



Social policies today: the end of the road?

Políticas sociais na contemporaneidade: o fim do caminho?

ANA TARGINA RODRIGUES FERRAZ*



ABSTRACT – This article is the result of a study grounded on concepts to reflect on the relationship between State and Social Policy in the capitalist society. It adopts bibliographical research and literature review carried out within the study project during qualification leave. The main goal is to think about how social policy is configured, taking into account its economic determinants, as the result of a political and theoretical debate about the role of the State in capitalist societies between the main theoretical references within social sciences: liberal thinking and Marxist thinking.

Keywords – State. Social policy. Reconfiguration of social policies.

RESUMO – O artigo é produto de um trabalho de reflexão conceitual sobre as relações entre Estado e política social na sociedade capitalista a partir de pesquisa bibliográfica e revisão da literatura, realizadas no âmbito do projeto de estudos desenvolvido em licença capacitação. Seu principal objetivo é pensar a configuração da política social, sem deixar de tratar dos seus determinantes econômicos, como resultante, também, de um processo de disputa política e teórica acerca do papel do Estado na sociedade capitalista entre as principais referências teóricas no interior das ciências sociais: o pensamento liberal e o pensamento marxista.

Palavras-chave – Estado. Política social. Reconfiguração das políticas sociais.

* Doctor in Social Sciences from the State University of Campinas (Unicamp). It is a full professor in the Department of Social Services in the Graduate Program in Social Policy in Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES), Vitória – ES, Brazil.
E-mail: anatargina@uol.com.br

Submitted on: July/2014. Approved: November/2014.

This paper examines the main concepts of State that steer both theoretical discussions and the design and formulation of social policies in capitalist societies.

We start from the assumption that the theoretical and political debate about the main concepts of State in this society is responsible both for the State's different types of intervention and relationships with society as well as for how public and social policies are put together.

Such theoretical and political debate has steered the very process which organized the modern States. The consolidation of the capitalist mode of production, the political rise of the bourgeoisie, and workers becoming political subjects as an organized group with their own project of society were responsible for how the State was set up and its types of intervention were defined.

The elements that characterize the modern nation-states (full sovereignty, separation between State and civil society, between State and religion, having its own body of employees and armed forces under a single command) point both toward breaking with the feudal society's political organization and the rise of a completely new conception of man (the liberal bourgeoisie's), relationships between men, and relationships between man and nature.

Between the 16th and 18th centuries, the modern States were set up as heavily centralized, authoritarian absolutist monarchies. Such characteristics made it possible to eliminate different, abusive toll-collection practices, rules and prohibitions, as well as the constant conflicts between the very feudal lords. However, since the 17th century the absolutist states' centralization, authoritarianism, and arbitrary ruling greatly hampered the expansion of commercial and manufacturing activities, the individual freedoms sought by the bourgeoisie, and the end of the nobility's privileges.

This context – where the capitalist mode of production was cementing itself, the bourgeoisie was rising politically, the State was being reconfigured as the first representative governments took office and workers became a political force – was the environment that allowed the main modern theories of State to be created.

The classical liberal theory and, later on, the Marxist theory of State expressed the deep economic and political changes underway throughout Europe at the time. Those theories expressed the opposite views of man and society espoused by the capitalist society's basic social classes: capitalists and workers.

This paper examines the argument that the subsequent development of these and connected theories was steered by the development of class warfare and the very reconfiguration of the State.

Classical liberalism

Liberal thought emerges as the theoretical and ethical expression of the bourgeois world view in which freedom is a core value. Freedom means the absence of coercions and constraints imposed on individuals, and everyone's ability to act according to their interests (negative freedom and positive freedom). Freedom results in ownership, ownership of oneself, of one's own capabilities, and of everything one may obtain by using their capabilities.

Contrary to the medieval world's organicist, religious view of man and society, the liberal thought sees the individual as the sole leading player in economic and political life. Every human being is in charge of their own life and welfare.

Liberals believe men are free, equal, and independent. However, satisfying their own interests and expanding their capabilities may lead to conflicts stemming from the absence of limits to individual freedom, a situation in which each one is their own judge (state of nature).

