Article

Surveillance, Repression and the Welfare State: Aspects of Continuity and Discontinuity in post-Fascist Italy

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Abstract

This paper seeks to explore political, cultural, legal and socio-economic legacies of the Fascist regime (1922-1943) in Italy. With the fall of the regime, in fact, the overall surveillance apparatus did not fade away. Former fascists were not purged from political and cultural life and very few were found guilty. The transition to democracy was thus marked by a substantial continuity of men and institutions (Della Porta and Reiter 2004) due to the active involvement of ex-OVRA (Organization of Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism) officers in public institutions (Fonio 2011). It comes as no surprise that forms of pervasive non-technological social control continued for more than twenty years after the fall of the duce.

Moreover, police state surveillance was combined with a meaningful continuity in other areas. For instance, the welfare state immediately after World War II was actually based upon the model built during Fascism. The 'Fascist Social State' (Silei 2000) had a corporative and authoritarian inspiration and was a strategy of social control and a tool to create consensus. In the 1950s and 1960s the institutional features of the Italian social security system remained fundamentally unchanged (Giorgi 2009; Silei 2000): an excess of bureaucracy and discretionary power; a system based on specific categories of people needing assistance and not on a more universal approach. The Italian post-Fascist experience is a paradigmatic case-study that allows us to deal with ambiguities of the welfare state experience, described either as a tool of social control or as a vector of social justice.

Introduction

This paper seeks to explore aspects of both continuity and discontinuity in post-Fascist Italy with a specific focus on the Fascist legacy of social control in both policing and welfare. Thus, we are not concerned here with an overall analysis of surveillance and the welfare state under the Fascist regime, but rather with the twenty-five years immediately after the fall (1945) of the dictatorship. The analysis does not include the decades after the 1970s for three main reasons. First, new social movements that emerged at the end of the 1960s marked a significant socio-political shift and thus reduced the impact of Fascist cultural and social legacies. Second, in relation to surveillance apparatus and practices, both the tools forged in the Liberal State and then extensively used by the dictatorship (i.e. the Central Political Record), and the overall approach to social control changed in the 1970s due to a new political and technological (i.e. the rise of electronic surveillance) landscape. Thirdly, the late 1960s and the 1970s were also characterized by major reforms in social policy (e.g. the public health system in 1978) that led to the foundation of a new pattern of welfare state with a clear caesura with respect to the Fascist model.

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While, as previously mentioned, we address issues of continuity and discontinuity, we also argue that aspects of continuity seem to be more prominent. In doing so, this paper does not suggest reductive path-dependency explanations related to surveillance, repression and the welfare state. However, we argue that Fascism (1922–1945) was not a ‘parenthesis’ as theorized by Croce (1973). If, on the one hand, it emerged out of the Liberal State and took advantage, for instance, of the weaknesses of the legal framework, on the other it was not disconnected from the first two decades of the Republic. Social, political and even ideological legacies prevent the dismissal of the dictatorship as a ‘mere blip’ (Ventresca 2004). As Nerenberg puts it, ‘although the Constitution was charted, the rights that it purports were not immediately granted, a hiatus that relates more generally to the continuity into the post-war period under Fascism’ (Nerenberg 2001: 13).

In the first part, the emphasis is mainly on the continuity of men and institutions related to police state surveillance. In particular, we look at the consequences of a summary purge that led to the involvement of ex-OVRA (Organization of Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism) officers in public institutions (for an analysis of police state surveillance under the Fascist regime see, *inter alia*, Dunnage 2013; Fonio 2011). Moreover, we focus on the impact of a general lack of transparency as far as the publication of the list of ex-OVRA informers is concerned. We also draw attention both to the policing approach carried out in the 1950s and the 1960s and to parallel structures within military institutional branches that envisaged a plot to destabilize the country. As it is shown in the following pages, institutions, ideologies as well as approaches to security and repression echo the Fascist regime and highlight that the overarching ‘culture of suspicion’, along with misuses of surveillance measures and secret information, enforced during the dictatorship, permeated Italian society for a long time.

In the second part, the paper focuses on the Italian social security system immediately after World War II. We emphasize the preponderance of the elements of continuity between the corporative welfare state built up by Mussolini and the strategy of social policy developed in Italy during the first two decades of post-Fascist era (Villa 2003). In particular, we draw attention to the persistent hegemony of an approach that saw the welfare state above all as a functional tool for political purposes, such as social control and creation of consensus. We emphasize how these political goals were pursued through a system based on four controversial ism-pillars: particularism, dualism, familism and clientelism (Ascoli 2002). Moreover, this paper also highlights how this pattern of the welfare state has implied a continuity between the Fascist and Christian Democrats ideologies, particularly with regards to the idea of a society without class-conflict and where aspects of personalized clientelism could replace the role usually played by collective political actions (Castronovo 1976). From this perspective, we underline how clientelistic strategies, as well as family policies or education policies, represented strategic resources to develop ideological consensus both during Fascism and in the first twenty-five years of Italian democracy.

