from the Anglo-Saxon measures; they proposed to index the minimum wage to the overall national income, which did not coincide with the minimum vital income and was calculated on the male breadwinner salary with other integration according to dependant relatives.¹²⁹⁰

By mid-1943, the Commission’s proposals were highly inspired by the *Atlantic Charter*: international organization of the economy and trades; social security for all citizens in case of loss income, higher levels of productivity and full employment; participation of the workers in the management of public, “controlled” or private enterprises; free trade unions and freedom to *not* join any trade

¹²⁸⁸ Ivi. p. 28. The italics is mine. Underlined in the original type-writing.

¹²⁸⁹ Ivi. pp. 28-32.

¹²⁹⁰ AN, 72/AJ/546, «Procès-verbal. Section Sociale – 25.2.43»; AN, 72/AJ/546, «Commission économique, financière et sociale. Salaire minimum. 15.6.43»; AN, 72/AJ/546, «Commission économique, financière et sociale. Salaire minimum. Projet de l’O.C.M. (Paris). 1.6.43»; AN, 72/AJ/546, «Résumé des considérations générales de la Section Sociale sur l’établissement d’un salaire minimum. S.d.» see also the report attached.

union.¹²⁹¹ The Commission provided a modern and comprehensive policy in line with the modern debates on social security in Britain, without merely copying its universalistic measures. The social reformers in London proposed to embed the new principles within the previous French setting, and, possibly, to achieve an higher social equality than the coeval Anglo-Saxon projects. The *Beveridge Report* rather redefined the policy areas of social policy and the approach for its coherent reform: from a piecemeal approach matter of horse-trading for private business to State-driven reforms. The climate of the war allowed to overcome once for all the resistances of vested interest, and achieve “social security” and “freedom from want” also in France.

The first dissemination channels of the *Beveridge Report* were the translations of the summaries appeared in the British press since 1943. The integral translation of the plan has never been published, but since 1943-4 the first French editions of extracts, commentaries and translation were published in Switzerland, and from 1945 also in France.¹²⁹² The *Beveridge Report*, however, was already introduced into the elaborations of the inner Resistance in France. As historian Jean-Pierre Le Crom reported, «since 1942, the discussion is no longer entirely free: it necessarily refers to the English plan. The Beveridge plan, badly known in detail, became a guideline. It is impossible to ignore it. It raises the postwar social issues in front of the worldwide public opinion. It symbolise the social progress.»¹²⁹³ During wartime years, it was delivered in technical, albeit general, terms to an audience of academics, technical experts and civil servants, and it did not apparently have a mass circulation. The report had initially a wider

¹²⁹¹ AN, 72/AJ/546, «Résumé des activités de la Commission pour l'étude des problèmes d'après-guerre d'ordre économique, financière, et social. 31.5.1943»

¹²⁹² E. Milhaud, *Le Plan Beveridge*, Genève, 1943; E.-F. Rimensberger, *Qu'est-ce que le Plan Beveridge ?*, Neuchâtel, La Baconnière, 1943 ; R. Servoise, *Le 1^{er} Plan Beveridge*, Paris, Domat-Montchrestien, 1946 ; Id., *Le 2^{ème} Plan Beveridge*, Paris, Domat-Montchrestien, 1946 ; G. De Lagarde, *Le Plan Beveridge. Suivi d'un tableau des principales modifications apportées à la législation sociale française depuis la libération*, Paris, Edition Sociale Française, 1945. See also the official summary of the *Beveridge Report* translated in French, in BDIC, FPIèce 2595.

¹²⁹³ Mentioned in J.-P. Le Crom, «Les idées de la Résistance», in Philippe-Jean Hesse, Jean-Pierre Le Crom, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-354.

diffusion in the Occupied Zone; one of the underground movements, the *Organisation Civile et Militaire* (OCM), deepened the analysis of specific aspects, namely the nationalisation of the social services as blueprint for the future. This was needed because they considered that the private business did not pursue the common interest in this sector¹²⁹⁴ This take inferred a new conception of social policy; from the sectional interest and fragmentation to the full deployment of social solidarity and rights of citizenship by the State.

Between 1944 and 1945, the Ministries of National Economy and Information as well as study centres like the *Institut de Science Economique Appliquée* (which had an important foreign editorial board, including Beveridge, Keynes, Robinson, John Hicks, and Friedrich von Hayek) provided detailed studies on the foreign social legislations; the *Beveridge Report* did the lion's share, but also the reforms enacted in the same period by the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia were scrutinized in detail.¹²⁹⁵ These studies recognized the significance of the changes occurred in the Anglo-Saxon world, and more generally in the Allied countries. France, with its "plan of social security" laced up the trend of the reconstruction. But this commitment did not only concern narrow groups of technocrats; quests for social inclusion came also from the parties. There is sparse evidence of wider circulation of the ideas of the *Beveridge Report* also in the French society. Immediately after the Liberation, the CNR launched the *États Généraux de la Renaissance Française* (Estates-Generals for the French Reconstruction),

¹²⁹⁴ Bruno Valat, «Résistance et sécurité sociale, 1941-1944», *Revue historique*, n.2/1994, pp. 315-346.

¹²⁹⁵ See the studies of the *Beveridge Plan* in six volumes, «Le Plan Beveridge. 1-6» *Institut de Conjoncture. Section des économies étrangères* Ministère de l'Economie Nationale, 1945, which carried out thorough comparative analyses on the social security, the health service, and the comparative legislation in the Anglo-Saxon countries; *La Notion de sécurité sociale. Vol. 1-2*, Institut de Science Economique Appliquée, 1945; «Les plans de sécurité sociale. Le Plan Beveridge», *Notes et Etudes documentaires n.111*, Ministère de l'Information, 14 Aout 1945; «La Nouvelle Législation en Grande-Bretagne. 1^{er} partie», *Notes et Etudes documentaires n.398*, Ministère de l'Information, 7 Septembre 1946; «La Nouvelle Législation en Grande-Bretagne. 2^{ème} partie», *Notes et Etudes documentaires n.398*, Ministère de l'Information, 7 Septembre 1946; «La sécurité sociale en Grande-Bretagne», *Notes et Etudes documentaires n.969*, Ministère de l'Information, 3 Aout 1948.

which in 1945 proposed the programme of the Resistance for the new French Republic and the reconstruction. Its works took place at the same times of the governmental projects of the PGFR, and involved all the French departments; the local committees gathered political and trade union representatives, and single personalities. Each local and departmental committee had to deliver its proposals (*Cahiers de Doléances*) to the central Commissions. The Commission on the Social Progress was directed by the former leader of the OCM, the Conservative Maxime Blocq-Mascart.

The reports named “Social Progress” astonished for their global uniformity, in spite of the different geographical and socio-political backgrounds. They all proposed a unified and coordinated system of social protection, with explicit references in the reports to “social security” as goal to achieve in the new France.¹²⁹⁶ Their proposals were even more advanced than those of Laroque and Parodi, as for instance they wanted unemployment benefits in the compulsory insurances. The departmental reports claimed for the transition from social insurances to social security: single Ministry, coverage of all the working categories and family wages and allowances. This last proposal matched the new universalistic principles with the traditional demographic concerns. Many reports recognized the “structural backwardness” of the French social insurances with regard to other foreign legislations, due to the overlapping of regional and mutualist funds, the deficiencies and inadequacies of the fragmented bureaucracies and the vested interests of the private business.¹²⁹⁷

The reform of the social protection had to lace up the trend started in 1942; the references to the *Beveridge Report* served as touchstone rather than a specific model, which arguably was not known in detail. It was mainly the evocation of some basic principles: nationalization of compulsory schemes, industrial insurance and family

¹²⁹⁶ The main part of the departmental reports are stored in CHS, CNR, 88/3-CNR-2C2; CHS, CNR, 89/3-CNR-2C2; CHS, CNR, 90/3-CNR-2C2.

¹²⁹⁷ CHS, CNR, 88/3-CNR-2C2, «La réforme des assurances sociales» ; CHS, CNR, 90/3-CNR-2C2, «Considération sur la sécurité sociale dans le passé et le présent» ; CHS, CNR, 90/3-CNR-2C2, « Rapport de la Commission du Progrès Social » ; CHS, CNR, 90/3-CNR-2C2, « Rapport sur le Progrès Social ».

allowances, administrative centralization. In some cases they demanded «the application in France of the BEVERIDGE plan in operation in Great Britain.»¹²⁹⁸ The proposals for healthcare, which in Britain entered into the design of social security, departed from these solutions. They were more in line with the consideration of the Social Section of Free France in London; public hygiene, leveraging over the individual behaviours (fight against alcoholism, prostitution, etc.) and special structures to contrast tuberculosis and other major disease. The nationalization of the healthcare structures was only mentioned as a possibility for the future. The French social reformers and parties did not tackle the health policies in terms of rights of citizenship, but still in those of public and “national” health. They seemed rather oriented to increasingly outdated demographic concerns that equalized the health and the number of the population to the international role of the country.¹²⁹⁹

The years 1944-6 were favourable for the recasting of French institutions on new bases. In 1945, Parodi was appointed Minister of Labour; there operated the General Direction of Social Security, where the civil servants who collaborated under Laroque’s supervision had the necessary leeway to put in action the plan. The conditions of the Liberation gave momentum to implement the unitary reform that vested interests and financial concerns stopped during the interwar period and under Vichy.¹³⁰⁰ The working group did not prepare any document to fix the main principles and technical aspects of the reforms, as for the *White Papers*. These general guidelines were rather exposed in the preambles of the governmental decrees between 1945 and 1946, and in other speeches and lectures by Laroque at that time.¹³⁰¹

¹²⁹⁸ CHS, CNR, 88/3-CNR-2C2, «Progrès Social», p.2. ; see also CHS, CNR, 90/3-CNR-2C2, «Rapport pour la commission du progrès social», p.1.

¹²⁹⁹ See the texts of the final proposals for social security and health policies in CHS, CNR, 81/3-CNR-2C2, «Conseil National de la Résistance, *Etats Généraux de la Renaissance Française. Proclamation et serment du Palais de Chaillot-10-14 juillet 1945*», pp. 31-34.

¹³⁰⁰ P.. V. Dutton, *Origins of the French Welfare State. The Struggle for Social Reforms in France, 1914-1947*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 208-211.

¹³⁰¹ N. Kerschner, «L’influence du rapport Beveridge sur le plan français de sécurité sociale», p.571.

The French reforms gradually integrated the general outlines of social security, set up in 1945, in family allowances and compulsory insurances for specific categories (public officers, farmers, miners).

The pattern was similar to British, where the acts passed one by one between 1946 and 1948. The guidelines of the reforms linked social security to the wider recovery plans, not unlike the British wartime debate that had incorporated the *Beveridge Report* into the tasks of reconstruction; Laroque related the achievement of social security to plans for full employment and support to the families. But while the British social security centred its action on the minimum vital income and on the fight against unemployment, the French reformers were still mainly concerned with demographic decline and wage policies. Unemployment, which affected to a lesser extent France during the Great Depression, was not at the very core of the 1944-5 elaborations on social security. There were also derogations from universalistic principles; the flat-rate benefits were rejected, while the retail of special schemes was a breach on the uniformity. Opposite resistances from the mutual assurances, the farmers' associations, the pronatalist movements and the trade unions led to autonomous agricultural social insurances and family allowances funds, which passed under trade unions' management.¹³⁰² The plan of social security did not establish the free national healthcare service, but increased the charge of the refund for medical treatments, enlarged the access to hospitalization and established new benefits, such as the "long sickness", that extended the paid recovery period.¹³⁰³

The establishment of the public healthcare was not in the aims of the post-war social reformers, and signalled once more how the NHS was a peculiarity to the British social reformism; it was also another relevant derogation to the nationalization and extension of the protection to the whole community of citizens. However, while the administrative universalism was not fully achieved, the approach to the social protection consistently changed: in the rationale of the social

¹³⁰² P. V. Dutton, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-217.

¹³⁰³ «La sécurité sociale 3. Organisation médicale et sécurité sociale en Angleterre et en France», *Institut de Science Economique Appliquée*, Paris, 1945, pp. 93-133.

benefits, now related to the status of citizens rather than of the affiliation to the mutual funds; in the same approach to what now was called “social security”, and no longer “social insurances”, which previously were not connected in a coherent vision of the social policy.¹³⁰⁴ Most of the administrative arrangements of the pre-war and Vichy’s period remained, but the aims of social policy changed. While Laroque and Parodi collaborated with the Ministry of Labour in the draft projects of the 1940 all-inclusive reforms, the same former Minister Belin recognized that the main influences of the basic guidelines should be rather retraced in the universalistic setting of the *Beveridge Report* than in the previous French system.¹³⁰⁵ The administrative edifice of the post-war French social security had many continuities with the previous legislation, but the 1945-6 plan rooted, from the ideological point of view, on the universalistic setting that spread from the Anglo-Saxon world to all the Western Europe.

7.4. World War II, social policies and propaganda: a transnational history

War was a moment of circulation of ideas and project. The British propaganda abroad was not a patch, but a net target. It was framed in the wider political elaborations arose between the shores of the Atlantic in 1941, and ratified by the *Atlantic Charter*. This document, until 1942, was the main reference for the social propaganda against the Axis. The *Beveridge Report* and other social enhancements promoted the Anglo-American idea of the post-war settlement, and – in the subsidiary – the leadership of Britain in Europe.