Conflict risks and the unstable relationships between men create the need to strike a pact between owners, under which pact they forgo a portion of their own natural power in order to set up

another, i.e. the political power, which represents the individual's will, to protect property and individual freedom and guarantee mercantile relationships. The government or State is the institution resulting from such agreement.

This State, which holds limited powers and whose main role is to protect property and individual freedom, is the Liberal State.

The State, the political society, constitutes the sphere of the individuals' common interests, and the civil society is the sphere that expresses the individual interests and the exchanges between the owners. The legitimate monopoly of force (resulting from consensus and regulated by laws) is one of the main tools used by the State to ensure and control the freedom to express ideas and opinions and the circulation of goods. The absence of any regulation of these activities is essential for balanced exchanges to be made. According to Bobbio, liberals see "the State as a necessary evil; and as an evil, although a necessary one (and this is the distinction between liberalism and anarchism), the State should interfere as little as possible in the individuals' sphere of action" (2005, p. 21).

Although the liberal viewpoint condemns any sort of intervention by the State in the activities of free individuals, the development of the capitalist society was only made possible by having its resources mediated, its regulation and control instruments, and by containing and curbing economic and political forces that put up obstacles to its expansion (those pining for feudal times and the workers' socialist movement).

At first, any intervention by the State in people's lives was criticized on moral and political grounds. The State's meeting the individuals' needs would prevent said individuals from developing independently and restrict their freedom. The criticism against the possibilities of restricting individual autonomy deriving from the State's intervention is followed by the understanding that the definition of welfare is individual and no one or any State can define it but the individual.

The collective responsibility for individual welfare, represented by the creation of the Welfare State and its measures to protect and distribute income in the mid 20th century, would be harshly criticized by orthodox liberals. To Friedrich Hayek (1990), disregarding the inequalities that actually stem from individual capabilities and choices, as well as coercing society's members into some collective responsibility, breaches the terms under which free men accept to submit to a government. His criticism, formulated in the 1940s, will have an impact starting from the 1970s as the first signs of the crisis in the Fordist-Keynesian regime of accumulation emerge.¹ Social policies as they are known today stem from the capitalist society and are not predominantly tied to the creation of the Welfare State² late in the 19th century. Until the 19th century, the State's main forms of social intervention were meant to control and contain poor and extremely poor workers and were compatible with the liberal understanding that each individual is free and responsible for meeting their own needs. Behind such intervention, especially laid out in the English Poor Laws, was the idea that each one was supposed to ensure their survival through their work. Only those unable to work would deserve private charity and governmental assistance. Poor people fit for work and beggars in good health were sent to work in the so-called workhouses.

Liberals believed that public measures to assist the poor would lead to laziness and vice, besides destroying their initiative, people's entrepreneurial capabilities, and their dignity. Public social protection should merely prevent individual freedom from being compromised.

Laws meant to regulate the situation of the poor underwent changes in the course of the 18th and 19th centuries. The purpose of those changes was to supply the capitalist market with increasingly higher numbers of free workers willing to submit themselves to degrading working conditions and meager wages.³

More significant changes to that picture would only be seen starting from the 1830s, when increasing pauperism and emerging workers' organizations reined in the liberal belief in individualism and the free market. The increasingly higher number of poor people found in the new society amidst the

growing accumulation of wealth gave rise to the term *social issue* to name the phenomenon which liberal principles failed to explain.

The workers' expanding political organization will be important toward changing the terms of the debate about the determinants of poverty and the principles of social protection. Holding the workers themselves accountable for their poverty will be called into serious question in late 19th century Germany.

The most significant change brought on by the growing political participation of workers and mass movements took place in the State's social roles. The State then moves on from merely safeguarding the public order and ensuring the conditions necessary for production and workers' exploitation and begins regulating the process of production and accumulation and the relationships between capital and labor by setting rules for mercantile relationships, encouraging investments, and creating measures to protect workers from the risks deriving from their work (death, disease, disability).

From the 19th century onward, we see changes to how the State intervenes which modify its restricted character (introduction of social security, farther-reaching citizenship, and rising social expenditure) (PEREIRA, 2008). The introduction of social security expressed the public acknowledgement that poverty and claims of having trouble making one's own living derived from events beyond the individuals' control (aging, disease, unemployment), which created the right to protection by the state (PEREIRA, 2008).