1. ‘If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change’¹

Under Mussolini’s regime police state surveillance was carried out through the Ovra (Organization of Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism). Although the use of political police was only one of the many forms of the Fascist surveillance apparatus (Fonio 2011), the Ovra was the most prominent and its repressive actions extended both inside and outside the country thanks to a wide network of informers. Police state surveillance was orchestrated, as analyzed by Franzinelli (1999), in an octopus-like way through powerful ‘tentacles’ which was comprised of, for instance, the Political Police Division (PolPol) as well as networks of spies that went beyond the Ovra. As Canali argues, the PolPol was the intelligence wing of the police, while the Ovra was more of an operational branch (Canali 2009).

¹ Quotation from *The Leopard*, by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa (1960).

In the last years of the regime the overall organization of the political police changed due to World War II and the creation of the Italian Social Republic (hereafter, RSI: 1943-1945).² Political instability led to more repression and social control, thus both delation (i.e. civilian denunciations) and close monitoring of citizens intensified. From July to September 1942, the number of citizens were sentenced to prison, to *confino* (internal exile meant to segregate the enemies of the regime in remote areas) or *ammonizione* (restriction on the activities and movements of individuals) was 684; this number significantly increased the following year in only two months, with 1884 citizens sentenced from February to March 1943 (Franzinelli 1999: 391).

Not only was the Ovra not destabilized by the fall of Mussolini, but under the short Badoglio government in 1944, the Fascist apparatus continued to the extent that almost all Ovra's functionaries were at the head of special inspectorates. However, what did change, especially from 1944, was the network of paid informers whose number progressively decreased (Franzinelli 1999: 411). As Franzinelli claims, in 1944-1945 the informative network was radically different from the previous well-organized apparatus (Franzinelli 1999: 461). It was, in fact, more fragmented and polycentric, and many informers—for opportunistic reasons—had begun to collaborate with the police.

From 1944, the Allies had engaged in counterespionage operations and interrogations of ex-Ovra officers. These operations shed light on the 'dossier society' fostered by the regime. As being an ex-Ovra officer was not punishable *per se*, very few were found guilty and the acquittal of Guido Leto, one of the key personalities of the Fascist police,³ and his collaborators paved the way to the discharge of less important functionaries. This summary purge was also carried out against collaborators and informers with the overall outcome of a political climate typified by a lack of transparency and accountability: 'if the purge touched few people, fewer still were affected by the trials against Fascism criminals' (Kritz 1995). Overall, the Fascist administrative class remained in place despite defascistization:

Judicial application of the purge decrees and a final amnesty adopted in February 1948 resulted in the fact that most of the 1,870 civil servants who had been dismissed (for collaborating with the government of the north) and the 671 who had been compulsorily retired were reinstated.

(Kritz 1995: 162)⁴

The lack of transparency is particularly clear when considering the printing of the 'Ovra list', namely of the names of the informers. While a first draft compiled by the 'Commission to identify the Ovra informers'⁵ contained 900 names, the final list contained only 622 names (Franzinelli 1999: 437). Interestingly enough, some categories are overrepresented (such as journalists and lawyers) while others are underrepresented, such as judges who, as Franzinelli (1999) and Pavone (1995) claim, were highly implicated with the regime. The case of the 'Ovra list' was a missed opportunity to break with the past in order to guarantee full accountability in the process of defascitization of the Italian Republic. The names of some well-known informers, such as Monsignor Pucci or the lawyer Cassinelli, were even deleted due to political pressure despite evidence concerning their active involvement with the regime (Franzinelli 1999).

² The RSI was marked by a continuity of men (i.e. prefects of the provinces) and institutions (i.e. the administrative organizational structure).

³ Guido Leto was the chief of the Political Police Division.

⁴ It is worth noting that the treatment of those who served the regime is very controversial and goes beyond the aim of this short contribution.

⁵ The word 'informers' here stands for spies, namely citizens who collaborated with the Ovra.

Thus, the democratic shift occurred in a controversial socio-political landscape and—above all—in the absence of police reform: the antidemocratic ideology, which permeated the Fascist political police, survived the regime. When Mario Scelba was the Minister of the Interior (1947-1953), the police approach was not inherently different from the one used during the twenty years of the dictatorship and some surveillance-related tools, such as the Central Political Record,⁶ were reused in order to maintain files on certain categories of citizens. Furthermore, the overall ‘juridical character of the post war period’ (Nerenberg 2001: 14) shared more similarities than differences with the regime. For instance, the criteria for incarceration of deviant subjects ‘do not alter radically from those crafted during the twenty year tenure of the regime’ (*ibid*). This relates to one of the primarily legal legacies of the dictatorship, namely the Rocco code (the penal code promulgated under Mussolini), portions of which remained in effect until the 1970s (*ibid*) along with the Lombrosian approach to delinquency.