The MOI clearly understood the political relevance of the *Beveridge Report*, gone down in history as “plan”, as nicknamed by the PWE. While the *War Cabinet* was still considering whether to fully or partially accept the guidelines of the report, this was presented as the state-sponsored statement of principles for the reconstruction. It was the product of the British “institutional” revolution, and the basis for

¹³⁰⁴ P. Laroque, «De l’assurance sociale à la sécurité sociale : l’expérience française», *Revue internationale du travail*, n.6/1948, pp. 621-649.

¹³⁰⁵ R. Belin, «Lettre adressée aux Études sociales et syndicales», n. 191/ 1971, pp. 17-18

more concrete and detailed policy proposals, after that the PWE recognized the failure of the *Atlantic Charter* in the propaganda on the continent. The *Beveridge Report*, gradually identified abroad with the social provisions elaborated by the British government, was propagandised via different channels and by different actors. Beveridge and the SSL promoted the diffusion of the principles of the document, thanks to summaries, schemes, and translations across the Atlantic and above.¹³⁰⁶ The PWE devoted great attention to the diffusion of the pamphlets through paper and broadcast media on the social progress in Britain or on the life of the workers during wartime.¹³⁰⁷ The BBC, and particularly broadcasts like *Radio London*, were expected to “project” Britain and its achievements over Europe, strengthening its role as stronghold of democracy, social progress and wealth, since «in consequence of the collapse of France, the political, moral, and artistic leadership of Europe will be vacant. This leadership will certainly be sought in the first place in Moscow or in London [...] Britain’s prestige after the war will be higher than ever before, and there is little doubt that her moral and political leadership will be largely accepted in Europe.»¹³⁰⁸

The principles of political freedoms, economic prosperity and social security were the cornerstone of the British narrative to impose its hegemony in Europe: «the projection of Britain would be the legitimate aim of these broadcasts, and would be acceptable to their audiences, so long as the Britain which projected stands for the principles outlined in the Atlantic Charter, and so long as the political, educational, and cultural policies they are asked to follow are based on the idea of Britain as a part of Europe, Europe as a part of the world, and on the belief that freedom and prosperity and happiness are as indivisible as peace.»¹³⁰⁹ The new principles of social solidarity established in 1941 became useful tools for the Allied rethoric which opposed both the Nazi-Fascism (the “racial community” or the

¹³⁰⁶ See various material in LSE, Beveridge/8/58; LSE, Beveridge/8/61.

¹³⁰⁷ See TNA, INF/2/30; TNA, INF/2/39; TNA, INF/2/40.

¹³⁰⁸ TNA, INF/1/982, «Memoranda on the future of B.B.C. European Broadcasting», p.1.

¹³⁰⁹ Ivi. p.2.

“corporative solidarity”), and Communism (“the dictatorship of the proletariat”).

The Allied propaganda had two aims. In the shorter period, it weakened the Axis narrative against the liberal Anglo-Saxon capitalism, presenting the Anglo-Americans plains for a fairer society – even better than Communism. The second goal was linked to the international relations and to the power politics in the post-war settlement. To safeguard its position, Britain adhered to the principles of the *Atlantic Charter* which laid down the foundations of policies and institutions of the new order. Promoting social security was meant to convince the support of the working classes and a doable political road map for the European ruling classes. As no one could really believe that the post-war world would remain the same, the challenge for the Allies was to win the consensus of the population after the war, and to pull the rug out of the Soviet expansion. Except for the case of *Radio London*, which reached a significant audience, it may be exaggerated to talk about “mass propaganda”; nevertheless, the government encouraged a capillary dissemination of the main documents; translations of the reports started to circulate immediately after their publishing in Britain and the summaries were printed also on the Continent, in Switzerland as well as in liberated Italy and in Germany.¹³¹⁰ In the end, the plans reached the public officers and parties with new ideas and served to inform the Continent of the social enhancement in the making in Britain. This strategy had some fruits; the interest in social reforms did not decrease after the war, and yet the diffusion of information summaries on the British legislation kept flowing after 1945.¹³¹¹

The Nazi-Fascists harshly criticized British plans, as the attempt to chase their social achievement. In 1939, Hitler declared that

¹³¹⁰ LSEA, Beveridge/8/57, «Nicola Pascazion, *Il Piano Beveridge. La Gran Bretagna per tutti i cittadini lavoratori*, Putignano, 1944»; LSEA, Beveridge/8/57, «Basilio Mauro, *Libertà dal bisogno (Freedom from Want)*, Ionia, Milton, 1945»; E.F. Rimensberger, *Was ist der Beveridgeplan?*, Hausenstein, Verlag Olten, 1943; G.D.H. Cole, *Der Beveridge Plan. sein Inhalt und seine Bedeutung*, Zürich, Landesring der Unabhängigen, 1943; W. Beveridge, *Soziale Sicherheit und Vollbeschäftigung*, Hamburg, Hoffmann und Campe Verlag, 1946.

¹³¹¹ Gaetano Stamatì, *Dal “Piano Beveridge” al progetto laburista sulle assicurazioni sociali*, Roma, Associazione Italo-britannica, 1946.

Britain was at war against the Third Reich because «what they hate is the Germany which sets a dangerous example for them, this social Germany. It is the Germany of a social labour legislation [...] It is the Germany of social welfare, of social equality, of the elimination of class differences – this is what they hate! [...] This Germany which grants its labourers decent housing – this is what they hate because they have the feeling their own peoples could be “infected” thereby.»¹³¹² The Fascist narrative was similar, retracing twenty years of contraposition between “social” Fascism and “plutocratic” Britain.¹³¹³ The Second World War represented in their view the logical conclusion of the path undertaken by Fascism since 1919. In 1941, Mussolini in Rome solemnly proclaimed before the workers that the “higher” social justice among nations was the prerequisite to achieve the “higher” social justice among the classes: «after the war, in the worldwide social turmoil that will follow with a fairer social redistribution of the resources of the world, it should be taken into account, and it will take into account, the sacrifices made and the discipline of the Italian working classes: the Fascist Revolution will make another decisive step to shorten the social distances.»¹³¹⁴ The Axis carefully stressed this confrontation between distinguished models that determined the socio-economic relations after the war. Historian Kiran Klaus Patel stated that «on social policy specifically, Italian fascism and Nazism claimed leadership role in reorganizing Europe.»¹³¹⁵ In their criticisms, the Fascists did not read between the lines the political implications of the *Beveridge Report*: the establishment of the social rights of citizenship. The social policies of the Axis powers and their satellites claimed for the “social collaboration” or defined the social rights according to racial bonds. On the contrary, the British

¹³¹² Mentioned in K.K.Patel, «Welfare in the Warfare State: Nazi Social Policy on the International Stage», *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, n.2/2015, pp. 3-38.

¹³¹³ Istituto Nazionale di Cultura Fascista, *Plutocrazia e Bolscevismo*, Quaderni di divulgazione, Roma, 1942-XXII.

¹³¹⁴ B. Mussolini, «La più alta giustizia sociale fra i popoli condizione essenziale per la più alta giustizia sociale fra le classi. Teatro Adriano, 23 febbraio 1941», in Id., *Mussolini parla agli operai*, p. 40.

¹³¹⁵ K.K.Patel, «Welfare in the Warfare State: Nazi Social Policy on the International Stage», p. 12.

report pointed at creating new bonds of social solidarity related to the status of “citizen”.

The British propaganda overwhelmed the Nazi-Fascist narrative, but in the very end did not completely succeed in all its purposes; the 1942-4 social projects directly opposed to Nazism, but also competed with Soviet Russia. The universalistic principles already stated in the *Atlantic Charter* did not hold the grip of the masses. Both the Allied and the Axis powers captured the importance of the working class as key element to determine the balance of power. Both were overwhelmed by the spreading of Communism and by the rise of a second wave of popularity of Stalin and Soviet Russia.¹³¹⁶ In the long-run, the wide diffusion and uproars surrounding the British plans led to mixed results in the international status and outlook of Britain. The reports of the PWE said that the propaganda of social security served to give to Britain the leadership of the Western world in the foreshadowed confrontation with Soviet Communism. The promotion of the British social policy as possible blueprint for similar reforms on the Continent was also related to the need to support the creation of more balanced trade relations. In that regard, the government and Beveridge’s outlook coincided more than in other policy areas:

«The economic clauses of the Atlantic Charter represent not vague idealism but plain business sense. No nation can enjoy high and rising standards of life without some trade with other nations. No two nations can trade with another without becoming linked in a partnership for prosperity or adversity. All nations which wish to trade together for economic advancement with security must pursue full employment together. The united military war of the freedom-loving nations against tyranny and barbarism needs to be followed by common action, embracing more and more nations, against the economic instability which has spelt insecurity to

¹³¹⁶ E.J. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991*, London, Abacus, 1995, pp. 225-237.

so many millions in the past.»¹³¹⁷

The spread of social security was expected to give moral and political authority to Britain, and to create the favourable international and economic environment to enact social and economic reforms at home. The “revolution” begun in the Anglo-Saxon world became a subject matter of transnational exchange, without achieving the expected results. Full employment, for instance, became “paradigm” for the Western European ruling classes, but this did not mean necessarily the implementation of Keynesian policies. In Italy, full employment was subsidiary to the boost of production, monetary stabilization, and creation of national savings. France adopted policies to support employment that also had little to do with Keynesianism. The *Plan Monnet* was rather a plan of industrial investments and productive expansion in the expected key sectors of the French economy: steel and coal production, infrastructure, housing, agriculture.¹³¹⁸

The same “ambivalence” concerned social security; neither in Italy nor in France the democratic governments reset the legislation of the previous regimes, with the exception of the laws on corporations and socializations. In Italy, this would have meant to dismantle nearly twenty years of social actions, which constituted the very framework of the Italian compulsory insurances.¹³¹⁹ The recasting of the democracy on inclusive basis was attested by incorporation of the social rights and the social protection in the Constitutional Charter.¹³²⁰ The reception of the British social security was critically assessed and took into account

¹³¹⁷ W. Beveridge, *Full Employment in a Free Society*, p.231.

¹³¹⁸ Some historians retraced the origins of the postwar plan in the Vichy years, while others stressed the importance of the models coming from the US, with their emphasis put on the productivity. R. Kuisel, «Vichy et les Origines de la Planification Economique : 1940-46», *Le Mouvement Social*, n.98/1977, pp. 77-101; M.-L. Djelic, «Genèse et fondements du plan Monnet : l’inspiration américaine», *Revue Française d’Etudes Américaines*, n.1/1996, pp. 77-86.

¹³¹⁹ Gi. Silei, *Lo Stato Sociale in Italia. Storia e Documenti. Vol. II. Dalla caduta del fascismo ad oggi (1943-2004)*, Roma-Manduria-Bari, Piero Lacaita Editore, 2004, pp. 27-72.

¹³²⁰ See the article 38 of the Italian Constitution. *Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana*, Roma, Senato della Repubblica, 2009.

the structural gaps between the two countries, which made impossible similar plans in Italy. The parties mostly retained the political principles underpinning the Anglo-Saxon projects. The Italian Social Catholics considered it the doable third way between the lawless capitalism and Communism; it allowed the coordination and the intermingling between social and economic policy, and the affirmation of bond of citizenships based on solidarity.¹³²¹ More complicated was the left-wing take on this subject; while Fascists rejected the “plutocratic” British plans because they did not solve class antagonism, the Marxist parties objected their conservative features, which preserved capitalism and weakened the class struggle. This ideological rebuttal accompanied the strong opposition to the Labour Government from 1945-51, regarded as the stronghold of the anti-Communist international policy in Western Europe.¹³²²

Alongside ideological and political opposition, the left-wing forces put much trust in the myth of the “planning”, which had less to do with universalism, but integrated elements of social security within more articulated wealth redistribution through progressive taxation.¹³²³ The harshening of the Cold War in Italy led to ideological polarization. Instead of a policy area that favoured the pro-Western options, as suggested by British services during the war, social policy became bone of contention in the political debate. DC governments reluctantly gripped this issue; the universalistic setting was not rejected in principle, but was considered not applicable to the Italian economic and political situation, determining the withdrawal *sine die* of any coherent project. In turn, the reform of social protection remained in the

¹³²¹ D. Parisi, «Riformismo economico anglosassone. La presenza di Beveridge nella cultura economica italiana (1943-1950)», in Piero Roggi (edited by), *L'attesa della povera gente. Giorgio La Pira e la cultura economica anglosassone*, pp. 24-47

¹³²² The Foreign Minister Bevin was constantly attacked by the Italian Socialist journals for his anti-Communist positions. He was regularly lampooned and criticized in the Socialist newspaper *Mondo Operaio* and other magazines. See «PSI e Labour», *Mondo Operaio*, 22 gennaio 1949; F.A. Ridley, «Laburismo o socialismo», *Iniziativa Socialista per l'Unità Europea*, 16-30 novembre 1946.

¹³²³ C. Pinto, *Il riformismo possibile. La grande stagione delle riforme: utopie, speranze, realtà (1945-1964)*, Soveria Mannelli, Il Rubettino, 2008, pp. 3-42.

political agenda throughout the whole Cold War; its benchmarks would have been the reforms of the old-age pensions and the education systems during the Centre-Left Government between DC and PSI in the '60s, culminated with the Labour Statute in 1970 and the birth of the Italian NHS in 1978.