The workers' expanding political rights and the introduction of the so-called social rights were responsible for broadening the concept of citizenship. Belonging to a given society no longer implies solely individual duties; it now creates rights that must be ensured by the whole of society represented by the figure of the State. Perhaps, that was the deepest change to the concept and role of the State. Each one's welfare becomes a collective responsibility and is ensured by means of public and social policies.

The expansion of citizenship will give rise to what I have called connected theories within the main social and political conceptions of our time: liberalism and Marxism. As a counterpoint to orthodox liberalism, social-democrat thinking cements itself in the mid 1940s.⁴ Within Marxism, Gramsci's theory of the Extended State would show the ability of Marxist thought to understand the economic and political changes capitalist societies underwent in the 20th century.

Keeping in mind that the development of each of these theories is intimately connected to the dynamics of class warfare, next we are going to address the Marxist understanding of the State which emerged as workers' organizations and struggles became fiercer and socialist theories were created in the 19th century.

Marxism

Marxism is a comprehensive set of materialist theories. Its most important postulate states that how the material production of existence is organized and carried out in a given society is a determining factor for its political organization and the construction of its intellectual and cultural representations in a time period. The material production of existence is the basis on which a legal and political superstructure is built, where the current and dominant ideas in such society correspond to the ideas of the economically dominant social classes.

Within Marxist thought,⁵ the State is a colossal superstructure of social class domination. The State arises when society has become entangled in irreconcilable antagonisms which require the use of coercion instruments by the economically dominant class to ensure a minimum of social cohesion and unity (ENGELS, 1986; LENIN, 2007). Contrary to the liberal theories of State as a product of the association between free, independent individuals, in Marxism the emergence of the State is connected

to the needs of containing and controlling the conflicts between social classes, because the structural inequality between those who own the means of production and those who do not results in conflicts that only ideology and coercion are capable of reconciling.

According to Marxism, the organization of economic production must be subordinated to the satisfaction of human needs and potential. Because social inequality and extreme poverty are structural in the capitalist society, it is impossible for individual and collective welfare to be achieved in such society.

The capitalist State, much like every State in classical Marxism, is the organized power held by one class to oppress the others (MARX; ENGELS, 1998). The State is responsible for regulating and containing the social conflicts arising out of exploitation, inequality and poverty, thereby ensuring social order is maintained.

Marx and Engels believed that the super-exploitation of the workforce and the clear trend toward pauperization would lead to the need for permanent coercion (COUTINHO, 1996).

According to Coutinho (1996), understanding that the State is a committee that manages the bourgeoisie's business and that the general law of accumulation does not allow any concessions to the workers' interests leads the authors (Marx and Engels) to conclude that the transition to socialism necessarily requires a sudden, violent break with the bourgeois order.

Toppling the class State, destroying and replacing it with the workers' self-government will be essential for breaking with the capitalist social order and setting up the conditions required to abolish the private property of the means of production and create a society free of exploitation, social classes, and poverty.

Espousing the restrictive, coercive view of the bourgeois State's nature, Lenin, Russian political leader and Marxist thinker, developed important reflections about the revolutionary process.⁶

Lenin developed his ideas in a context where European workers were achieving political victories (universal male suffrage and the right to unionize and create their own political parties) in the course of the 19th century and early 20th century. Such victories led to advances in the makeup of modern democratic States and allowed for the emergence and expression of the main political dissents found within the workers' movement between those that advocated reformist, gradual strategies for seizing the State's power via suffrage and the revolutionaries. To Lenin and the other proponents of violent revolution:

The petty-bourgeois democrats, those sham socialists who replaced the class struggle by dreams of class harmony, even pictured the socialist transformation in a dreamy fashion — not as the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class, but as the peaceful submission of the minority to the majority which has become aware of its aims. This petty-bourgeois utopia, which is inseparable from the idea of the state being above classes, led in practice to the betrayal of the interests of the working classes, as was shown, for example, by the history of the French revolutions of 1848 and 1871, and by the experience of “socialist” participation in bourgeois Cabinets in Britain, France, Italy and other countries at the turn of the century (LENIN, 2007, p. 43).