The reorganization of the police, forged by the Fascist Arturo Bocchini, was almost unaffected by the transition to democracy. Surveillance and control were used to target left-wing groups. Communist and socialist politicians, such as Basso and Lussu, raised the issue in the Italian Parliament, highlighting the use of anti-democratic police-state methods (Basso 1951). Drawing on archival evidence, Spriano writes that, ‘from 1938 to 1948 the change of the regime is not apparent’ (Spriano 1992: 135). Despite the different socio-political context, communists and socialists remained the main target of surveillance for at least three decades after the end of World War II (Serri 2012).

While the democratic shift is controversial, surveillance-related tools cannot be deemed illegal *per se*. However, both the surveillance of ‘suspects’ (e.g. left-wing citizens and parties such as the Italian Communist Party, PCI) and the continuity of a dossier society, implemented by the Fascist regime, reveal a weighty ideological legacy and thus a pattern of continuity. Additionally, the antidemocratic ideology is clear when looking at thousands of pages of police investigation dossiers focused on the Italian left-wing *intelligenza* compiled from 1945 to 1980 (Serri 2012).

It comes as no surprise, thus, that many ex-Ovra officers who were at the head of zones during the dictatorship were either only ‘moved’ to other areas or were actively involved in law enforcement activities after the fall of regime (Fonio 2011). For instance, Gesualdo Barletta, head of the Ovra zone in Rome was actually promoted to director of the new Division of General and Confidential Affairs (*Divisioni Affari Generali Riservati*) and to Assistant Police Chief. The Division centralized information on ‘public order and subversion, on political parties and trade unions activities, on associations of foreigners in Italy’ (Barrera 2011: 74). Barletta remained in place until 1958, more than 10 years after the end of the regime (Franzinelli 1999: 475). Moreover, the previously mentioned Guido Leto, after his acquittal, was enrolled as Inspector General of the Police and then as director of the police training schools.

The transition from Fascist to post-Fascist governments displayed more continuity than discontinuity in many aspects. First and foremost, the highly centralized and bureaucratic Italian governance was not dismissed. The state structure and its administration remained unaffected by the regime’s ousting (Nerenberg 2001: 14). If we consider surveillance as intertwined with modernity, bureaucracy and rationality (Giddens 1990; Bauman 1991; Lyon 2001) which are also three characteristics of the *ventennio*,⁷ we would argue that the repression carried out through surveillance was not only a feature of the regime but also a feature embedded in the new Italian Republic. Despite a ‘formal’ discontinuity embodied by the Italian Constitution, the lack of a more substantial shift from the regime seems apparent

⁶ The Central Political Record, established before Fascism, was used before, during and after the dictatorship to maintain files on the ‘subversives’.

⁷ ‘*Ventennio*’ means twenty years in Italian. The expression ‘*ventennio*’ is generally used with reference to the Fascist regime (1922-1945).

in the absence of both police reform and a democratic approach to policing and social control. Moreover, as pointed out by Barrera, after World War II, the history of the Republic was typified by a misuse of secrecy ‘together with the illegal handling of intelligence records (there were files that were illegally created or destroyed, or preserved, or hidden) ...’ (Barrera 2011: 70).

Many state agencies were affected by a permanence of the Fascist ideology and several para-state agencies associated with the regime did not fade away with the fall of the *duce*. This ‘ideological permanence’ flourished in the 1950s and 1960s through the emergence of what has been labelled ‘a double state’ (Melis 2007), typified by informative and illegal police-type bodies. For instance, it is revealing that the first Italian military secret service (Sifar, *Servizio Informazioni Forze Armate*) was created in 1949 without a proper political debate. The Sifar was identical to the Sim (*Servizio Informazioni Militari*; Military Information Service) created under Mussolini’s regime (De Lutiis 1998: 48).

When the aforementioned Gesualdo Barletta left the management of the new Division of General and Reserved Affairs in 1958, the approach to state security did not change. The new director, Domenico De Nozza, moved from Trieste to Rome with more than 40 collaborators who, with the help of the Ministry of Interior Tambroni, engaged in illegal information gathering on communists, specifically on the Italian Communist Party (PCI). This illegal activity was carried out independently from the legal secret service Sifar and thus epitomized the emergence of a state within a state also supported by the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).⁸ After De Nozza, Ulderico Caputo, who was an ex-Fascist police officer, continued along the same lines.