In France, the basic reforms were laid down immediately after the war, partially escaping from domestic and international political tensions. The PGFR gave birth to the plan of social security, but did not erase the legislation of Vichy that achieved the interwar prospected reforms.¹³²⁴ Inclusiveness became the political principle underpinning social policy, but, as in Italy, it proved impossible and counterproductive to overhaul the previous system, so the reformers adapted French social policy to this new principle. As publicly stated by De Gaulle, who personally found the *Beveridge Report* "impressive", «national and social security are, for us, mandatory and interlinked goals.»¹³²⁵ The interpenetration of the aims of social security with the previous French social legislation led to a new synthesis, that, in a definition that could easily apply also for the Italian case, represented «the institutional compromise between the two fundamental historical traditions as far as the social protection is concerned: it matched the universalistic principles of Beveridge with the compulsory schemes of Bismarck.»¹³²⁶

Neither Italy nor France turned into integral universalistic Britain-like social security systems, but rather incorporated new political goals within their specific compulsory schemes. This is the reason why the results of the British propaganda cannot be univocally assessed. It did not probably achieve the expected results in penetrating among the masses nor in securing the role of Britain in the post-war international scenario. On the other side, the dissemination of the British plans effectively provided working tools for civil servants, experts and policy-makers in reshaping the approach to this policy area. In the subsidiary, it proves once again that – especially after 1945

¹³²⁴ AN, 72/AJ/546, «Assurances Sociales. S.d.»

¹³²⁵ Christian Pineau, *La simple vérité*, Paris, Phalanx, 1983, p. 608.

¹³²⁶ B. Palier, *Gouverner la sécurité sociale*, Paris, PUF, 2015, p. 103, see also pp. 65-106.

– social policy developed first and foremost as State policy, in a strong bargaining position with regard to sectional interests and voluntary sector. And this also resulted from the Allied “cultural warfare” during WWII.

Conclusions

The evolution of social policy has been an incremental, multifaceted, process. Different factors contributed to the redefinition of social security after 1945. They resulted from the public policy's *path dependence* and important political and socio-economic ruptures. The comparative analysis puzzles even more linear and generalizing stances. A fruitful approach to understand the new place of social security in domestic and international scenarios considers the role of the State as principal actor in the expansion of the welfare schemes from 1945 onwards. Social policy assumed fundamental tasks in the regulation of the social conflict *and* in addressing the inequalities in social statuses among the citizens. The compulsory social insurances are related to the breakthrough of industrial capitalism and to the "social question" it caused, and called into question the rights of citizenship and their extent. But they also concerned even wider issues opened up by the collapse of the Old Regime; the breaking of the traditional social ties required the reconfiguration of the mechanisms of social relief.¹³²⁷

Between the 19th and 20th centuries the social protection changed in its *function of political* aims. Until the Second World War, the pattern combined upside-down legislative regulation, mutual self-aid and uncoordinated State policy. The social insurances were not necessarily identified with the rights of citizenship; they rather addressed conjunctural issues (unemployment) or concerns not directly related to social rights (demographic policies). The watershed moment was WWII; Marshall's classical interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative expansion of the social rights of citizenship might be

¹³²⁷ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, Boston, Beacon, 2001, particularly pp. 21-32.

affected by the British context in the '60s.¹³²⁸ His analysis, however, captured a real feature of post-war social welfare; after 1945, the democracies reformed the previous schemes and introduced new policies to integrate as much citizens as possible in the new "social pact"; the enjoyment of the social benefits and services progressively became a right. This was not the natural outcome of the "spreading" of citizenship-based social solidarity, but resulted from a cumbersome redefinition of the borders and the tasks of the Nation-States.

On the one side, the social legislation carried out as an incremental process of coordination and rationalisation of the compulsory schemes. This was a long-run political and socio-economic change, which did not pass through major ruptures; the social schemes even experienced a certain degree of convergence, that nonetheless should not be overestimated. The administrative solutions may converge, but the various settings retained substantial divergences, as for the traditional split between universalistic liberal systems and the continental "conservative-corporatist" schemes.¹³²⁹ The very common ground during wartime years was the political will to carry on with more coherent and integrated social policies. The policy-makers, in *all* countries considered here, elaborated projects for the overhaul of the previous systems; redefining their tasks and extent was the subject of a lively debate that crossed the traditional categories of "democracies" and "totalitarianisms".

On the other side, on ideological differences dwells the great divergence between the three case-studies. In the year 1942-5, the meaning and scope of social policy was submitted to a real "Copernican Revolution". The British social projects, as well as the Italian and French reforms were part of a wider international transfer of policies and ideas occurred in the Thirties.¹³³⁰ After the Great Depression, it was no longer possible to recast the *laissez-faire*

¹³²⁸ See T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class, and other essays*; Id. (edited by), *Class, Citizenship and Social Development*, Garden City, Doubleday and Company, 1964;

¹³²⁹ R. Titmuss, *Social Policy: an Introduction*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1974; G.-E. Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Western Capitalism*.

¹³³⁰ K.K. Patel, «Welfare State», in Akira Iriye, Pierre-Yves Saunier (eds.), *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2009, pp. 1099-1102.

capitalism, nor ignore the popular masses in the re-legitimation of the States. Britain reconfigured social policy according to "citizenship"; the State ensured the citizens from the loss of income that might undermine social fabric and political institutions. The Italian and French regimes, instead, reorganized the relation between State and individuals towards forms of "social collaboration". Vichy pointed at achieving corporative and national solidarity, while in the RSI social rights were granted to the members of each business unit, as productive elements of the national community.

I deepened three aspects of the social policies during wartime. Firstly, the gradual convergence of the three systems towards similar administrative practices and increasing importance of public social policy. The second focus is on the wartime projects. In the plans for the post-war settlement, social policy had a primary role for the Anglo-Americans and the Axis powers. The third fundamental feature is related to the new dimension and growing importance of the social policy in the national and international arena.

"Social security" was used by the British to legitimize the war effort before the opinion at home and to take the leadership on the Continent, in opposition to Nazi-Fascism and Soviet Communism. The British social propaganda not only had immediate goals related to the war, but also wider-ranging aims. Social security was expected to legitimize the democratic "social pact" and to contribute to resettle the post-war international relations on the ground of pacific co-operation among nations. Mutually, the Axis powers grounded their narrative on the "new" social policies at home and on the reorganisation of the international relations according to this new social order. "Social collaboration" as policy goal was equally important for the Vichy regime and for the Fascists. It is not stretch to imagine that the reasons of the failure of the Axis and their satellites in the implementation of their policies and in the conquest of the consensus of popular and middle classes, are rather attributable to the military rebuffs from 1942 on. The military events changed also the mood of the opinion in Europe and the "ideological climate" of the war.

It is extremely difficult to grasp a single factor that determined the wartime “Copernican Revolution”. Diachronically, social insurances developed incrementally over time, to such an extent that even the 1939-45 projects did not mark a real legislative break. But the exceptional war conditions (whether fought or suffered) decisively affected policy-makers. From the political point of view, in all the three countries the major concern was the end of social strife and insecurity, and the strengthening of a new “social pact”. The States became increasingly more committed to “social solidarity”, which varied according to each political regime and ideology. Vichy’s “corporatist solidarity” slightly differed from the ideology that inspired the republican Fascism, and of course from the kind of solidarity underpinning the British reforms.

In fact, “totalitarian” or “liberal” welfare states never existed; it would be more appropriate to distinguish between universalist social security and occupational/“corporatist” social protection, and the corresponding ways to redefine the “social pact” and social solidarity. The assesement of the “affirmation” of the British model is extremely ambivalent and required multiple levels of analysis. On the one side, the “universalist” administrative mechanisms were only partially adopted on the Continent; on the other, the core ideas of the “universalist social security” penetrated European policy-makers and social reformers. They changed the nature of social policy both in the immediate years after the war and in the longer-run, as it was no longer possible to handle the reform of social protection without taking into consideration the universalism inspired by Beveridge’s model.

Policy Convergences

I approached the topic as a combined provision of *political legacy* and major *conceptual* ruptures occurred from 1942 onwards. The legislative stratification could not be overturned overnight. In the Vichy regime, the previous compulsory schemes created acquired rights and vested interests, which had a major role in the failure of 1940-2 Belin’s reforms. Similarly, the RSI could not reset the measures enacted in twenty years; its most effective reform was the

administrative rearrangement of contributions and insurances, which was the logical prosecution of the 1935 and 1939 reforms. As for the *Beveridge Report*, its effective extent could not be assessed univocally; after the publication of the report, the Paymaster General argued that «there is nothing particularly novel or revolutionary about the Beveridge plan. In the main it consolidates and augments existing insurance schemes, thus achieving administrative economy. [...] The benefits promised are greater than at present but not as much greater as people are apt to think.»¹³³¹

More than the technical innovations, the report stood out for the political principles it therein asserted. The Beveridge Committee, at the beginning, was not expected to draft the ground-breaking text that it eventually became.¹³³² Its follow-up compelled the *War Cabinet* to respond positively to the guidelines of the report. Among the three countries here studied, the only one with institutional continuity experienced the major breakthrough to a *new approach* of social policy. The subsequent governmental *White Papers* fixed some linchpins of the post-1945 social policy, not only in Britain: the unification in a single political and administrative institution of the compulsory social insurances; the tripartite contributory system; the nationalisation of the compulsory insurances alongside the voluntary schemes; the “freedom of want” as leading principle; the coordination of social services and assistance; employment policies. The tendential convergence of social systems according to these parameters, altogether defined the post-war “social security”. The two key innovations, however, did not cross the Channel. The flat-rate benefits were usually not adopted in the major European countries, which retained Bismarckian schemes. The creation of the free and universalistic healthcare service was delayed in Europe, in some cases of decades.

The 1944 *White Papers* retained the political principles of the *Beveridge Report*, rather than its detailed proposals. Similarly, the

¹³³¹ TNA, PREM/89/4/2, «Paymaster General to the Prime Minister. The Beveridge Report. 11th February 1943», p.1.

¹³³² B. Abel Smith, «The Beveridge Report: its Origins and Outcomes», *International Social Security Review*, n.1-2/2007, pp. 5-16.

“spreading” of solidarity in post-1945 Europe did not take place through the automatic adoption of the universalistic model *as administrative practice*. The new rights of citizenship deployed through the juxtaposition of the previous occupational “Bismarckian” schemes and the universalistic model *as political principle* and “social pact”; the introduction of elements of universalism within the social protection systems eased the socio-economic and political processes in the post-war advanced capitalist countries.¹³³³ After 1945, the effective convergence of the policies is related to the emergence of a precise social model that unified public policies and political paradigms. This pattern was not limited to Western Europe – characterized nonetheless by an increasing integration of its social policies – but stood out as worldwide trend, which, once again, crossed political and ideological borders.¹³³⁴ After WWII, it was difficult to rethink the “social pact” without amalgamating, to various degrees, the former schemes and provisions with citizenship-based benefits and measures.

The social solidarity and the rights of citizenship

Historian Peter Baldwin, in his historical comparison of the post-war social security models in the European continent, stated that the continental ruling classes failed in achieving the “solidarity turn”; only the Nordic countries and Britain put in place a true universalistic and solidarity system.¹³³⁵ The post-1945 “paradigm shift” did not occur with the same extent everywhere. But the abovementioned

¹³³³ H. Wilensky, C.N. Lebeaux, *Industrial Society and Social Welfare*, New York, Russell Sage, 1958; F. Pryor, *Public Expenditures in Communist and Capitalist Nations*, Homewood, Irvin, 1968.

¹³³⁴ See the contributions in H. Kaeble, G. Schmid (eds.), *Das europäische Sozialmodell: auf dem Weg zum transnationalen Sozialstaat*, Berlin, Sigma, 2004, and particularly H. Kaeble, «Das europäische Sozialmodell – eine historische Perspektive», pp. 31-50; L. Raphael, «Europäische Sozialstaaten in der Boomphase (1948-1973)», pp. 51-73; see also P. Kettunen, K. Petersen (eds.), *Beyond Welfare State Models. Transnational Historical Perspectives on Social Policy*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 2011, in particularly P. Kettunen, Klaus Petersen, «Introduction: rethinking welfare state models», pp. 1-15; C. Conrad, «Social policy history after the transnational turn», pp. 218-240.

¹³³⁵ P. Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State, 1875-1975*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

administrative innovations, and mostly the principles of social citizenship, reconfigured the relationship between governments and citizens. Social security, to whatever extent and typology, was now a State policy area and shored up the consensus within the democratic societies.