The theory of class struggle, applied by Marx to the question of the state and the socialist revolution, leads as a matter of course to the recognition of the political rule of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, i.e., of undivided power directly backed by the armed force of the people. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming the ruling class, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and of organizing all the working and exploited people for the new economic system (LENIN, 2007, p. 44).

The successful revolutionary strategy devised by the Bolsheviks proved the validity of seeing the State as a monumental administrative and military machine at the dominant classes' service.

However, the expansion of political democracy and the achievement of economic and social improvements by the working class in western Europe helped give rise to a debate in which the nature of the State as a class instrument became the subject of contention (GRAMSCI, 2004); POULANTZAS, 1986).

Gramsci believed the State had become an important variable for understanding the 19th century capitalist society because of its growing participation in economic activity by creating the conditions for both accumulation and the reproduction of labor. His original contribution to Marxist thought resides in understanding civil society as a dimension composed of private organizations responsible for society's cultural, intellectual, and spiritual life. Unlike Marx,⁷ Gramsci believes the civil society is part of the superstructure along with the State. His original formulations also include the Extended State concept according to which the State is not merely a committee for managing the bourgeoisie's common interests or a class' organized power to oppress the others (MARX; ENGELS, 1998). To Gramsci, the State's role in the domination process encompasses both the exercise of coercive functions and the production of such class' hegemony⁸.

To Poulantzas, especially in his book *State, Power, Socialism* (Brazilian 1986 edition), class warfare conditions the capitalist society's social relationships and the very model of the State's operation. According to the author, the incorporation of workers into the political life of capitalist societies as they secured universal suffrage and the freedoms of expression and association turned the State into an important stage for class warfare as the State's interventions were then shaped also by the workers' interests.

Gramsci's and Poulantzas' reflections in the field of Marxist thought were formulated based both on the expansion of democracy as a political regime and the rise of social democracy among workers.

Social democracy

The social democrat thought is situated within that which I have called connected theories in the field of liberal thought. According to Adam Przeworski,⁹ social democrats ranged from espousing a non-violent standpoint of fighting for socialism within the socialist movement to the complete abandonment of such standpoint.

Today's social democrats used to be the so-called reformists within the workers' movement, and advocated a gradualist strategy for the revolution.¹⁰ They believed taking part in the electoral process could be important for disseminating the socialist project and the subsequent electoral victory of this project's proponents, thereby enabling gradual reforms to the capitalist society that would decrease the capitalists' power and control over the means of production. The main reforms they sought were related to the nationalization of companies and their subsequent socialization. However, Przeworski says the social democrats had never achieved the electoral majorities they needed to implement their proposals. Also according to the author, their efforts to expand their constituency led them to tone down the social democrat discourse. They stopped talking to workers to talk to citizens from all walks of life.

The major capitalist crisis in 1929 and the increasingly authoritarian, violent State in the Soviet Union contributed for reformism to be abandoned as a strategy for socialism and socialism itself, both because it was impossible to carry out deeper reforms and the hardships faced as the Soviet experience developed.

After World War II, social democrats rose to power in several European countries and found Keynes' economic theory provided the economic justification for defending programs that ensured the satisfaction of workers' needs and their reproduction.

John Maynard Keynes was a major critic of the classical liberal political economy's principles, especially the proposition that the supply of goods generates its own demand. He proposed changes to the State's relationships with the production system because he believed that the State should coordinate the relationships between public and private investments in order to make sure all factors of production (capital, men, and machines) were used to the fullest and by so doing ensure the economic balance by means of fiscal, credit, and expenditure measures.

Social policies were part of the set of measures needed to maintain the full employment of all factors of production, thereby ensuring workers and those unfit for work the conditions necessary for their reproduction. They would enable and encourage the workers' consumption and reproduction by means of stable employment and income in case they lost their job or were unable to work (unemployment benefits, sick pay, and pensions for disability, retirement or death). They would also ensure the conditions necessary for workers to join and remain in the job market (education, health, and housing policies).