When Giovanni de Lorenzo⁹ was appointed chief of Italian Intelligence (1955-1961), ‘he went into a wire-tapping and information gathering craze’ (Marcus 1999: 207). The appointment of the general de Lorenzo was highly supported by the US, who were concerned by the growth of left-wing parties. At the end of the 1950s, the Sifar (deeply restructured and strengthened thanks also to collaboration with foreign intelligence agencies) managed to put together 157,000 files (34,000 were deemed illegal by parliamentary committee) on politicians, trade union leaders, political activists and priests (Marcus 1999; De Lutiis 1998). Interestingly enough, neo-Fascist movements, such as Ordine Nuovo, were not perceived as ‘threats’; as a consequence, the large majority of the files were on left wing politicians or groups (Franzinelli 2010). The ‘dossier society’ reached its maximum extent in those years due to quantitative and qualitative shifts in information gathering. Firstly, surveillance techniques relied more on electronic devices (i.e. cameras and microphones) compared to the previous decade, and secondly, information pertained not only to state security and terrorism but also to personal details such as the friendship network of those spied upon (De Lutiis 1998: 69). Thirdly, the Sifar was shaped more by issues of power and personal interests than by national security needs. The entire Italian elite were monitored with a particular emphasis on data gathered on what was considered ‘irregular behavior’, such as homosexual relationships and contacts with prostitutes (Ganser 2005: 72). This massive operation was carried out as an instrument of intimidation in subsequent years and ‘De Lorenzo went as far as to install microphones in the Vatican and in the palace of the Prime Minister in order to allow the CIA to monitor and record top-level conversations in Italy’ (*ibid*). The General stated that the files were set up for the NATO countries but some of those files, for instance, were also used to manipulate the presidential elections in 1962.

⁸ This should be analyzed in the context of the Cold War. The activities of the Sifar were strictly linked to those of the CIA and the cooperation between the two is crucial to understand the rise of what can be referred to as a ‘dossier society’. While the contextual history of intelligence during the Cold War is beyond the aim of this paper, it is worth noting that the cooperation between the CIA and the Italian military secret service led to the creation of the so called Gladio, a clandestine network conceived within NATO countries to confront a Soviet invasion (De Lutiis 1998).

⁹ Before being appointed chief of Italian Intelligence, De Lorenzo served on the Russian front in the Second World War and was active in the partisan movement.

De Lorenzo, who, in 1962, became the commander-in-chief of the *Carabinieri* (the national military police force), was preparing a silent *coup d'état* labelled '*Piano Solo*'. The latter was, as Ginsborg puts it, 'a counter-insurgency plan which was insurgent in itself' (Ginsborg 2003: 277), as it entailed dossiers on people considered threats to public security and also a plan to occupy prefectures, mass media and the 'headquarters of certain political parties' (*ibid*).

The massive surveillance operation carried out by De Lorenzo and his paramilitary forces through unconstitutional means is both thorny and far from being fully understood. However, the patchwork picture that seems to transpire from the 1950s and 1960s did not occur in a vacuum. Ideological, legal and political legacies of the dictatorship were fertile grounds for discretionary policing approaches to flourish. The survival in powerful positions in security and judiciary services of ex-fascists (or fascist sympathizers) preserved an ideological *status quo ante* that threatened democracy for at least two decades after the end of the dictatorship. The militarization and the centralization of police forces are key to explaining repression and strategies of social control. Moreover, surveillance and information gathering, that permeated every aspect of the Fascist society and were used to orchestrate a powerful policing system, fostered a police culture that went well beyond the *ventennio*. Parallel police and illegal police-type bodies are reminiscent of one of the first forms of political repression used by the regime. Fascist legacies were, thus, either direct (i.e. the Rocco penal code) or less visible (i.e. ideological continuity) but were nevertheless apparent in post-war Italy.

2. The Welfare State as a tool for social control

Social policy in post-war Italy was another sector where direct and indirect legacies of the Fascist regime were apparent. In this section we describe the main features of the Fascist welfare state and we point out the prevalence of elements of continuity during the first two decades in the life of Italian democracy. Moreover, we highlight the strategic role played by social policy as a tool for social control, according to cultural and political perspectives similar to those pursued by the approaches to security and repression described in section 1. In this framework, we focus on the case study of the educational system as another paradigmatic example of continuity between the Fascist regime and democracy, with many similarities to the history of the police state surveillance apparatus. Finally, we refer to some elements of discontinuity that characterized the 1950s and 1960s.

First, it is worth mentioning that the Fascist model on one side had a corporative inspiration, but on the other side it represented a fundamental step and a turning point in the development of State intervention in the field of social policies. In fact, although during the liberal pre-Fascist era some important signals of state social intervention emerged, these reformist achievements did not imply the existence of a systematic network of social services comparable with the one introduced during the dictatorship. In particular, the reformist government of Giolitti succeeded in introducing significant innovations in social insurance legislation, such as the introduction of compulsory insurance for old age, invalidity and unemployment in 1919 (Cherubini 1977), but its strategy did not imply the build-up of a social system managed by the State. In this framework, the traditional network of charitable institutions managed by the Catholic Church and the assistance and co-operative structures provided by trade unions and the workers' movement represented the main important actors that met the social needs of the people, until Mussolini took over.