Vigorelli captured the scope of the “paradigm shift” occurred in the political culture after 1942 in Britain, then spread even in countries, like Italy, without the preconditions to implement a thorough plan of social security. The British plans conceived the “freedom from Want” as a right of citizenship, achieved thanks to the involvement of the State; these principles were adapted to the different conditions of each country. In Italy, they inspired the shift to a more consistent commitment of the State in the assistance and social policies:

*«the modern assistance is conceived as a collective bond of solidarity and springs from the right to life of all human beings; [...] and puts all citizens on the same footing in front of the need and the distress. [...] Thus, only in an inherently democratic regime it is possible to conceive and to achieve a system of “social security” which encompasses and commits the political and moral values and the material forces of the human coexistence, and carries out therefore an authentic social revolution.»*¹³³⁶

Similarly, the programme of the CNR in France was clear about the principles that should inspire the reform: «on the social plan: [...] a comprehensive plan of social security, to ensure for all the citizens the livelihood, in any case where they cannot provide them with their own work, by a management owned by the delegates of the insured and the State; the security of employment, conditions relating to recruitment and dismissal.»¹³³⁷

The principles of “freedom from Want” were interiorized in the post-1945 democracies, while the occupational framework of the

¹³³⁶ E. Vigorelli, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹³³⁷ CNR, *Programme du Conseil National de la Résistance*, Paris, CNR, 1944.

continental compulsory schemes gradually adapted to the principles of social citizenship. In France, the fragmentation of different schemes along occupational lines (with separate insurance schemes for farmers, shopkeepers, self-employed) did not prevent the achievement of major solidarity. The overdue establishment of the public hospitals was equally affected by the 1941 reform and by the need to provide universal access to all the citizens.¹³³⁸ Similarly, the Italian social protection never experienced any coherent reform. It rather pursued the adaptation to the European trend with a piecemeal approach that underpinned the logic of the post-1945 social security. In 1963, the PSI joined the government with a wide-scope programme of social reforms, including old-age pensions and national healthcare system. Pietro Nenni, the leader of the Socialists, proclaimed – borrowing the classical definition of the British Welfare State – that his party wanted to achieve the welfare state «from the cradle to the grave.»¹³³⁹

The answer to the question of the “features” of social security after 1945 is not univocal. In administrative terms, the “universalistic turn” failed everywhere except in Nordic countries and British Commonwealth.¹³⁴⁰ In turn, the principles of social citizenship gradually spread also through the European continent; they fit to the renewed international and domestic context, and came to more coherence after the 1960s. The real turning point did not *primarily* concern the administrative setting of the social protection, but rather its extent and function in the post-war States, and the idea of the “social pact” underlying the “new” social policies. The traditional concerns

¹³³⁸ In France, like in other countries, the health policy throughout 19th and 20th centuries was moved by different concerns, related to public health, prevention of the social ills, and social engineering. After 1945, the establishment of the rights to health tied in with the social security. See P. Rosanvallon, *L'état en France de 1789 à nos jours*, Paris, Seuil, 1990, pp. 128-135 ; V.-P. Comiti, *Histoire sanitaire et sociale*, Paris, PUF, 1997.

¹³³⁹ P. Nenni, *Perché i socialisti nel governo. Discorso pronunciato dall'On. Pietro Nenni al Teatro Adriano di Roma il 29 dicembre 1963*, Roma, PSI, 1964, p.20.

¹³⁴⁰ By the '60s the European welfare systems experienced a certain degree of convergence for compulsory insurances and other social services, as well as for the social expenditure. See H. Kaebler, *A Social History of Europe, 1945-2000. Recovery and Transformation after Two World Wars*, New York-Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2013, pp. 250-270, and particularly pp. 265-267.

about social unrest were juxtaposed to the enjoyment of social benefits related to the citizenship.

In this sense, the 1942 British report and its legislative aftermaths after 1945, succeeded where Fascist Italy and the Vichy regime failed before and during WWII. Both regimes tackled the “social question” combining occupational schemes, corporatism in the industrial relations and suppression of individual and social freedoms. Both failed in providing effective social solidarity throughout the whole national community, as the regimes relied on other forms of solidarity/dependence (e.g. the corporations, the party). The analysis of the reception of the *Beveridge Report* by Fascists is illuminating. They received the British plans in ideological terms; this bias did not allow them to capture the innovative features of the British projects, that is, the incorporation of the social protection in the public policies as a right of citizenship. They did not catch the “paradigm shift” occurred in 1942; the British social plans linked the appeasement of social insecurity and unrest to a wider social inclusiveness of the State policies, which provided the *basic* minimum income without other requirements outside of the citizenship.

The post-war welfare state did not repose exclusively on the confrontation with Communism, just as the wartime social plans did not merely confront Nazi-Fascism. It also resulted from the rethinking of the very foundations of the “social pact” and the policies to achieve it. In Britain, it went down in history as “post-war consensus”, whose limits are debated by historiography.¹³⁴¹ But France and Italy did not escape from this trend. At the same time that Vichy’s Secretary of Labour tried to ensure solidarity within and among corporations, the French social reformers in London declared the need to «create solidarity, particularly among the insured, but within the society in

¹³⁴¹ D. Dutton, *British Politics since 1945. The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of Consensus*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1997, pp. 1-85; B. Pimlott, D. Kavanagh, P. Morris, «Is the postwar “consensus” a myth?», *Contemporary Records*, n.6/1989, pp. 12-15; D. Kavanagh, «The Postwar Consensus»; more critical with the actual existence of any “consensus” is R. Toye, «From “Consensus” to “Common Ground”: the Rhetoric of the Postwar Settlement and its Collapse», *Journal of Contemporary History*, n.1/2013, pp. 3-23.

general.»¹³⁴² This single clause sums up the extent and limits of the British influence over continental plans: they retained the principles of national social solidarity, while opting for the persistence of occupational schemes. From the 1945 *Plan de sécurité sociale* onwards, the French policy-makers tried to ensure increasingly more universalist elements in the French social welfare.¹³⁴³

Italy never experienced a plan of social reforms comparable to the British and French ones. Nor had the Italian elites the opportunity to access to the original British texts and coeval debates, being the knowledge of the *Beveridge Report* mediated by the Allied information services. The reception of the British plans by the Italian reformers was even more “second-handed” than for the French ones. Yet, their ideas and guidelines penetrated into the Italian debate for decades after the war. Also the democratic and anti-fascist parties received innovations of the British reports with their own ideological lens; but, unlike the Fascists, they retained the elements of social solidarity considered no longer deferrable, as stated by the *Atlantic Charter* and the other founding texts of the post-war order.

Social Security and International Order

These principles did not germinate nor spread from nothing. Their diffusion and circulation owed a lot to the deliberate and specific choice of the Allies, first and foremost the *War Cabinet*. The effort to ensure the widest circulation possible to the plans of social security was inherently related to the wartime conditions. It resulted also from the ideological content of the war and from the confrontation with other social systems that challenged the traditional approach to the “social question”. The publishing of the *Beveridge Report* was an obligatory step; however, its popular success led the *War Cabinet* to follow up on with some official and compelling guidelines for the reconstruction. The reaction of the public, in Britain, Europe and across the Atlantic,

¹³⁴² AN, 72/AJ/546, « Rapport sur les Assurances Sociales en France », p.25.

¹³⁴³ B. Palier, *op. cit.*, particularly pp. 107-165; B. Palier, T. Chevalier, «Welfare State Reforms», in Edward J. Mullen, *Oxford Bibliographies in Social Work*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2013.

was later fostered by the British propaganda machine. Later, the post-war social welfare apparently mitigated the social conflict, by achieving a more inclusive citizenship.¹³⁴⁴ The success of the British plans rested on this new bond of social solidarity, which had a relevant carryover in the wartime propaganda and was able to reach – with mixed results – all the social strata.

The coeval French and Italian public narratives stressed respectively the “social collaboration” at the very basis of their actions. Domestic and external factors led to the failure of these projects; British society was cohesive, as the country was winning the war, while French and Italian regimes exercised control over a divided society under the yoke of Nazi Germany. Eventually, the Allies overwhelmed the Axis powers not only thanks to their military and industrial superiority, but also to the new ideas they carried on the horseback. Social security cannot be understood outside the context of international politics. Not only for the implications of full employment on international trade, industrial production and labour market; social security designed also a model of socio-economic organization, which restored liberal capitalism and democracy. It was also expected to challenge Soviet Communism, the other ideological, economic and institutional pole emerged from the war.

By the end of 1941, the British government was confident to win the war; they had – unlike in 1918 – to win the peace. They wanted to propose Britain as a model for the reconstruction, in terms of material relief and social innovations. From this point of view, Britain lost her political challenge; the war undermined her international role, and from 1941 onwards the country highly depended on American aid and loans.¹³⁴⁵ Among the continental working classes the success of the

¹³⁴⁴ R. Dahrendorf, «Citizenship and Social Class», in Martin Bulmer, and Anthony Rees (eds.), *Citizenship Today: The Contemporary Relevance of T.H. Marshall*, London, UCL Press, 1996, pp. 25-48, see particularly pp. 34-40.

¹³⁴⁵ The historian Clive Ponting wrote that «the lesson of 1940 was that Britain was no longer a great power [...] much of Britain's post-war economic, defence and foreign policy was based on an illusion: an attempt was made to reassert Britain's role as a major power without the necessary foundations to sustain it.» C.Ponting, *op. cit.*, p. 234, see also pp. 196-235 .

Red Army contributed to refresh the myth of Communism. The political and economic ruling classes, by reaction, oriented themselves toward the United States, their model and their ideology.¹³⁴⁶ The *Marshall Plan*, whose global impact on the recovery was questionable, marketed a political and psychological turn toward economic integration, as well as social and political pacification.¹³⁴⁷

Britain deceived itself to take the lead of Western Europe thanks to its contribution to the material recovery and thanks to the promotion of its renewed socio-economic model. As Milward wrote, the European post-war settlement was mostly shaped by the US, that furthered «the process of economic recovery in Western Europe, to develop a bloc of states which would share similar political, social, economic and cultural values to those which the United States itself publicly valued and claimed to uphold. [...] the values of so-called “free enterprise”, of entrepreneurship, of efficiency, of technical expertise, and of competition. These were all brought together in the concept of productivity.»¹³⁴⁸ These values were not inconsistent with the establishment of the welfare state. In the first formulations of the British social reformers, social security was rather a protection measure to avoid mass unemployment as experienced in the Thirties, and to guarantee the minimum vital income in any event. Later, economic growth, welfare states, social rights, affluent societies became – unexpectedly – the necessary corollaries of the “securing” of the Nation-States, strengthening the domestic political consensus and favouring the stabilization of the international settlement.¹³⁴⁹ But this outcome was achieved under the ideological and political American

¹³⁴⁶ C.S. Maier, «The politics of productivity: foundations of American international economic policy after World War II», and Id., «The two postwar eras and the conditions for stability in twentieth century Western Europe», in Id., *In Search of Stability*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, respectively pp. 121-152, and pp. 153-184.

¹³⁴⁷ A. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945-51*, London, Methuen&co., 1984, pp. 90-125.

¹³⁴⁸ A. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945-51*, p. 123.

¹³⁴⁹ Id., *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000, pp. 21-45, and particularly pp. 31-33.

hegemony over the “West”, and no longer that of the British one.

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List of abbreviations:

- The National Archives of UK: TNA
- London School of Economics Archives: LSEA
- Archives Nationales: AN
- Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présents: IHTP
- Centre d'Histoire Sociale du XXème Siècle : CHS
- Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine : BDIC
- Archivio Centrale di Stato : ACS
- Archivio Fondazione Micheletti : AFM

Vers un nouveau “pacte social” : La Deuxième Guerre Mondiale et les politiques sociales en Grande-Bretagne, Italie et dans l’État Français

Introduction

Dès le début de la guerre, les Alliés ainsi que les puissances de l’Axe et ses satellites étaient conscients que le conflit aurait élargi le périmètre des droits de citoyenneté et redéfini globalement le pacte social. La Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, sous ce point de vue, n’a pas seulement été un événement militaire, mais aussi un tournant en ce qui concerne les politiques sociales.

Cette thèse aborde ce sujet à plusieurs niveaux. Les trois Pays objet de l’analyse sont la Grande Bretagne, l’Italie Fasciste – et notamment la période de la République Sociale Italienne (RSI) – et l’État Français. Ces études de cas correspondent à trois modèles politiques différents : une démocratie libérale, le Royaume-Uni, une expérience fasciste extrême, la RSI, et une situation que l’on peut définir intermédiaire, telle que le régime vichyste. D’un point de vue diachronique, l’évolution des politiques sociales (assurances sociales, politiques de santé, allocations familiales) est un processus incrémental ; les plans de réforme de l’état-providence des années 1939-1945 reposent dans les héritages politiques et administratifs des cinquante années précédentes.

La thèse se compose de trois parties ; les deux premières parties sont des comparaisons « traditionnelles » parmi les politiques mises en place dans les trois Pays, alors que la troisième partie propose une approche transnationale. La première partie prend en compte les politiques sociales des Pays considérés sur la moyenne durée du siècle, en soulignant les caractéristiques nationales de chaque système de prévoyance sociale, par rapport à des tendances plus ample qui ont concerné tous les Pays industriels. La deuxième partie se concentre sur la période d’exception représentée par la guerre ; le moment de rupture conjoncturelle politique et économique de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale permet de comprendre la mesure du changement à niveau d’élaboration des politiques publiques, qui ne sont pas de toute

manière discernables de la tradition politique antérieure, précédemment analysée. La troisième partie, toujours liée à la dimension du changement mise en route par la guerre, est attentive aux échanges et circulations de plans de réforme sociale anglo-saxonnes – la pierre de touche de cette étude supranationale – sur le Continent et à travers l’Atlantique. Le transfert des informations sur les nouvelles politiques sociales en cours de discussion en Grande-Bretagne a pris la forme de propagande de guerre et des débats politiques et intellectuelles. Il a concerné les régimes de l’Axe ainsi que les mouvements démocratiques et de la Résistance, générant une discussion qui est allée bien au-delà de la guerre, et qui a concerné la redéfinition du pacte politique et social dans les démocraties européennes d’après-guerre.