Social democrats criticize the market's natural ability to self-regulate. They advocate a systematic intervention by the State in the production system capable of changing the pattern according to which socially produced wealth is distributed, thereby reducing inequalities and social strains between the classes. Social democrats believe that family, the market, individuals, and charities are not enough to diminish or eliminate poverty. The State must fill in the gaps left by these institutions and solve the problems deriving from the market's poor operation (COIMBRA, 1987).

Social policies are necessary for ensuring some equality¹¹ by reducing the damage caused by the market's operation. Social democrats gave up on and replaced the prospect of socializing the production with socializing its distribution and consumption. In that regard, the State is tasked with taking steps capable of bringing the operation of economic activities to an equilibrium by preventing or controlling their crises and helping reduce social inequalities. Each one's welfare becomes a collective responsibility.

This shift in the classical liberal standpoint did not mean a break with the liberal view about man and society but gave a new meaning to the relationship between public and private, where public takes on three basic meanings:

a) lo público como sinónimo de lo que es común a todos y que así aproxima su significado a "lo colectivo" (en el sentido de una cierta naturaleza de algo compartido, no en tanto realidad empírica) y que se opone a "lo privado"; b) lo público como lo conocido y manifiesto, y por lo tanto vinculado con el atributo de la publicidad; y c) lo público como accesible, como abierto al colectivo y por tanto opuesto a lo clausurado y/o excluyente (FILC, 1997; RABOTNIKOF, 2005; MINTEGUIAGA apud DANANI, 2010, p. 6).

In the first sense, State policies help define the public or private character of an issue to the extent that its intervention is going to take place as a result of whether such issue is public or not.

Social policy as a State policy is defined by its intervention in the conditions for the reproduction of life of various classes and social groups.

[...] la política social puede ser definida como el campo de relaciones y de prácticas, estatalmente organizado, en cuyo interior se disputa por constituir las condiciones de vida como asunto público – en el sentido de colectivo, o de participante del interés general – o como asunto de los particulares (DANANI, 2010, p. 7).

Once the State is seen as an institution responsible for individual and collective life and welfare, its greater or lesser intervention will depend on how public, i.e. collective, an issue is deemed, and therefore subject to the State's intervention.

The theoretical and political development of the concept of citizenship was also important for shaping the political struggle and the patterns of State intervention. The introduction of social rights (the right to fully participate in the social heritage and the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in society), according to Marshall (1967), and their eminently distributive character makes their definition (what will or will not be considered a social right) also dependent on the local capitalism's and the political struggle's development pattern.¹² The discussion opened up by revolutionary France regarding the definition of social rights examined the problem of balancing out the principle of solidarity (society has responsibilities towards its members), defended by social reformists, and the principle of responsibility (each individual is responsible for their own life), advocated by liberals.

The attack against the formulation of social rights carried out by jurists and liberals considered the difficulty of framing social rights as rights given it was impossible to define *a priori* the needs to be met. Then, social rights were included in the set of citizenship rights as a result of an ample process of theoretical, legal, and political debate involving forces representing the interests of capitalists and workers, instead of being included in a gradual or sequential manner as suggested by Marshall in his work.¹³

What we saw in western Europe in the mid 20th century was a confluence between social democracy, Keynesianism, and the theory of citizenship, which made up a well coordinated set of ideas whose common thread defended the existence of a third way between liberal capitalism and socialism, in which the private property of the means of production is maintained while economic growth, high profit rates, and more equitable distribution of the socially produced wealth are reconciled via public and social policies. The confluence of this set of ideas and its practical and political consequences changed, to quite a degree, the profile of European capitalist societies and became a successful strategy to face the communist threat during the Cold War.

While it remained possible to uphold the agreements between capital and labor that made it possible to reconcile productivity, profits, and social welfare for workers, Europe enjoyed approximately 30 years of prosperity and relative "social peace."¹⁴ Around the late 1960s when the first signs emerged it would be difficult to maintain the period's high profit rates¹⁵ at the same levels, the Welfare State became the target of criticism and considered, owing to its excessive expenditure, particularly social expenditures and their high tax rates, the main culprit for the crisis at the time.