In the historical context described above, the Fascist strategy in social policy was implemented through two basic steps, both aimed at keeping social control and creating consensus for the new regime. The first step concerned the urgent necessity of destroying the structures managed by ideological competitors. In this perspective there was the dismantling of the pre-existing structures managed by trade unions and workers' movements. In fact, during the first years of the Fascist regime, the *Federazione delle Società di Mutuo Soccorso* (Federation of Mutual Aid Societies) and the *casse autonome* (credit and deposit institutions), both directly managed by workers' associations, were dissolved (Silei 2000: 95-96). At the

same time, the signature, in 1929, of the Lateran Treaty between Mussolini and the representatives of the Pope, with the explication of an ideological alliance between the Fascist regime and Church, saved many Catholic activities which were permitted to exist during the dictatorship and did not have their sphere of influence curbed (Jemolo 1948).

The second step took place especially after 1927 with the foundation of the Corporatist state, when the regime began to look at the implementation of a Fascist social policy. Thus, the 1930s and early 1940s witnessed a great increase in welfare programs, such as a scheme for family allowances in 1933/1934 and one for compulsory sickness insurance in 1943 (Ferrera 1986: 389). From a quantitative viewpoint, during the regime the social expenditure grew to some 15-17 per cent of the state budget, two or three times more than in 1922 (Flora 1986). The supporting structure of the Fascist model of the 'Social State' was represented by various state social security and assistance institutions, such as the ONMI—*Opera Nazionale per la Maternità e l'Infanzia* (National Organization for Motherhood and Childhood) constituted in 1925; the INFPS—*Istituto Nazionale Fascista della Previdenza Sociale* (Fascist National Institute of Social Security) constituted in 1933; the INFAIL—*Istituto Nazionale Fascista per l'Assicurazione contro gli Infortuni sul Lavoro* (Fascist National Institute for Insurance against Industrial Accidents) constituted in 1933; the INAM—*Istituto Nazionale per l'Assicurazione contro le Malattie* (Disease Support Workers National Institute) constituted in 1943 (Silei 2000; Giorgi 2009).

All these achievements were built up in a political perspective that gave social policy a very important ideological status as a privileged tool for the creation and the maintenance of social control (De Felice 1968, 1974). As Ferrera (1986: 389) has noted, the large insurance agencies (INFPS, INFAIL and INAM) became an 'arena of clientelistic exchanges, through the provision of selective benefits to social clients whose consensus had to be secured and preserved'. Moreover, although the regime's leadership always highlighted the achievements of Fascist social policy, the real effect of the dictatorship's welfare state was a pattern of episodic, fragmentary and discriminatory protection (Quine 2002). In this framework, the reality was that unemployment insurances were at the level of starvation wages and workers gained access to a clearly inadequate health care system. Moreover, access to these inadequate services was based on political and social discrimination. For instance, aid for the unemployed during the post 1929 crisis went to those 'with the right politics' (Quine 2002). Furthermore, many resources were invested in campaigns—such as those against alcoholism and drugs—that produced few practical results but were useful for the purposes of social control.

The above-described Italian welfare state pattern did not change significantly during the two decades after World War II (Villa 2003: 54). A sort of long-term path dependency attitude limited the capacity of reformation. The assistance and social security system was divided into specific categories according to the subjects needing assistance (a universal social security system for all citizens did not exist); in addition, the constitution of agencies structured upon categories of subjects continued (Silei 2000). The main consequence was a lack of planning and co-ordination between different agencies and activities so enormous gaps remained (for instance, in assistance to the elderly).

The institutional framework inherited by Fascism divided social security into three separate parts: social insurance, health care, assistance (Ferrera 1986: 390). In particular, the social insurance agencies created by Fascism, and a plethora of smaller institutions that were added over the years, covered six main types of needs: pensions, sickness and maternity, accidents and occupational diseases, unemployment, tuberculosis and family allowances (Silei 2004). The coverage provided by insurance agencies was limited to employees, while the self-employed were excluded. Moreover, most benefits were flat-rate or related to previous contributions (Ferrera 1986: 390). The health care system was basically run by private actors and was adjusted by the system of professional or private '*Casse Mutue*' (Insurance Funds) (Silei 2004). Finally, assistance was mainly provided by many different public agencies, such as

the ECA—*Enti Comunali di Assistenza* (municipal assistance agencies) founded by Fascism in 1936, that worked at the local level, side by side with private and Church charities.