La perspective générale de la thèse, donc, combine deux perspectives : le moyen terme des politiques sociales en tant que « politiques d’état », et l’impact de la « guerre totale » dans la réforme globale des systèmes d’assurance sociale et de santé. L’utilisation de la catégorie historiographique de « guerre totale » doit être contextualisée. Si dans le cas britannique l’impact structurelle de l’effort de guerre est évident, et traverse tous les domaines d’intervention étatique, ainsi que le débat public, la « guerre totale » concerne aussi l’Italie fasciste, et – dans une certaine mesure – l’État Français. Ces deux Pays ont été plongés dans l’économie de « guerre totale » de l’Allemagne nazie ; l’opinion générale auprès de l’ordre établie italienne et française est d’être au milieu d’un moment charnière par rapport aux politiques précédentes en matière d’intervention sociale. Pour cela, la « guerre totale » reste une hypothèse interprétative valable, mais sa portée doit être considérée dans les différents contextes politiques dans lesquelles les trois Pays se trouvaient.

Les systèmes d’assurances sociales sont un phénomène complexe qui a impliqué différents acteurs politiques et sociaux dès ses origines. L’importance du tournant de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale repose aussi sur le fait que, après le 1945, la prévoyance sociale est incorporée d’une manière de plus en plus importante au cœur des tâches des états. La perspective qu’on a adopté dans cette thèse ne veut

pas sous-estimer l'importance des éléments mutualistes, politiques et syndicaux dans le déploiement des nouvelles politiques sociales d'après-guerre. Bien au contraire, comme l'on a essayé de montrer dans ce travail, les différentes capacités des gouvernements dans ces trois Pays de négocier avec, voire s'imposer sur, les différents intérêts organisés a contribué à déterminer l'ampleur ou même le succès des projets de réforme. Et pourtant, l'importance qu'on a décidé de donner à l'acteur étatique – qu'on estime être justifié par l'évolution subséquente des états-providences – nous a amené à faire un tri des sources primaires et d'archive utilisées. Elles sont pour la plupart les archives des différents départements gouvernementaux impliqués dans la mise au point de nouvelles politiques sociales nationales ou dans leur promotion, ou encore la littérature grise de l'époque produite par les experts, les intellectuels, les fonctionnaires engagés dans ces réformes.

Le sujet des politiques sociales concerne d'une façon plus générale l'évolution globale des politiques publiques dans les Pays industriels. L'égard à la fois comparatif et transnational s'avère être le plus adapté, car il permet de saisir la complexité des processus simultanés et superposés à l'origine de l'état-providence d'après-guerre. Au-delà d'un substrat de *path dependence* inscrit dans les traditions et processus administratifs et politiques liés à chaque Pays, différents *critical junctures* ont affecté le changement radical de paradigme des années 1942-5 : la crise des Années 30 et le chômage de masse dans la plupart des Pays capitalistes ; les propositions alternatives des régimes Fascistes et Nazis pour assurer le plein emploi et la paix sociale ; le bogey de l'Union Soviétique et des mouvements communistes européens ; les conditions extrêmement difficiles de la guerre. Après avoir traversé tous ces bouleversements, les Pays capitalistes en Europe occidentale ont été capables d'établir un nouveau modèle de développement. Il a été défini à la fois « capitalisme-providence », « économie mixte », « néo-corporatisme ». Aujourd'hui, l'état-providence est une composante permanente des systèmes capitalistes modernes, quoi qu'il en soit les orientations générales en matière économique. Une politique effective de

compression des dépenses ne semble pas être à l'ordre du jour, même si le projet politique néo- et ordo-libérale en demande la « restructuration ».

Le modèle actuel du capitalisme semble subir une crise structurelle qui, à bien des égards, est comparable à celle des années 30, car elle remet en question les politiques et les discours hégémoniques. Le parallélisme s'arrête là ; le changement de paradigme après 1945 a résulté de bouleversements et d'affrontements militaro-idéologiques qui ont contraint les classes dirigeantes occidentales à reformuler leurs politiques et à établir un lien entre la croissance économique, la redistribution des richesses et le bien-être social. De nos jours, alors que les politiques d'austérité persistent avec le soutien de la gauche et de la droite, le marché libre, les politiques de redistribution, la richesse économique et l'état-providence s'effondrent près que complètement. Il faut voir si le capitalisme occidental sera une nouvelle fois capable de se réformer, et si les démocraties occidentales d'affirmer un nouveau pacte social, juste comme ils l'ont fait entre la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale et les soi-disant « Trente Glorieuses » de l'après-guerre.

Première partie. L'évolution générale de la politique sociale jusqu'à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale

La littérature scientifique convient que l'origine des modernes formes de protection sociale remonte aux assurances sociales obligatoires mises en œuvre par Bismarck en Allemagne, à partir des années '80 du 19^{ème} siècle. Elles ont constitué le modèle dont se sont inspirées les autres législations continentales et – dans une certaine mesure – le Royaume-Uni.

La première vague des lois sociales a été plutôt réalisée par les conservateurs ; elle s'est développée autour de mesures limitées, concernant tout d'abord les accidents du travail, et une législation résiduelle en matière de protection contre la maladie et la vieillesse. Du côté des législateurs de l'époque, ces réformes été inspirées tout d'abord au paternalisme conservateur et aux inquiétudes pour la préservation de la paix sociale face à la montée du mouvement ouvrier

organisé. Sur le continent ainsi qu'en Grande-Bretagne, les programmes d'assurance publiques croisaient le secteur privé et les fonds mutualistes, dont ils empruntaient la nature « corporatiste », c'est-à-dire, occupationnelle.

Une deuxième, plus consistante, période réformatrice s'est concrétisée entre la fin du 19^{ème} et le début du 20^{ème} siècles. Les gouvernements libéraux et la progressive intégration socialistes et d'autres partis de masse dans les systèmes politiques ont permis une plus ample activité législative à l'égard de la protection sociale. L'ouverture aux instances du mouvement ouvrier allait aussi à l'encontre des exigences « structurelles » des sociétés industrielles de masse naissantes. Ceci était, par exemple, le cas des soi-disant *Liberal Welfare Reforms* en Grande-Bretagne (1906-1914), dont une des principales causes étaient les préoccupations à l'égard de l'efficacité nationale face aux rivalités impériales et les taux croissants de chômage. Mais ceci était aussi le cas de réforme sociale de l'époque du Président Giolitti en Italie, qui accompagnaient la première vague d'industrialisation du Pays.

Ce processus de progressive intégration et étatisation de la prévoyance sociale a connu une accélération au lendemain de la Première Guerre Mondiale et pendant l'entre-deux-guerres, un premier moment charnière dans l'histoire des politiques sociales. D'un côté, la guerre a créé un nouveau vaste group d'assurés : les invalides, les vétérans, les familles des soldats morts au front. La guerre a comporté dans tous les Pays concernés un bouleversement matériel et social auquel les gouvernements ont dû faire face. De l'autre côté, les changements structurels mis en places par l'économie de guerre ont introduits des nouveaux acteurs sociaux ainsi que des nouvelles formes d'interventionnisme d'état dans la vie économique. En conséquent, dans la plupart des Pays, les gouvernements, bien qu'en trahissant les promesses faites pendant la guerre, ont retenu, voire étendu, les précédents schèmes des assurances sociales ; en Italie et en France, par exemple, des commissions gouvernementales ont été chargées de l'étude des possibles réformes du régime de protection sociale dans son ensemble. Ces enquêtes ont abouti aux réformes d'une certaine

importance : l'Italie devient l'un des rares Pays à établir une assurance obligatoire contre le chômage en 1919 ; en France, l'annexion des anciens territoires allemands de l'Alsace et de la Lorraine a contribué à déclencher une discussion qui a finalement conduit à la première réforme globale des assurances sociales entre 1928 et 1930. Cette réforme a été la base sur laquelle se sont appuyées les subséquentes réformes de la l'état-providence.

Après la crise du 1929, la scène politique ainsi économique mondiale change. Les États-Unis, la Grande-Bretagne, l'Allemagne et – dans une moindre mesure – l'Italie et la France sont frappées par les répercussions de la Grande Dépression, notamment pour la chute de la production industrielle, les hautes taxes de chômage, la forte inflation. Ses effets ont été néfastes aussi à niveau politique. En Allemagne, les dispositions combinées de chômage et inflation ont donné le coup de grâce au fragile compromis de la République de Weimar, et – rétrospectivement – ont ouvert la voie au Nazis. Aux États-Unis, le *New Deal* du Président Roosevelt s'est traduit dans un programme de sauvetage de secteur bancaire, de travaux publics, de sécurité sociale et de rétablissement de la confiance de l'opinion publique par rapport au système capitaliste.

Dans les trois Pays considérés, la crise économique et politique des années 30 a pesé différemment dans les politiques des trois Pays. En Italie, la Grande Crise a éclaté concomitamment au déploiement des politiques économiques et sociales du régime. Celles-ci se sont développées en continuité avec la dernière phase de l'Italie libérale, et peuvent être assimilées aux politiques de' « économie mixte » mises en place dans la même période en différents Pays européens. Dans la ligne tracée par les dernières mesure d'époque libérale, la rationalisation et unification des systèmes d'assurances sociales a poursuivi à un rythme accéléré après le 1933, avec la création des instituts nationaux pour les assurances sociales (INFPS) et des accidents du travail (INFAIL), qui, en réalité, ont réorganisé les précédentes assurances obligatoires. Au contraire, la création des institut semi-public pour supporter le système du crédit italien et pour le crédit à long et moyenne terme (IRI et IMI) s'inscrivaient dans des politiques anticycliques pour faire face à la

Grande Dépression. A côté de ces mesures, le régime Fasciste formulait une doctrine inspirée au principes du « corporatisme », bientôt devenu un instrument de propagande à l'intérieur ainsi qu'à l'étranger.

En France, les effets de la crise ont eu un impact plus faible par rapport au reste d'Europe, bien que ils se soient prolongés plus longtemps. En effet, jusqu'à l'arrivée au pouvoir du cartel de gauche du Front Populaire, l'orthodoxie en matière économique et sociale ne semblait pas être remise en cause. Le gouvernement du Front Populaire (1936-1938) a correspondu à la période de plus grandes réformes en matière de politique industrielle et syndicale, ainsi que de protection sociale (allocations familiales, congés payés, aides aux chômeurs, projets concernant les allocations aux vieux travailleurs). L'effort d'extension de la protection sociale mené par le Front Populaire n'a pas changé sa nature, qui se bifurquait dans une structure mutualiste et occupationnelle des assurances sociales et une intervention plus marquée de l'état dans le secteur des politiques familiales. Ce qui a caractérisé la France des années 30 a plutôt été un climat de croissante délégitimation des institutions républicaines face à la montée des mouvements s'inspirant au Fascisme ou à l'extrême droite. A côté de ces mouvements politiques, le débat intellectuel de ces années a été caractérisé par le ferment des groupes nommés des « non-conformistes » ; cet ensemble hétérogène des groupes et personnalités partageait la méfiance vers les institutions discréditées de la III^{ème} République ainsi que vers le libre marché. Ce milieu « technocratique » a graduellement été capable d'assumer des rôles importants au sein des départements ministériels, au chevet de la III^{ème} République, le régime de Vichy, et la France de l'après-guerre.

En Grande-Bretagne, le développement des politiques sociales était encouragé par la nécessité de faire face à la montée et persistance du chômage au cours de la décennie 1929-39. Les responsables politiques et les intellectuels s'interrogeaient sur les conséquences des taux élevés de chômage sur les institutions anglaises, et surtout sur les remèdes à la persistante crise du capitalisme du laissez-faire. Et pourtant, les recettes pour sortir de la crise, à la fois des formes de planisme, socialisation, ou keynésianisme se limitaient à un vif débat politique, académique et

auprès de l'opinion publique. Les nouvelles théories ne pénétraient pas les départements économiques du gouvernement, qui préférait adresser la question du chômage cyclique à travers des dispositions temporaires et que souvent croisaient assistance et prévoyance, plutôt qu'avec de programmes d'intervention macro- ou micro-économique. Globalement, toutefois, les organismes de prévoyance sociale ont été mieux intégrés et rationalisés à travers la réponse à la conjoncture économique et sociale. Les mesures de protection sociale au Royaume-Uni se sont adressées principalement à l'atténuation des effets économiques du chômage, qui était une donnée structurelle de l'économie britannique, aggravé par la conjoncture économique des années '30. Les mesures prises pour affronter le chômage contribuaient à changer l'approche de l'intervention publique aux nécessiteux, même si n'envisageait pas le tournant représenté par la guerre à cet égard.

A la fin des années '30, donc, dans ces trois Pays – et dans contextes institutionnels assez différents – l'approche générale aux politiques sociales (et économiques) suivait des tendances similaires. Dans tous les trois Pays, les nécessités d'ajustement structurel du système capitaliste ont croisé l'importance de relégitimer les institutions politiques ainsi que sociales. Ces exigences ont concerné les régimes libéraux ainsi, tels que la France et l'Italie, ainsi que le régime Fasciste en Italie. De la même manière, les politiques sociales se développées selon une tendance similaire, compte tenu des différentes conditions économiques et de la différente structure occupationnelle dans les trois Pays. A la fin des années Trente, dans les Pays européens, les systèmes de protection sociale convergeaient vers la consolidation des régimes obligatoires d'assurance sociale et leur progressive centralisation et unification. En même temps, le vieux paradigme libéral d'intervention résiduel dans la protection sociale était dépassé dans les événements après la Grande Dépression, même si l'orthodoxie libérale était encore la « doctrine » officielle des gouvernements dans leur action sociale et économique.