Among the liberals' responses to the crisis, they started pushing for a set of initiatives against stable employment, the workers' productivity gains, social benefits, and all policies meant to reduce social inequalities and ensure a minimum standard of welfare for citizens. The liberal model of State is once again touted as the most suitable for facing the new crisis, and capable of ensuring the conditions necessary for accumulation and the emergence of a new cycle of growth.

The neoliberal measures¹⁶ adopted by both the central and peripheral capitalist countries failed to deliver a new growth cycle and, with respect to the central capitalist countries, started facing the workers' resistance to a swift, full breakdown of all structures of the Welfare State.

Between the 1980s and 1990s, initiatives to corrode the Welfare State were in their infancy and the workers' resistance prevented that process from developing fast. However, the corrosion continued on and worsened in the 2000s.

Today, Europe is undergoing a process where the State is being deeply reconfigured as its social protection systems wear away (BOSCHETTI, 2012; FERGUSON, 2013) and its repressive and penal activities increase (WACQUANT, 2001). Such reconfiguration has been so intense and deep that perhaps it is not an overstatement to say it is an irreversible process for which the resistance and opposition movements that have been growing, and not only in Europe in these circumstances, are yet to find a response.

The end of the road for social policies?

We have been watching throughout Europe the remaining structures of the Welfare State completely disintegrate as social security is reconfigured (higher age, longer period of contribution, and introduction of caps for receiving full benefits), employment stability ends and stricter requirements for receiving unemployment benefits are introduced (lack of any jobs that require from applicants the same qualifications and offer similar wages as their last job), trade-offs and conditions are required for receiving assistance benefits (stricter criteria for receiving benefits such as France's Income of Active Solidarity, which replaced the Minimum Income of Insertion), and payments for health and education services are introduced, all of which eat away at universal welfare (BOSCHETTI, 2012).

Because the State is so essential for a capitalist society to sustain itself, all of the State's structures must be placed at the service of the interests of capital, which completely erodes the social services meant to meet the workers' needs.

In the mid 20th century, after World War II, social policies played an economic and political role in the production and reproduction of capital and labor. Meeting the workforce's reproduction needs by means of social policies was important both for the economy's growth, as they ensured its full cycle as workers became consumers and increased their productivity, and for keeping social and political peace by preventing social conflicts from worsening and also keeping the communist threat at bay.

Today, as the interest-bearing capital prevails in the dynamics of accumulation, there are other needs to be met by social policies.

Growing unemployment and poverty across the world, typical of the current stage of capitalism's development, makes it necessary to develop strategies to control workers and the unemployed and maintain public safety by steering social policies toward the extremely poor and channeling their resources to give such individuals the ability to consume very basic items for their survival. Hence the growth of money transfer programs such as Brazil's Family Allowance. These programs require a leaner State structure and foster people's individual accountability for using such resources in the best way.

Money transfer programs, along with their conditions and trade-offs, such as job training and carrying out activities that generate some income, are the best expression of the role to be played by social policies in contemporary capitalist societies: they provide a springboard for people to look after themselves, according to the purest liberal definition for the role of the State (DURANA; ERANSUS, 2007).

So that the State's main roles can be maintained in this society (providing the necessary conditions for the capitalist society's accumulation and legitimacy) (MANDEL, 1985) in the current context, the Welfare State's structures erected in the so-called glorious years need to crumble in order for the State's resources, the public fund, to be allocated to save banks and companies in crisis, as well as, via tax waivers and the speculative gains created by higher (domestic and foreign) public debt, allow for (actual and fictitious) profit increases. On the other hand, social policies need to be reconfigured and the State's supply of social goods and services remodeled so that the State may continue playing its legitimating and conflict containment and repression roles. In other words, the accumulation process' needs and the general conditions of class warfare, as workers' organizations break apart and weaken, have led to an overall impoverishment of the population, public fund resources being allocated mostly to meet the capital's needs, and escalated repression, thereby boosting the liberal notion of State and weakening the democratic conditions of political struggle.