It should be noted that such a model of an assistance system was not consistent with the principles expressed by the new fundamental law of the Italian democratic state, the new Constitution passed in 1948 after lengthy debate in the Constituent Assembly (1946–1948) (Salini 2003; Di Nucci 2002). In particular, the new Constitution, and specifically Article 38, introduced the principle of the state's responsibility for assistance and it envisaged the principle of 'liberation from need' for all citizens. However, during the 1950s and in the first part of the 1960s, the assistance and social security system was not altered in its main features and the constitutional principles were not seriously implemented.

In general, the continuity with the previous Liberal and Fascist state emerged in the high institutional and organizational fragmentation, in the extreme diversification of performance based on various employment schemes, as well as in the widespread presence of private agencies (Girotti 1998: 279). Moreover, we can state that assistance did not yet fall within the main goals of the state. As during Fascism, the welfare state was functional to other objectives such as social control and creation of consensus. Social control and creation of consensus worked through the apparent paradox of a system that was neither market-oriented nor universalist, but based on four controversial ism-pillars: particularism, dualism, familism and clientelism (Ascoli 2002).

Social benefits appear to have been strongly differentiated depending on the person to whom they were related, and they were based on the specific 'status' acquired by the individual's participation in the labor market. A paradigmatic example was the extension of health coverage to social categories previously unprotected. In fact, instead of a universal enlargement of the health care to all citizens, or, at least, to all workers, extensions happened following patterns of particularism and political clientelism. Each category of workers dealt with its political referents to obtain health care coverage: in 1952 it was obtained by farmers; tenant farmers and sharecroppers in 1954; artisans in 1956; fishermen in 1958; and, finally, traders in 1960 (Pipino 2010). Every worker was required to demonstrate his right to have health care as a result of his own status as a member of a protected category.

The result was an exasperating particularism with hundreds of different situations, which favored the occurrence of horizontal conflict rather than vertical or class-related ones. The clientelism was a natural consequence of power imbalances with millions of individual relationships, rather than collective, between individuals and state agencies such as INPS, INAM or INAIL. Moreover, the society was dualistically divided between people inside and people outside the protective network provided by state agencies themselves. In fact, social rights were not recognized because of citizenship, but as a consequence of the specific status held in society.

Finally, this fragmented and dual system highlighted a close relationship between this pattern of clientelistic welfare state and an attempt to develop ideological consensus. By using clientelism and its idea of a '*politica del favore*' [policy of favor], both Fascism and, later, Christian Democrats, tried to counteract the weight of ideologies which instead offered the perspective of social change through political action (Castronovo 1976). The clientelistic approach entailed an idea of a 'non-conflicting society' and denied the existence of the class struggle. Moreover, it was also based on a deeply patriarchal and paternalistic culture (Ascoli 2002). In fact, the particularistic, clientelistic and dualistic nature of the system was accompanied by an ideological and functionalist vision of the family. It idealized a complementary division of roles between the genders, allocating child care to women.

The continuity with the recent past was evident: it was Fascism that had provided the ideological background for a welfare system based on this kind of gender division of roles. In fact, on one hand, with the aim of increasing Italy's economic strength and mobilizing every resource available—including the

reproductive capacity of women—the Fascist regime, for the first time in the country’s history, created a network of services in support of the ‘typical’ duties of women (De Grazia 1993). From this perspective, the Fascist familist policies included the introduction of family allowances, maternity insurance, loans for weddings and births, preference in career moves for fathers, and many services provided by state agencies (the ONMI in particular). On the other hand, Fascism propagandized a female model in a society where the only social functions of the woman were motherhood and family assistance (Brin 1981).

The continuity between Fascism and Democracy was explicit in the survival of this functionalist ideology of the family, since all the services provided by the state agencies (included the ONMI which existed until 1975) in the 1950s and the 1960s were complementary to a rigid gender division of labor in society (Ascoli 2002). Until the 1970s and the feminist movement, the achievements in the field of political rights (the first of which was the right to vote, introduced in 1946) was not accompanied by a similar change in the welfare state and in the extension of social and civil rights.

This approach was also the consequence of the traditional ‘Catholic’ idea of women that remained hegemonic both during Fascism and under the Christian Democratic governments of post-war Italy. The woman was ‘sanctified’ in the role of devoted mother, who, consequently, did not have to think about entering the labor market, nor impair the performance of her ‘natural’ duties. The introduction, in 1933, of the *Giornata della Madre e dell’Infanzia* [Day of Mother and Child], set for December 24, a choice that exploited the Catholic worship of the Virgin Mary, was not random. In this way, the Italian Fascist regime proposed the Mother of God as an example for each Italian mother (Maffeo 2005). After World War II, the same approach was followed by the Christian Democrats, openly supported by the Catholic Church in their challenge against Socialists and Communists. The new pattern of women was not only the Virgin Mary, but also Maria Goretti, sanctified in 1950 by Pope Pio XII and proposed as a symbol of purity.