A l'aube de la Deuxième guerre mondiale, donc, le panorama intellectuelle et politique concernant les politiques sociales, et l'espace d'intervention étatique dans le domaine économique était changé ; les

plans du réarmement en Grande-Bretagne et en France, et les politiques autarciques dans l'Italie Fasciste avait redéfini le rôle de l'état. Et pourtant, le moment charnière pour comprendre la « révolution » survenue dans les politiques sociales est la Deuxième guerre mondiale, en tant que « guerre totale ». Cette catégorie historiographique a été investiguée par une vaste littérature dans les sciences politiques et par l'historiographie. Bien que la « guerre totale » puisse être défini à travers des paramètres objectifs et mesurables économiquement, selon de critères exclusivement économique ni le cas italien, ni – bien évidemment – celui français relèveraient de cette catégorisation. Et pourtant, le modèle de la « guerre totale » - généralement appliqué au cas britannique – pourrait être utilisé dans une perspective supranationale, en déplaçant l'attention de la mobilisation structurelle vers un climat de guerre similaire qui favorisait le flux d'informations et l'engagement aux plans de reconstruction, qui a impliqué gouvernements, acteurs sociaux et politiques, organisations internationales.

Le lien entre « guerre totale » et changement sociale ne réside pas seulement dans les transformations structurelles, ni dans les tâches de l'état face aux dévastations matérielles et à l'action humanitaire, et même pas dans l'établissement d'une « société sans classes ». ces facteurs expliquent une partie du changement de paradigme opéré pendant la Seconde guerre mondiale, mais ils reposent sur un niveau national. La guerre a également conduit à des réformes sociales parce que les responsables politiques des deux côtés ont préfiguré la mise en place d'un nouveau « pacte social » et ordre international. Deux traits distinctifs ont été le creuset de la guerre entre 1939 et 1945 : d'un côté, le mythe de « la guerre qui met fin à toutes les guerres » ; de l'autre, la tentative de résoudre une fois pour toutes la « question sociale » dans l'état-nation industriel moderne à travers plus d'inclusion.

Deuxième Partie. Politiques sociales en comparaison

En Grande-Bretagne, entre 1939 et 1945, tous les aspects les plus importants concernant les politiques publiques étaient

inextricablement liés à la guerre et aux plans pour la reconstruction. Dans les discours publics, et dans les projets gouvernementaux, ces deux moments étaient reliées entre eux ; d'un côté, le War Cabinet devait justifier les contraintes matériaux et les restrictions des droits sociaux auprès de l'opinion publique ainsi que des travailleurs.

Les mesures de contrôle de la conflictualité dans les usines et de surmenage étaient toutefois négocié avec les syndicats et le gouvernement – notamment le Secrétaire d'état à l'emploi, le travailliste Ernest Bevin – échangeait ces mesures avec la promesse de nombreuses réformes sociales et économiques pour l'après-guerre. L'impact de la guerre a touché également les politiques fiscales ; dans le moment le plus dur de la guerre entre 1940 et 1942, le gouvernement a comprimé les biens de consommation et – à partir du 1941 – a calculé le budget en intégrant des éléments du Keynésianisme pour réguler la demande intérieure et pour contrôler l'inflation, notamment avec l'introduction de l'outil macroéconomique de l' « écarte inflationniste », suggéré par John Maynard Keynes pour stabiliser les prix dans un contexte d'économie de guerre et plein emploi. Ces changements structurels menés par la guerre ont été accompagnés par l'effort du War Cabinet de planifier la reconstruction une fois la guerre finie. Sous la supervision du Ministère de la Reconstruction, un nombre remarquable des Commissions gouvernementales composées par politiciens et experts ont proposé des réformes structurelles de l'économie et de la société ; la guerre a fourni l'occasion pour adresser globalement les problèmes socio-économique au Royaume-Uni : urbanisme, aménagement industrielle, réforme foncière, etc.

Dans ce contexte, en 1941 le gouvernement a chargé la *Inter-Departmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Service*, présidée par Lord William Beveridge, de mener une enquête sur l'état du système des assurances sociales et de suggérer des lignes directrices pour sa réforme. Cette Commission a impliqué ou travaillé en étroite collaboration avec les hauts fonctionnaires publics, les départements gouvernementaux, ainsi que les syndicats, les fonds mutualistes, les partis politiques et les lobbies ; les travaux de recherche et rédaction se sont étalés pour environ un an. La poursuite du développement du

rapport Beveridge vers des résultats plus importants a été le résultat du dérapage en temps de guerre : le climat favorable aux réformes sociales, l'accueil enthousiaste du public et la dynamique politique au sein du gouvernement ont rendu possible le saut qualitatif.

Les propositions finales du Rapport Beveridge, publié en 1942, allaient bien au-delà des buts originaux. Le document proposait la réforme et unification des assurances sociales selon des principes universalistes. Les pivots de la réforme proposée portaient sur la centralisation et la nationalisation des différents régimes et autorités, l'unification de la base contributive des assurances sociales, la rationalisation du financement, l'universalisme des bénéfices pour tous les citoyens, indépendamment de leurs revenus et de leur catégorie de travail. La création d'un Service de Santé Nationale et la nationalisation des assurances pour les accidents du travail – ces deux dernières entièrement financés par la fiscalité générale – complétaient le tableau d'une approche que pensait la protection sociale en tant que droit de citoyenneté, indépendamment de revenus ou statut social ; l'état, l'individu, et la communauté dans son ensemble, prenaient en charge pour garantir le revenu vital minimal des citoyens dans tous les événements de leur vies.

Les bureaucraties gouvernementales et les experts, ainsi que les intérêts sectionnelles, ont au début résisté à certains aspects spécifiques de ce tournant universaliste, tout en approuvant leurs principes généraux, ou du moins en les acceptant comme inévitables. Les parties ont également accueilli le Rapport Beveridge avec un débat approfondi. Les conservateurs et les travaillistes étaient sceptiques quant à la possibilité de mettre en œuvre le plan présenté par Beveridge. Les conservateurs avaient peur de son fardeau financier et de ses implications politiques et sociales. Mais les organisations de gauche se méfiaient aussi, initialement du rapport ; sorti du milieu libéral, il était intrinsèquement centralisateur et il prônait à l'état beaucoup des tâches précédentes des organisations ouvrières. Cependant, les partis britanniques ont finalement accepté les directives générales du plan. D'après sa publication, le gouvernement s'est mis au travail pour l'élaboration des Livres Blanches officiels, concernant les assurances

sociales, le service de santé national et les politiques de plein emploi. Ces documents affirmaient sa position officielle ; le gouvernement adoptait les indications de Beveridge, même si certaines propositions différaient du Rapport, comme par exemple pour la quantification du minimum vital ou les politiques du plein emploi proposées par le gouvernement, qui, selon Beveridge, n'étaient pas encore des mesures structurelles, mais se limitaient à des interventions anticycliques qui sur la longue période n'auraient pas garanti des niveaux stables d'emploi.

Bien que le « consensus » dans la politique britannique après 1945 ait sans doute été exagérée à ce sujet, en 1945 tous les partis britanniques avaient intégré la sécurité sociale dans leurs programmes. Après les élections générales de cette année, le Parti Travailleiste au gouvernement relevait le défi d'implémenter – notamment entre 1946 et 1948 – les réformes sociales promises pendant la guerre. La Seconde Guerre mondiale a donné l'élan nécessaire pour s'attaquer de front à certains problèmes en Grande-Bretagne, sous l'étiquette de « politiques de reconstruction ». Cette formule caractérisait la démocratie britannique après 1945 avec l'engagement de l'état à garantir la sécurité sociale à tous les citoyens et à placer le plein emploi au nombre des objectifs politiques. Ceux-ci n'étaient pas étrangers aux déclarations idéologiques des Alliées, résumées dans la Charte de l'Atlantique du 1941. Ils n'étaient pas non plus exempts de considérations liées à l'ordre international d'après-guerre, à la projection britannique sur l'Europe et à la nécessité de contenir la menace communiste. La politique sociale ne traitait pas seulement de la prospérité interne, mais aussi de la sécurité internationale et de l'équilibre des forces.

En France, la défaite du 1940 conduit à un bouleversement institutionnel, marquant ainsi la fin de la IIIème République, et la création de l'État français, le régime collaborationniste sous l'occupation allemande. Le soi-disant régime de Vichy, néanmoins, essayé de déployer des politiques autonomes, notamment dans le champ économique et sociale. Les projets de planification, ou la restructuration de la production par branches professionnelles, par exemple, répondaient aux intérêts allemands ; en même temps, ils

s'inscrivaient dans des tendances de plus longue période et, à la fois, ils voulaient être le début d'une politique globale pour redresser la France et pour insérer le Pays dans le Nouveau Ordre Européen, gouverné par l'Allemagne Nazie. Dans la même logique, les politiques sociales du régime appuyaient sur la tradition législative et le réforme des dernières années de la IIIème République, et elles étaient affectées par la conjoncture de la guerre.

Le nouveau Secrétariat à la Production Industrielle et au Travail, dirigé par l'ancien secrétaire de la CGT, René Belin, a essayé à maintes reprises, entre 1940 et 1942, de reformer le régime des assurances sociales avec une réforme d'ensemble. En 1940, le projet de réforme établait l'unification des cotisations pour les assurances sociales, les allocations familiales et les congés payés, en homogénéisant les cotisations des différentes catégories et en prévoyant un rôle plus important de l'état d'un point de vue administratif et financière. Cette réforme envisageait aussi la création des pensions sociaux pour les travailleurs à faibles revenus. Deux ans plus tard, une réforme plus limitée préfigurait la coordination centrale des fonds mutualistes et leur réorganisation territoriale, ainsi que l'unification des cotisations pour l'assurance maladie et les allocations familiales. Les deux projets ont été rejetés à cause des résistances dans les cercles gouvernementaux, mais surtout pour l'opposition des intérêts organisés es fonds mutualistes, de catégorie et du secteur privé. La seule réalisation importante, dans le secteur de la prévoyance sociale, a été l'Allocations aux Vieux Travailleurs Salariés, introduite aussi pour faire face à la montée du chômage suite à la démobilisation après la défaite. Aussi les autres mesures relatives à la protection sociales (allocations familiales, politiques sanitaires, indemnités de chômage) n'ont pas été promulguées dans le cadre d'une réforme organique, mais d'une manière fragmentaire.

Même si ces réformes suivaient certains critères assimilables aux lignes directrices des réformateurs anglais, le contexte idéologique était assez différent. Dans la rhétorique du régime, les assurances sociales étaient une partie d'un projet de refonte des bases institutionnelles et socio-économique du Pays. À côté de la réforme de

la protection sociale, le régime promulguait aussi la Charte du Travail en 1941 ; ce document, dans les intentions des réformateurs sociaux vichystes, était censé être la pierre angulaire des politiques et de l'idéologie de l'État Français. En vérité, il n'y avait pas un véritable consensus au sein du régime à l'égard de quel type de corporatisme mettre en œuvre. De plus, les projets corporatistes se heurtaient au corporatisme « formelle » qui avait été implémenté en liaison avec les nécessités de guerre allemandes. Là où le régime envisageait une « collaboration sociale » (plus ou moins) paritaire entre les différentes catégories de producteurs, le corporatisme « substantielle » mis en place à travers les Comités d'Organisations excluait la composante ouvrière des organismes de consultation. Le cheval de bataille idéologique du régime, la collaboration sociale à travers les corporations, a finalement resté n'a jamais eu des répercussions concrètes de vaste portée, et a resté pour la plupart étranger au monde ouvrier.

La politique sociale de Vichy, telle qu'une grande partie des autres politiques du régime, a été caractérisé par les événements conjoncturels (la guerre, le chômage, la division administrative, l'occupation) et, en même temps, par l'effort d'envisager des politiques pour la reconstruction, capable de relier la France à l'Allemagne Nazie. Pareillement, les politiques publiques du régime de Vichy avaient nombreuses continuités avec la dernière phase de réformes de la III^{ème} République et ont jeté des bases – dans un contexte institutionnelle et international totalement différent – pour le plan de sécurité sociale du 1944-5. Ceci a été affecté par l'héritage politique de la protection sociale française et par les idées nouvelles provenant notamment du monde anglo-saxon. Il s'agissait, dans les intentions des anciens collaborateurs de Belin, Alexandre Parodi et Pierre Laroque, d'intégrer un plan de réforme inspiré aux principes d'universalisme dans les institutions démocratiques.

En Italie, le régime avait produit, pendant vingt ans, une législation sociale assez importante, qu'un tout état de cause est restée dans le sillon d'un système occupationnel et mutualiste. L'Italie Fasciste n'a pas mobilisée son économie pour la guerre d'une manière

« totale » ; bien au contraire, les données macroéconomiques suggèrent une mobilisation faible, là où les processus de modernisation de l'appareil industriel, qui était le vrai but de l'ordre établi économique italien à l'époque. Pourtant, le climat de la « guerre totale » a affecté le discours politique du régime aussi ; pendant les années précédentes la guerre, les hiérarques avaient élaboré une doctrine de la « guerre totale » sous le point de vue de sa préparation technique ; pareillement, entre 1939 et 1942, le régime s'était intéressé aux différentes législations sociales de guerre.