The State's massive importance for the capitalist society's reproduction has required it to reconfigure itself after the crisis in the 1970s and, in our time, after the 2008 crisis. We see the return and strengthening of the liberal concept of State. Its most prominent characteristics are found in how the State intervenes in society's life by means of public and social policies, which have expanded security and repression policies. At the same time, the universal and welfare-fostering nature of social policies has

shrunk as health and social assistance services become targeted, privatized, and contracted out (FERGUSON, 2013). Social policies have restricted themselves to precariously fighting extreme poverty.

Therefore, it seems indisputable that the different stages of capitalism's development and the conditions of class warfare, with their theoretical and political expressions, are essential for us to understand the role assigned to the State and social policies in each of these moments.

In that regard, in the period when the social democrat thought and the Fordist-Keynesian accumulation regime prevailed in Europe, social policies were important vehicles allowing social integration, bringing about social rights, and counterpointing the socialist experiences as they provided better distribution of the socially produced wealth by maintaining the private property of the means of production and the exploitation relationships. Now that the conditions under which social policies were capable of performing such roles have ended (the 1970 and 2008 capitalist crises and the demise of the socialist experiences in the 1990s), it has become necessary for the capital to re-discuss social rights,¹⁷ citizenship, and the role of the State in the supply of goods and services capable of ensuring them. The universality and equality of rights have become a matter of contention, as has who is supposed to guarantee them. Once social rights and citizenship have been given new meanings, social policy should play the role of a stepping stone, an initial support to launch poor workers into the formal and informal job market and the market of goods and services as the ones solely responsible for their living conditions.

References

- BRANDÃO, André Augusto. Liberalismo, neoliberalismo e políticas sociais. *Serviço Social e Sociedade*, São Paulo, n. 36, p. 84-100, out./dez. 1991.
- BOBBIO, Norberto. *Liberalismo e democracia*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2005.
- BOSCHETTI, Ivanete. A insidiosa corrosão dos sistemas de proteção social europeus. *Serviço Social e Sociedade*, São Paulo, n. 112, p. 754-803, out./dez. 2012.
- CASTEL, Robert. Desestruturação do trabalho e política social. In: PEREIRA, Potyara Amazoneida (Org.). *Política social, trabalho e democracia em questão*. Brasília: UNB, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Política Social, Departamento de Serviço Social, 2009.
- COIMBRA, Marcos. Abordagens teóricas ao estudo das políticas sociais. In: ABRANCHES, Sergio. et al. *Política social e combate à pobreza*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1987.
- COUTINHO, Carlos Nelson. *Marxismo e política: a dualidade de poderes e outros ensaios*. 2. ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 1996.
- DANANI, Claudia. El espacio publico em su laberinto: las políticas sociales y las confrontaciones del universalismo. In: GLUZ, Nora; SALGADO, Jorge Arzate (Comp.). *Particularismo y universalismo en las políticas sociales: el caso de la educación*. Buenos Aires: UNGS – Universidade Autónoma del Estado de México, 2010.
- DURANA, Ana Arriba González de; ERANSUS, Begoña, Pérez. La última red de protección social en España: prestaciones asistenciales y su activación. *Política y Sociedad*, Madrid, v. 44, n. 2, p. 115-133. 2007.
- ENGELS, Friedrich. *A origem da família, da propriedade privada e do Estado*. 3. ed. São Paulo: Global, 1986. (Coleção Bases)
- FERGUSON, Iain. Austeridade no Reino Unido: o fim do estado de bem-estar social? *Argumentum*, Vitória (ES), v. 5, n. 2, p. 65-88, jul./dez. 2013.
- GRAMSCI, Antônio. *Escritos políticos*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2004. v. 1 e 2.
- HAYEK, Friedrich August von. *O caminho da servidão*. 5. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Liberal, 1990.
- LÊNIN, Vladimir Ilitch. *O Estado e a revolução: o que ensina o marxismo sobre o Estado e o papel do proletariado na revolução*. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2007.
- _____. *O que fazer? problemas candentes do nosso movimentos*. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2010.
- MALAGUTI, Manuel L. Smith e Hayek, irmanados na defesa das regras do jogo. In: _____.; CARCANHOLO, Reinaldo; CARCANHALO, Marcelo (Org.). *Neoliberalismo: a tragédia do nosso tempo*. 3. ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2002. (Coleção Questões da Nossa Época, v. 65)
- MANDEL, Ernest. *O capitalismo tardio*. São Paulo: Nova Cultural, 1985.
- MARSHALL, T. H. *Cidadania, classe social e status*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1967.
- MARX, Karl; ENGELS, Friedrich. *A ideologia alemã: teses sobre Feuerbach*. 9. ed. São Paulo: Centauro, 2006.
- _____.; _____. *Manifesto do Partido Comunista*. São Paulo: Cortez, 1998.
- PEREIRA, Potyara A. P. Sobre a controvertida identificação da política social com o *Welfare State* In: _____. *Política social: temas & questões*. São Paulo: Cortez, 2008.

