

Política Social

– Ramón Sáenz de Ynestrillas –

According to Professor Jeronimo Molina Cano, it was during the second half of the summer of 1932 when it should have been published *Política social*, by Ramón Sáenz de Ynestrillas. It came out in the "Instituto Pericial" of Barcelona. As far as we know, it is the first Spanish systematic treatise of Social Policy. Now, almost 80 years later, it appears again this book in Ediciones Isabor. And it is not by chance.

This work appears in the collection *Elmare. Estudios de Política Social*, which is directed by Professor Molina, who is at the same time Director of the Social Policy Seminar "Luis Olariaga" at the University of Murcia. It is some time ago that Molina realized the fact that there was not enough knowledge in Spain about the self history of Social policy. He is devoting his efforts to undertake this task and one proof of this is his large bibliography on the subject. Consistent with this former intellectual intuition, current scientific certainty, the collection mentioned above has already published four works: *La Política Social en la historia*, by Jerónimo Molina, with introduction by Federico Rodríguez, the former Chair of Social Policy of Complutense University of Madrid; *La Política social y la sociología y otros escritos*, by Luis del Valle Pacual, with preliminary study by Molina Cano; *La Política social y la libertad*, by Manuel Moix Martinez, with preliminary study by Molina Cano; and, now, *Política social*, by Ramon Sáenz de Ynestrillas, also with preliminary study by Molina Cano.

In the preliminary study of the book that concerns us here, Molina explains the circumstances surrounding the origin of the scientific Social Policy in Spain. Circumstances which are still surrounding its development. Social policy has had a very different fate from that of other related matters as Sociology or Labor law; and also very different from that in other European universities. Especially strong was the relationship between Social Policy and Labor law, from which it was finally dissociated. Ludwig Heyde had already noted in its Compendium of Social Policy (1920), that this fact will allow greater freedom and depth to the scientists of both branches in their studies. So it was in other countries but not in Spain, where Social policy has been gradually being relegated to a secondary role in successive curricula.

It serves as an example of this neglect the fact that the author of the first Spanish compendium of Social Policy was a civil servant of the Labour Inspectorate. Moreover, if we consider that since 1917 the first Chair of Social policy was already provided and it was in the hands of the economist Luis Olariaga Pujana. It would have been logical that, as Social policy was an university matter of study, the compendium had to have been created in this academic environment in order to guide and facilitate the study of such materials to students and researchers. Awesome situation this of social policy, discipline of prestige for

those who talk about it. This subject always is in the mouth of everyone who wants to appear as just and wise, but few of them have worked in it from a scientific and academic perspective.

Over and above this lack of encouragement of the science of Social policy at universities, the second of the circumstances surrounding the beginning and development of Social policy in Spain is the conceptual confusion that has always been around it. On the one hand, the concept of Social policy is not clearly defined yet and it has different meanings depending on the flow of thought that it is referred to, Sozialpolitik or Social policy. In Spain, as we can see in the book, we mainly began taking into account the authors of the first flow and then shift to start being inclined towards the second. Nowadays, we have not only conceptual diversity, but also naming diversity. Even we name the Social policy with the Anglo-Saxon meaning of social policies, which, according to Molina, does not have enough density of concept in Spanish. There are other names even more deviant such as Social welfare policies or Social welfare. On the other hand, the fact that we use in a vague way another concepts related to Social policy does not help to clarify its concept: social grants, social assistance, social workers, social inequalities,... Every noun which get the social surname as adjective seems to be shrouded in holiness that no one dares to criticize, but nobody knows how to define.

Finally, just for the prestige and kindness that is always ascribed to Social policy, it has always suffered attempts of monopolization by different ideologies. Specially, by the left-wing. Thus, traditionally, we have been assumed that Social policy is a property and an achievement of left-wing ideologies. Thereby, this is stated in this book.

Molina closes his introduction, of which this is just a poor summary, referring to other books that appeared at that time and with similar intentions, but achieved much greater intellectual depth and range than the present one, namely: *Nociones de Política Social*, by Eugenio Ruano Fernández; *Contestaciones completas a la Política Social*, by Ramiro Álvarez Álvarez, Manuel García Gerpe y Luis Balaguer Securun; and, particularly, *Tratado de Política social* de Miguel Carmona Sobrino, of which Molina has a deep knowledge, as he already presented a paper at the Second Congress of the Spanish Network of Social Policy in 2010.