En ce qui concerne la législation concrète, jusqu'au 1943, les mesures prises en Italie visaient à augmenter la protection économique des familles des soldats, et à garantir le maintien de l'ordinaire administration des prestations sociales. Et pourtant, au sein des administrations chargées des assurances sociales, des propositions de réforme de la législation conformément aux tendances contemporaines commençaient à circuler ; les exigences de renforcer le front intérieur et de simplifier la stratification législative était un besoin ressenti en Italie aussi. Et pourtant, les renverses militaires et l'effondrement du régime en 1943, avec la reconstitution d'une république sous le contrôle Nazi au Nord ont amené à un changement dans la rhétorique et dans les projets du régime, qui pourtant n'ont jamais eu aucune conséquence en termes législatifs, ni a affecté les réformes des assurances sociales que même ont été passées pendant l'éphémère expérience de la République Sociale Italienne.

D'un côté, le programme économique-sociale du régime visait à la socialisation des industries. Les entreprises n'étaient pas nationalisées – sauf pour celles considérées d'intérêt nationale – mais leur gestion et leurs profits étaient partagés parmi tous les éléments de la fabrique. A niveau institutionnelle, ceci impliquait un transfèrement de la collaboration corporative des corps représentatifs nationaux à l'échelle de l'entreprise. De l'autre côté, la réforme du régime des assurances sociales en 1944 était la fin d'un parcours cohérent de réarrangement des assurances sociales, commençait en 1935 ; dans cette première réforme, une agence nationale unique était chargée de coordonner les fonds mutualistes. Avec la loi du 1939, l'INFP

fournissait des prestations sociales complémentaires ainsi que les allocations familiales. La réforme du 1944 procédait d'une manière cohérente dans ce processus d'unification des fonds, cotisations et prestations, ainsi que dans l'extension du champ d'intervention ; l'année précédente, le régime avait lancé une agence nationale de coordination des fonds mutualiste de protection contre la maladie (dans une manière toute à fait similaire à ce que le régime de Vichy avait essayé de faire en 1942, d'ailleurs).

Le discours idéologique révolutionnaire du régime et la politique effective mise en place par le régime divergeaient d'une manière criante. Au-delà des conditions conjoncturelles et politiques qui n'ont pas permis au régime d'avoir une véritable politique autonome ni la légitimation nécessaire pour la faire, ce décalage entre la rhétorique du régime et la substantielle continuité des politiques repose sur le fait que ces dernières peuvent être considérées comme des politiques de longue période, d'une certaine manière structurelle, qui se sont déroulées indépendamment des changements idéologiques internes au régime. Cette interprétation semble être corroborée par le maintien des institutions sociales fascistes pendant les années de l'après-guerre. Différemment aux cases britannique et français, pendant les années immédiatement suivantes la guerre, aucune réforme globale de la protection sociale a été entamé en Italie. Cependant, les acteurs politiques et sociaux ont longuement réfléchi sur la possibilité de réformer les assurances sociales italiennes selon les principes de la naissante sécurité sociale, comme l'attestent les propositions sorties de la Commission gouvernementale présidé par le socialiste Ludovico D'Aragona.

Un bilan comparatif des trois expériences pendant la guerre, et leurs conséquences dans les plans de réforme pour l'après-guerre ne peut pas être univoque. D'un côté, le tournant universaliste du 1942 en Grande-Bretagne marque une rupture avec le passé et par rapport aux expériences continentales : la nationalisation des fonds d'assurance, le service national de santé, la couverture universelle visant à garantir le minimum vital de tous citoyens britanniques, l'idée de promouvoir – à travers la sécurité sociale et les politiques du plein emploi – l'abri du

besoin de la société britannique. Ceux-ci sont des points qui différencient d'une manière importante l'approche britannique par rapport à ceux français et italiens pendant la guerre. Dans ces deux Pays, les réformes proposées continuaient dans le sillon de la tradition occupationnelle/corporatiste ; dans le domaine des assurances sociales e de la santé publique, il s'agissait plutôt de réorganiser les fonds mutualistes, en introduisant des éléments de plus en plus importants d'intervention étatique et de solidarité, tels que les AVTS en France ou la révision des mécanismes de financement des assurances sociales en Italie.

D'une certaine manière, ces différences importantes ont été retenues même dans la reformulation de la protection sociale dans l'après-guerre ; bien que universalistes, le plan de sécurité sociale français ainsi que les propositions de réforme en Italie gardaient des systèmes occupationnels, ainsi avec des importantes dérogations en termes d'unification administrative (par exemple la gestion des caisses d'allocations familiales) ainsi qu'en ceux de couverture effective, comme pour le service de santé national ou l'allocation chômage, qui n'ont pas été intégrés dans le plan du 1945.

Et pourtant, certaines directrices de réforme administrative, notamment la centralisation des fonds mutualistes et l'unification des caisses et cotisations, n'était pas prérogative des projets anglo-saxonnes, mais elle était cherchée, comme ligne directrice, aussi par les réformateurs vichystes ou fascistes ; dans l'immédiate après-guerre, les mêmes préoccupations ont animé les législateurs qui se sont opposés – non sans certaines ambiguïtés – au Nazisme et à l'Occupation. Dans la même période où les réformateurs britanniques épinglaient leurs plans de création de la sécurité sociale (assurances sociales, service de santé national, allocations familiales, plein-emploi), sous Vichy et dans l'Italie Fasciste, les gouvernements respectifs ciblaient séparément les domaines principaux de la protection sociale ; la tendance commune était la propension à assurer un rôle de plus en plus important à l'état en ces matière. En dernier ressort, la reprise de la prévoyance sociale par l'état a réussi en Grande-Bretagne et a failli en France en Italie parce que le climat de la « guerre totale » et la majeure légitimation du War

Cabinet au Royaume-Uni lui a permis de l'emporter sur les résistances politiques et du secteur mutualiste et privé.

La progressive étatisation et extension des régimes de protection sociale était, d'un côté, les résultats d'un processus « structurel », commun à tous les Pays industriels, et par conséquent sans égard aux différents systèmes politiques en cause. De l'autre côté, des différences considérables parmi les modèles sociaux existaient ; elles ne résidaient pas tant la division traditionnelle « démocratie » contre « fascisme », mais bien dans celle entre « universalisme » et « corporatisme ». Ces deux régimes de protection sociale se sont donc confrontés pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale ; le conflit étant « totale », il s'est avéré nécessaire pour les différents ordres établis de créer consensus à l'intérieur et – pour le cas britannique – d'être capable de mobiliser aussi l'opinion publique à l'étranger.

Troisième Partie. Idées et politiques pendant la guerre : une perspective globale

Les promesses d'une plus grande justice sociale ne sont pas une exclusivité de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, mais, pendant ce conflit, les gouvernements ont attaché une importance nouvelle à la question sociale. Le gouvernement anglais, bien évidemment, voulait faire de la sécurité sociale la pierre angulaire pour obtenir le consensus des ouvrières et réduire les revendications, face à une militarisation des rythmes de travail. En même temps, étant donné les caractéristiques « universaliste » de ces projets de réforme (le Rapport Beveridge, ainsi que les Livres Blanches gouvernementaux), ils se prêtaient aussi bien à être exploité pour convaincre l'ensemble de la population britannique d'être en train de combattre pour la bonne cause.

Dans un contexte assez différent, les régimes français et celui italien essaient aussi d'utiliser les politiques sociales comme levier sur la population. En France, sous le régime de Vichy la « collaboration sociale » et le prestations sociales que le régime élargissait n'étaient pas utilisées pour mobiliser la société pour la guerre, mais pour mieux l'encadrer dans ce que le régime considéré déjà « l'après-guerre ». La Charte du Travail et les assurances sociales étaient les éléments

concrètes d'une reformulation du pacte sociale selon les principes de la hiérarchie et de la communauté (aussi de la communauté du travail).

Encore différent c'est le cas de la RSI en Italie ; après 20 ans de propagande sur les conquêtes sociales du régime, qui a pénétré le monde ouvrier, le collapse des institutions du Fascisme ont créé un vide que la nouvelle république a essayé de combler dans une situation de progressive désagrégation des bases politiques et sociaux du régime. L'importance donné par la RSI aux socialisations et aux autres mesures en faveur de la classe ouvrière s'est avérée être le seul outil à travers lequel le Fascisme pouvait justifier son existence sous la forme d'un gouvernement fantoche des Nazis.

En Grande-Bretagne, le « pacte sociale » proposé, l'abri du besoin comme promesse pour l'après-guerre à travers la sécurité sociale et le plein-emploi, s'est montré capable de relier différents secteurs de la société autour d'une plus ample solidarité sociale et l'engagement de l'état à être garant, intermédiaire, et dispensateur des prestations sociales. L'État Français a poursuivi un discours idéologique que, par contre, définissait la solidarité sociale tout d'abord en termes de « solidarité corporative », c'est-à-dire, de solidarité à l'intérieur des catégories professionnelles. Sous la RSI, les anciens postulats du corporatisme Fasciste étaient reproposés, même si dans le contexte totalement changé de la guerre et de l'occupation. Au lieu des communautés professionnelles par branche industrielle, la « gauche » du régime envisageait la création d'unités corporatives « de bases » ; le corporatisme « institutionnel » était remplacé par des socialisations dans chaque entreprise.

La réception par la population, dans ses différentes classes sociales, de la propagande des trois gouvernements a été très variée. En Grande-Bretagne, « l'esprit du 1941 » et la perception que les distances sociales s'étaient annulées grâce à la guerre ont conduit à une vague d'enthousiasme vers les propositions du Plan Beveridge, qui a censé le gouvernement à mettre au point rapidement les Livres Blanches. Dans l'État Français et dans la RSI, par contre, les efforts des régimes pour obtenir le consensus populaire, et notamment celui des ouvrières, se sont heurtés à la faible suite des différents secteurs sociaux pour les

projets corporatifs ou « socialisants ». Tout compte fait, les situations dans les trois Pays étaient totalement différentes ; le régime de Vichy et la RSI étaient perçus tels que des régimes fantoches, et manquaient de la légitimité nécessaire pour pouvoir obtenir le consensus autour de leurs projets sociaux. Au contraire, le War Cabinet était un gouvernement une Puissance pour laquelle – déjà à partir du 1942 – la force d’inertie du conflit était favorable ; il s’agissait désormais de préparer l’après-guerre à l’intérieur, et de préserver le rôle de la Grande-Bretagne comme Puissance de premier rang dans l’ordre international qu’allait se préfigurer.

La politique sociale, dans ce sens, a joué un rôle important aussi dans la propagande britannique à l’étrangère. Depuis le début, les services d’information britanniques étaient conscients du fait que le Plan Beveridge aurait pu mobiliser et rapprocher du Royaume-Uni différentes forces intellectuelles et sociales. Le plan de sécurité sociale aurait dû circuler tout d’abord dans les milieux politiques et intellectuels : partis politiques, syndicats, haute administration publique, académie. Mais les bureaux du Ministère de l’Information visaient en même temps à véhiculer ces réformes auprès de la population européennes (ainsi que l’américaine et dans les Dominions). Les dispositions combinées du Plan Beveridge et d’autres mesures en faveur des travailleurs et du progrès sociale – dans cette logique – aurait pu placer la Grande-Bretagne comme le Pays chef de file en ce qui concernait les droits sociaux des travailleurs. L’objectif était explicitement de se disputer le consensus de la classe ouvrière de l’après-guerre avec l’Union Soviétique.

En ce sens, le Plan Beveridge et la sécurité sociale doivent être contextualisés dans l’échange transatlantique entre États-Unis et Grande-Bretagne, qui avait en précédence abouti à la Charte Atlantique et à la préfiguration des organisations internationales pour l’après-guerre. En même temps, le Plan Beveridge, qui empruntait plusieurs mots d’ordre et principes de la Charte Atlantiques et de la rhétorique roosveltienne à l’égard de « quatre libertés », a – à son tour – affecté le débat à partir du 1942, et a remplacé la Charte Atlantique et les autres références au centre des discours politiques des Alliés dans le monde

anglo-saxonne. La même idée de « sécurité sociale » était le résultat de la synergie entre les organisations internationales de travailleur, tels que l'ILO, et les gouvernements des États-Unis et de la Grande-Bretagne. Le déploiement des nouveaux programmes pour l'après-guerre, centré sur la Charte Atlantique, se sont avérés ne pas avoir succès dans la mobilisation des opinions publiques dans le Pays Alliés, ainsi que dans les Pays sous occupation allemande.