_____. Trajetória da política social: das velhas leis dos pobres ao *Welfare State* In: _____. *Política social: temas & questões*. São Paulo: Cortez, 2008.

POULANTZAS, Nico. *O Estado o poder e o socialismo*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1986.

PRZEWORSKI, Adam. *Capitalismo e social-democracia*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1989.

WACQUANT, Loïc. *As prisões da miséria*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2001.

¹ We will be addressing this topic in the third section of this paper.

² The State which also starts playing social, legitimizing roles in the capitalist society was given different names in some countries: Social State in Germany, Providing State in France, and Welfare State in England. This text uses the term Welfare State.

³ For a more comprehensive view of this process, see PEREIRA, 2008.

⁴ Later on, we are going to address the process of changes to social democrat thought when political parties and advocates of a non-violent way toward socialism completely discarded the socialist ideas.

⁵ At this time, I am considering the postulates by the so-called classical Marxism, corresponding to the original theories of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

⁶ These considerations are found especially in Lenin's works (2007; 2010).

⁷ According to Marx, civil society comprises the individuals' material relationships, the entire commercial and industrial life in a given stage of the production forces' development (MARX; ENGELS, 2006).

⁸ Gramsci's concept of hegemony also represents an important change regarding the Leninist concept according to which hegemony-based relationships were seen as alliance-based relationships between the working class and the other lower classes. To Gramsci, hegemony means the ideological prevalence of the dominant class' values and rules over fractions of its own class and over lower classes. The dominant class and its fractions set aside their more immediate interests to intellectually, morally, and politically lead and steer the other social classes. In that sense, a class becomes dominant not by force alone but said class creates and recreates itself as those it dominates accept their dominants' world view and values.

⁹ This path is described by the author in his book *Capitalism and social-democracy*, 1989 (Brazilian edition).

¹⁰ Revolution as it is posited here means a deep transformation of a given mode of production, while that does not necessarily mean that radical changes only come about through violent breaks.

¹¹ Equality before the law, especially from the introduction of social rights into the set of citizenship rights, allowing for better income redistribution and opportunities among citizens of the same social class (MARSHALL, 1967).

¹² We have an important example in Brazil. It was only in 2001 that the right to housing was incorporated into the set of social rights contained in the Federal Constitution, after intense rallying and pressure by movements fighting for housing in the country.

¹³ Based on the British historic experience, Marshall (1967) maps the development path of citizenship rights, where civil rights were achieved first, followed by political rights, and as a consequence of these, social rights were secured.

¹⁴ We cannot but consider that such reconciliation was possible especially owing to a highly unequal exchange relationship and super-exploitation of the workforce between the central capitalist countries and other Latin American, Asian, and African countries.

¹⁵ In the late 1960s, there emerge the first signs (inflation, unemployment, companies and countries in debt) of the major capitalist crisis that would strike between 1970 and 1975.

¹⁶ Although we use the term "neoliberal," we share the standpoint defended by Brandão (1991) and Malaguti (2002) that, in fact, there are no substantial differences between John Locke's and Adam Smith's liberal postulates and Friedman's and Hayek's neoliberal theories.

¹⁷ Castel (2009) suggests social rights should be reviewed to reduce them to a limited number of basic, unconditional rights that would give citizens access to some social services. In others words, as some basic social services meant to satisfy that limited number of rights were offered, the collective and state responsibilities towards the members of society would cease to exist.