To summarize, in our opinion this system represented a dream-solution for strategies of social control. In fact, the goal of an invasive presence of the state in the citizens’ life was achieved together with the build-up of a highly segmented society, and easily manipulated through clientelistic mechanisms. The consensus was created in the daily bargaining that presented the service provided as a kind concession to the single worker. Moreover, the ideological role played by the family ensured an additional defence against the emergence of conflicting phenomena.

As in the case of the family, even the school policy represented a paradigmatic example of continuity in social control aptitude. In fact, the passage from Fascist dictatorship to republican democracy, with remarkable modifications in the founding ideology of the Nation, did not modify the basic organization of the Italian educational system. The Italian school model has been historically based on two reform acts: the Casati law (1859) and the Gentile laws (1922–1924). These two legislative interventions were not alternatives, but the Gentile laws represented the enforcement of the model introduced by Casati (Pattarin 2011: 173). This system has been characterized by three levels of education: primary elementary school (five years duration), junior high school (three years) and high school (five years). From the administrative point of view, the Italian school was centralist, with standardized teaching programs that were the same all around Italy (Schizzerotto and Barone 2006). This conformation, based on central ministerial direction, was used until the 1990s when the concept of autonomy started to be introduced.

Another structural characteristic of the Italian educational system has been the centrality of classics studies (Latin in particular) in school programs. This fact highlights the non-inclusive attitude that has traditionally defined the Italian system, with a dramatic fracture between an inclusive elementary school and an elitist high school (Pattarin 2011: 174). After a unitary elementary school for all students, the high

school system was based on the division between professional, vocational or technical training courses on one side, and the '*Licei*', attended by the elite and which offered classics studies, on the other.¹⁰

This pattern of school system was the result of the ideological hegemony of Idealism, and in particular of the thought of the two philosophers Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile. Moreover, in the years following the Gentile reforms, this approach was integrated by a process of *Fascistizzazione* of the school system (Mazzatosta 1978: 138–140). It meant that, from 1925, school professors could be dismissed if their behavior was not compatible with the government's policy. Furthermore, in 1935, the teaching of military culture was introduced; and finally the introduction, in 1939, of the *Carta della scuola* [Fascist Manifesto of the School] represented the last step in the attempt to create the Fascist school.

During the 1950s and 1960s, despite the removal of some Fascist laws and the important innovation of the more inclusive *unitary* junior high school that was introduced in 1963, the basic characteristics of this 'idealistic' school system planned by Gentile did not change. It continued as an efficient tool for the education of the 'good citizen' and for the reproduction of class hierarchy. Moreover there was the failure of the process of *defascistizzazione* (defascistisation). In fact, although lawsuits had already been started to purge teachers and professors who had been particularly supportive of the Fascist Regime, the 1946 amnesty stopped this process and almost all these individuals continued teaching in the 1950s and 1960s (Lajolo 2012). The result was that—as was the case for the welfare system as a whole—the first decades of Italian democracy were characterized by the survival of the Fascist school system, which was a well-oiled machine of social control for the education of new generations of Italians.

However, the predominant elements of continuity in post-Fascist Italian social policy described above were accompanied by some signs of discontinuity—which, nevertheless, did not change the basic features. Firstly, among the most significant reformation interventions, there was the progressive enlargement of the assistance and insurance schemes to new categories of workers than are already quoted above. Moreover, there was the founding of new central agencies, first of all the Ministry of Health (1958), the creation of which was introduced as an opportunity favoring the implementation of the principle of the 'right to health' (Sepe 1999: 257).

Secondly, some local experiences of the universal welfare state were carried out at municipal level. Among them the experience of the so-called '*socialismo municipale*' [Municipal Socialism] in Milan was one of the most significant, with an impressive network of social services to meet the basic needs of the citizens (Agnoletto 2006). The fact that during the War this city was a center of anti-Fascist Resistance probably influenced this experience.

Finally, during the 1950s the fundamental role played by trade unions in the building up of the Italian pattern of a universal welfare state in following decades began to show up (Agnoletto 2000). The Italian trade unions became protagonists of this fight even if they formally represented a part (the class in the Communist CGIL, or the members of the trade unions in the moderate CISL) of the Italian society. In this perspective, the role (a sort of 'pan-syndicalism attitude') played by trade unions represented the most important discontinuity with the Fascist era. It was representative of the practical conflict between the idea of the social policy as a tool for social control and social pacification, and the representation of the welfare state as a means for more social justice. In this framework, at the end of the 1960s and in the 1970s the trade union agenda became the background for the birth of the first model of a universal welfare state in Italy (Masulli 2002; Agnoletto 2000).