La campagne d'information du Plan Beveridge s'est déployée selon différentes axes et avec des différents moyens et médias. Un nombre impressionnant de traductions, résumés, synthèse, analyses critiques du Plan étaient adressé à la circulation plus étroite du plan parmi les acteurs qui auraient pu jouer un rôle décisionnel dans l'après-guerre. De l'autre côté, pour la diffusion à grande échelle, les Britanniques se sont appuyés principalement à Radio Londres, pour véhiculer les lignes directrices des réformes sociales, ainsi qu'aux tracts et brochures. Si le but direct était de mettre en opposition les réalisations sociales des démocraties contre les politiques sociales du Nazisme et des autres Puissance de l'Axe, à l'arrière-plan l'on peut envisager déjà la confrontation avec les communistes pour gagner le consensus des masses populaires. Sous ce point de vue, les Britanniques n'ont pas succédé dans leurs objectifs. La connaissance du Plan a resté assez limité dans le champs ouvrière et paysan, qui, dans la radicalisation du conflit, regardait avec espoir aux solutions communistes, renforcées en Europe par le succès militaires de l'Armée Rouge.

Les plans britanniques, par contre, ont eu une plus profonde circulation dans les ordres établis des différents Pays. Bien qu'assez souvent de seconde main, une bonne partie des dirigeants politiques et syndicaux, les Nazi-Fascistes autant que les membres de la Résistance, connaissaient les grandes lignes directrices du Plan Beveridge. Bien évidemment, dans les deux champs, ce document a été perçu avec des réceptions divergentes. Les Nazis et les Fascistes ont compris la portée innovatrice des plans britanniques et avaient gardé une position de contrepropagande similaire : dans les articles et analyses du Plan Beveridge, les Nazis ainsi que les Fascistes, ont remarqué les caractères

éphémères des réformes anglaises qui étaient entachées des nécessités de la guerre. Les régimes de protection sociale en Allemagne et en Italie étaient le résultat d'une politique incrémentale de cinquante ans et des mesures en faveur des ouvrières mises en place par les régimes ; au contraire, les plans de sécurité sociale tels que le Plan Beveridge, sortis d'un milieu libéral, étaient motivés par des raisons d'opportunité, dans le moment où le gouvernement demandait un maximum d'effort pour la mobilisation.

Les principales critiques des Fascistes italiens ne s'écartaient pas des directives allemandes : les caractéristiques conservatrices et la portée limitée du Plan Beveridge par rapport à la législation sociale italienne ; la nature propagandiste des mots d'ordre du plan. D'autres éléments étaient plutôt typiques de la propagande antibritannique menée par le Fascisme : l'expansion de la sécurité sociale britannique au détriment des colonies ; l'accent mis sur la « guerre idéologique » entre les puissances impérialistes traditionnelles et les nations prolétariennes « plus jeunes ». Dans un second moment, le régime a tenté de mettre en évidence le clivage entre les promesses des Alliés de l'amélioration sociale, et les difficultés à les mettre en œuvre dans l'Italie du Sud occupée. Pour la propagande fasciste, cela prouvait que les Anglo-Américains étaient entrés en guerre pour renverser les acquis sociaux fascistes. Le point de vue général des Fascistes sur le Rapport Beveridge combinait des hypothèses idéologiquement biaisées et des critiques qui

Parmi les mouvements antifascistes et de Résistance en France et Italie, le Plan a eu un certain succès, même s'il est toujours resté un point de référence intellectuel plutôt qu'une source à superposer à la précédente tradition législative. Les experts de France Libre à Londres ont eu la possibilité d'assister de première main au débat en cours en Angleterre pendant les années 1941-2. Les Commissions en charge des réformes économiques et sociales ont étudié les régimes de protection sociale dans les Pays anglo-saxons, et se sont chargés de faire circuler le Plan Beveridge dans la France occupée et dans les milieux de la Résistance. Et apparemment, déjà en 1944, la sécurité sociale anglaise était connue, et même, elle était un point de référence obligé. Et

pourtant, les réformateurs sociaux français à Londres et en France, ont toujours essayé de combiner les nouveaux principes universalistes avec la précédente législation sociale. Au fait, pendant les années d'élaboration théorique des nouvelles politiques sociales ainsi que pendant la mise en œuvre des textes législatifs de la sécurité sociale, le poids de la stratification de la protection sociale française a joué un rôle déterminant ; les trois principes fondamentaux d'unité, universalité, uniformité – émanation directe du réformisme beveridgien – n'ont pas été atteints totalement avec les lois du 1945-1946.

En Italie, la connaissance du Plan Beveridge et des autres réformes sociales étaient encore plus médiées par les services d'information Anglo-Américains. Et pourtant, même en Italie ces documents ont donné lieu à un grand intérêt ; de la Démocratie Chrétienne aux Libéraux, tous les principaux partis démocratiques se sont interrogés sur la possibilité et l'extension d'une réforme universaliste sur la même page de la sécurité sociale britannique. Ces principes ont particulièrement influencé certains secteurs des socialistes réformistes et du mouvement catholique. Et pourtant, en Italie, tous les discussions et propositions à cet égard n'ont pas abouti à une réforme organique des assurances sociales, même pas dans la forme d'un compromis entre le système universaliste « pure » anglais et un système occupationnel « continental », comme en France. L'achèvement de la sécurité sociale est pourtant devenu un objectif des réformateurs sociaux italiens, et a été réalisé d'une manière fragmentaire au fil des Années '60 et '70.

De ce point de vue, partant, la Deuxième Guerre mondiale a joué un rôle fondamental dans la programmation, et dans un second moment, dans la circulation, des nouvelles idées concernant la sécurité sociale pour l'après-guerre. Le Plan Beveridge a été pensé originellement comme un outil pour la propagande contre l'Allemagne Nazie et son ordre sociale, et, ensuite, comme un instrument pour disputer l'hégémonie sur le monde ouvrier avec les Soviétiques. C'est pour cette raison que la sécurité sociale doit beaucoup au contexte de la guerre ; avant même que pour l'impact structurelle de la mobilisation – qui a été une des causes en Grande-Bretagne, mais n'a pas concerné ni

l'Italie Fasciste ni l'État Français – pour la dimension idéologique du conflit.

Conclusion

La reconstruction historique du développement des régimes de protection sociale, des assurances sociales à la sécurité sociale et ensuite à l'état-providence, ne peut pas être réduite à des explications monocausales. Au fait, l'évolution de la politique sociale a été un processus progressif et complexe. Différents facteurs ont contribué à la redéfinition de la sécurité sociale après 1945. Ils résultent de la stratification législative et d'importantes ruptures politiques et socio-économiques. L'analyse comparative réfute encore plus les explications linéaires et les généralisations. Une approche fructueuse pour comprendre la nouvelle place de la sécurité sociale dans les scénarios nationaux et internationaux considère le rôle de l'État en tant qu'acteur principal dans l'expansion des régimes de protection sociale à partir de 1945. La politique sociale a assumé des tâches fondamentales dans la régulation du conflit social et dans la lutte contre les inégalités sociales entre les citoyens. Les assurances sociales obligatoire sont liées à la percée du capitalisme industriel et à la « question sociales » qui en découle, et remettent en question les droits de la citoyenneté et leur étendue. Mais il concernaient aussi des problèmes plus vastes ouverts par l'effondrement de l'Ancien Régime ; la rupture des liens sociaux traditionnels a nécessité la reconfiguration des mécanismes de secours social.

Entre le 19^{ème} et le 20^{ème} siècle, la protection sociale a changé dans sa fonction d'objectifs politiques. Jusqu'à la Seconde Guerre mondiale, le modèle combinait la réglementation législative et l'entraide mutuelle. Les assurances sociales n'étaient pas nécessairement identifiées aux droits de la citoyenneté ; ils traitent plutôt des problèmes conjoncturels (chômage) ou des préoccupations non directement liées aux droits sociaux (politiques démographiques). Le moment charnière a été la Seconde Guerre mondiale ; l'interprétation classique du sociologue T. H. Marshall sur l'expansion

quantitative et qualitative des droits sociaux de la citoyenneté pourrait être affectée par le contexte britannique des Années '60. Son analyse, cependant, a capturé une caractéristique réelle de l'état-providence ; après 1945, les démocraties ont réformé les régimes précédents et introduit des nouvelles politiques pour intégrer autant de citoyens que possible dans le nouveau « pacte social », puisque l'accès aux bénéfices sociaux et aux services est devenu progressivement un droit.

D'un côté, la législation sociale s'est déroulée comme un processus incrémental de coordination et de rationalisation des régimes obligatoires. Il s'agissait d'un changement politique et socio-économique à long-terme, qui n'a pas connu de ruptures importantes ; les régimes sociaux ont même connu un certain degré de convergence, qui ne doit cependant pas être surestimé. Les solutions administratives peuvent converger, mais les différents cadres conservent des divergences substantielles, comme pour la division traditionnelle entre les systèmes libéraux universalistes et les régimes continentaux « conservateur-corporatistes ». Le terrain commun pendant les années de guerre était la volonté politique de poursuivre des politiques sociales plus cohérentes et intégrées. Les décideurs, dans tous les Pays considérés, ont élaboré des projets pour la refonte des systèmes précédents ; redéfinir leurs tâches et leur ampleur a fait l'objet d'un débat animé qui a traversé les catégories traditionnelles de « démocraties » et de « totalitarismes ».

De l'autre côté, sur les différences idéologiques réside la grande divergence entre les trois études de cas. En 1942-5, les buts et la portée de la politique sociale ont été soumis à une véritable « révolution copernicienne ». Les projets sociaux britanniques, ainsi que les réformes italiennes et françaises faisaient partie d'un transfert international plus large de politiques et d'idées qui s'est produit dans les Années Trente. Après la Grande Dépression, il n'était plus possible de refondre le capitalisme du laissez-faire, ni d'ignorer les masses populaires dans la ré-légitimation des États. La Grande-Bretagne a reconfiguré la politique sociale en fonction de la « citoyenneté » ; l'État a assuré les citoyens de la perte de revenus qui aurait pu miner le tissu social et les institutions politiques. Les régimes italien et français, au contraire, ont réorganisé la

relation entre l'État et les individus vers des formes de « collaboration sociale ». Vichy a souligné la solidarité corporative et nationale, tandis que dans la RSI les droits sociaux ont été accordés aux travailleurs, en tant qu'éléments productifs de la communauté nationale.

Trois aspects des politiques sociales en temps de guerre ont été approfondi dans ce travail. Premièrement, la convergence progressive des trois systèmes vers des pratiques administratives similaires et l'importance croissante de la politique sociale publique. Le deuxième axe porte sur les projets en temps de guerre. Dans les plans pour le règlement de l'après-guerre, la politique sociale avait un rôle primordial pour les puissances Anglo-américaines et pour l'Axe. La troisième caractéristique fondamentale est liée à la nouvelle dimension de la politiques sociale sur la scène nationale et internationale. La « sécurité sociale » a été utilisée par les Britanniques pour légitimer l'effort de guerre face l'opinion publique à la maison et pour prendre la leadership sur le Continent, en opposition au Nazi-Fascisme et au Communisme soviétique. La propagande sociale britannique avait non seulement des objectifs immédiats liés à la guerre, mais aussi des objectifs plus larges. La sécurité sociale devait légitimer le « pacte social » démocratique et contribuer à réinstaller les relations internationales d'après-guerre sur la base de la coopération pacifique entre les nations. Mutuellement, les Puissances de l'Axe ont fondé leur rhétorique sur leurs « nouvelles » politiques sociales et sur la réorganisation des relations internationales selon ce nouvel ordre social. La « collaboration sociale » en tant qu'objectif politique était également importante pour le régime de Vichy et pour les Fascistes en Italie.

Il n'est pas exagéré d'imaginer que les raisons de l'échec de l'Axe et de ses satellites dans la mise en œuvre de leurs politiques et dans la conquête du consensus des classes populaires et moyennes sont plutôt attribuable aux rebuffades militaires à partir de 1942. Les événements militaires ont également changé l'humeur de l'opinion publique en Europe et le « climat idéologique » de la guerre. Il est extrêmement difficile de saisir un seul facteur qui a déterminé la « révolution copernicienne » en temps de guerre. Diachroniquement,

les assurances sociales se sont progressivement développées au fil du temps, à tel point que même les projets de 1939-1945 n'ont pas marqué une véritable rupture législative. Mais les conditions de guerre exceptionnelles (qu'elles aient été combattues ou subies) ont affecté de manière décisive les réformateurs et l'ordre établi politique. DU point de vue politique, dans les trois Pays, la principale préoccupation était la fin des luttes sociale et de l'insécurité économique et le renforcement d'un nouveau « pacte social » ; les états sont devenus de plus en plus attachés à la « solidarité sociale », qui varie selon chaque régime politique et idéologique. La « solidarité corporative » de Vichy diffère légèrement de l'idéologie qui a inspiré le fascisme républicain, et bien sûr du type de solidarité qui sous-tend les réformes britanniques.

En fait, les états-providence « totalitaires » ou « libéraux » n'ont jamais existé ; il serait plus approprié de distinguer entre la sécurité sociale universaliste et la protection sociale professionnelle/« corporatiste », et les façons correspondantes de redéfinir le « pacte social » et les formes de solidarité sociale. L'évaluation de l'« affirmation » du modèle britannique est extrêmement ambivalente et nécessite plusieurs niveaux d'analyse. D'un côté, les mécanismes administratifs « universalistes » n'ont été que partiellement adoptés sur le Continent ; de l'autre, les idées fondamentales de la « sécurité sociale universaliste » ont pénétré les réformateurs sociaux et les gouvernements européens. Ils ont changé la nature de la politique sociale à la fois dans les années qui ont suivi la guerre et à plus long terme, car il n'était plus possible de gérer la réforme de la protection sociale sans prendre en considération l'universalisme inspiré par le modèle de Beveridge.