In regard to the book Social Policy, this first compendium came out at a period of unrest and agitation in Spanish politics. The Second Spanish Republic was a period characterized by political instability, with constant changes of government and ministers. This fact was also passed, as it could not be otherwise, on competitive exams to the Labour Inspectorate and other institutions for the encouragement of Social policy. Then it followed several calls and cancellation of calls, reforms and reforms of the reforms. It is at that time of workers emancipation and theoretics emancipation of Social policy, when

Ramón Sáenz de Ynestrillas published this book. Actually, he was one of the candidates who got a position as Auxiliary work inspector at the competitive exam of 1933.

Following the words of Miguel Carmona Sobrino through Jerónimo Molina, we can say that the first works on Social policy came out like a collection of essays, incomplete and not very systematic, like responding needs of that time. He was talking about the need of providing enough materials to candidates who wanted to prepare the competitive exam to the renovated Labour Inspectorate. Also, as Molina added, it was a good opportunity to get some benefit from the publishing opportunity opened with the competition calls to the Provincial Labour Inspection, which took place between 1932 and 1936.

The list of questions and issues that the candidates had to prepare, which are object of a thorough examination at Molina's preliminary study, obviously helped Sáenz de Ynestrillas and other authors to guide how to prepare their books. Because of the brevity of the work, Sáenz de Ynestrillas deal in a synthetic way with concepts like social question, social policy, interventionism, labor, capital, income, trade union, conflict and conciliation. And he did it from a historical and comparative perspective.

Starting in many cases with an odd and concise historical explanation of some concepts as the social question, the capital, labor or trade union, Ramón Sáenz makes us understand that for him the social question is mainly labor question. Thereby, he considers the Social policy as a set of measures aiming to harmonize relations between employer and employee in the interest of the community and over individual interests. In the same way, Sáenz states that Social policy was not born in Spain till the creation of worker parties and social law (that is Labour law). And, in accordance with the same division that Ludwig Heyde had done in his Compendium of Social Policy of 1920, Sáenz states that the Social policy has three main objectives, namely: protection to workers, salary policy and protection to worker's personality.

In different parts of the book, but especially in those where the author give a theoretical and historical overview of Social policy and other related concepts, we can see what Molina stated in his preliminary study about ideology and Social policy. Sáenz de Ynestrillas makes numerous quotations from Marx or Engels taking these statements about capital, labor or surplus value as his own explanation. Moreover in other passages, he accuses civil servants of lack of working class consciousness in order to fight for their rights or he predicts the collapse of capitalism. Even he goes beyond taking part not only for an ideology, but also for one party and one union supporting them.

Consistently with the objective of the book, that is to help candidates to prepare the competitive exams to Labour Inspectorate, the author goes over some more practical aspects of Social policy. On the one hand, he gives an interesting explanation of aspects such as the fixing of salaries and supplements to protect workers in times of inactivity or the difference between industrial capital and productive capital. On the other hand, taking

the triple objective of Social policy as we described above, he shows the historical evolution of worker protection in Spain and compared it to other countries. At the end of the book, we can find a comprehensive list of conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Office.

In summary, this book may not be so interesting for its theoretical contribution to the science of Social policy, than for being the first Spanish compendium, which shows the conditions of the beginning of Social policy in Spain. To be able to better understand this statement, it is essential to read the preliminary study by Jerónimo Molina, which contextualizes, explains and puts into perspective the book as well as the complete collection.

Therefore we welcome this fourth installment of the series *Elmare. Estudios de Política social*, as well as the three former books and the new ones which are already mentioned in the lapel of this *Política social* by Ramón Sáenz de Ynestrillas. All these works attempt to bring to light the history of the scientist formation of Social Policy in Spain.

We recommend reading this book and the rest of the collection to anyone who is interested in the recovery, knowledge and analysis of origin and development of Social Policy science in Spain. That is why we found relevant and absolutely timely this initiative of Jerónimo Molina. This Professor of Social Policy at the University of Murcia, renowned specialist in Social policy, has seen the convinience and need of reconstruction of such subject, in view of the carelessness and conceptual confusion that Social policy has suffered .