¹⁰ However, this peculiar structure of the Italian school system, based on a combination of universal access to elementary schools, class discrimination and dominance of classical education, achieved some positive results during the Fascist period, such as the reduction of illiteracy from 35.8 per cent in 1921 to 21 per cent in 1931, the introduction of compulsory schooling until 14 years of age, and the fact that the number of students (including girls) attending high school and university increased during the 1930s, despite the elitist approach pursued by the government.

Concluding remarks

In this paper we investigated Fascist socio-political legacies by focusing on two main issues: police state surveillance and the overall approach to welfare. Through a socio-historical analysis we emphasized both aspects of continuity and of discontinuity, which in some cases are more direct while in others are less obvious, but are nonetheless worth considering in order to understand some crucial patterns that emerged in post-war Italy. However, as a result of our analysis, an interpretative hypothesis is that the new democratic Constitution, passed in 1948, was not enough to safeguard democracy or innovate social policy at least for more than twenty years after the fall of the Duce.

Firstly, due both to a continuity of men and institutions and to a summary purge, policing was permeated by an ideology which was not dissimilar from the one displayed during the dictatorship. The elements of continuity are apparent when looking at social control and at the targets of surveillance as well as at the illegal use of paramilitary bodies to gather information on citizens. Some of the tools crafted during the Liberal State and used by the regime to maintain files on citizens were not removed until the late 1960s. The militarization of police forces and the lack of police reform played a major role in the problematic transition to democracy. Moreover, the model of the welfare system highlighted the continuity of an ideology based on clientelistic strategies which were not consistent with the principles potentially embodied by the new democratic system (Salini 2003; Di Nucci 2002). In particular, although the new Constitution introduced the principles of the universal welfare state in the legal framework, during the 1950s and in the first part of the 1960s the main features of the social security system were not changed, and the constitutional principles were not seriously implemented. Welfare and education remained, above all, tools for the development of consensus.

In general, a substantial shift did not occur because of continuity of three fundamental aspects within the system: centralization, bureaucratization and the use of discretionary power. The highly centralized Italian governance, along with a personalistic use of power, challenged the post-war social and political landscape even more. The three aforementioned aspects seem to be the *fil rouge* of both approaches to security and policing, and to the welfare state. In general, these features marked the transition to democracy of the state structure that did not radically alter in the decades after Fascism, and this fact led to a prominence of aspects of continuity rather than of significant breaks.

Furthermore, a continuity of men and institutions was paralleled with a cultural and ideological continuity in some crucial areas, such as sexuality, procreation and the role of women, who ‘were still bound by the dominant discourse of family now theorized by the centrists Christian Democrats (DC) and the Communist Party instead of the regime’ (Nerenberg 2001). This ideological continuity provided the background for both the building up of a familistic welfare state, and the continuation of strategies of social control, repression and surveillance.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the overall approach to social control changed in the 1970s for several reasons. As far as surveillance is concerned, the 1970s represent a significant turning point. While until the end of the 1960s, surveillance did not rely (or relied only to a certain extent) on technology and was mainly carried out by public institutions, from the early 1970s on it migrated to the private realm and increasingly entailed the use of electronic devices. For instance, the FIAT (Italian Automobile Factory of Turin) scandal¹¹ in the early 1970s exemplified this trend; in particular it highlights the migration of surveillance activities from the public to the private realm. Moreover, the Central Political Record was dismissed in 1968 and a gradual de-militarization of the police started to occur. The progressive democratization of the police led to a key reform in the 1980s when the Italian State Police became a civil body.

¹¹ 350,000 files on workers, union members and industrial informers were found in the FIAT industry offices (Rodotà 1973).

The growth of both social movements and trade unions undoubtedly played a major role in reshaping the national, social and political landscape. It introduced important elements of discontinuity from the Fascist legacy. In this perspective, in the 1970s Italy achieved the birth of the first model of a universal welfare state in its history, as a direct consequence of the trade unions' action for reforms. In particular, during the decade 1968-1978 the trade unions were the protagonists of the implementation of legislative innovations that represented the pillars of the new system of Italian social policy. Among the new laws introduced in this period, the most significant were: the pension reform of 1969, the reform of unemployment benefits (the so-called '*cassa integrazione*') in 1972, two housing policy reforms with the introduction of the '*equo canone*' [fair rent] in 1971 and 1978, the 1975 reform of family law, and the health care reform in 1978. All these legislative achievements were part of the union strategy called '*Lotte per le riforme*' [Struggles for reforms] that aimed to radically change the Italian model of development (Couffignal 1979: 328) and that represented a typical example of '*supplenza sindacale*' [union substitution] with respect to the action of political parties (Regini 1981). Social control was no longer the basic reason for social policy innovation in Italy. The Fascist legacy finally began to be surpassed.

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