**Teaching Socialism: communalism & socio-emotional education**

**Taylor Spratt**

**University of Havana, June 30, 2016**

 This presentation hopes to be an open dialogue of socialist pedagogy, around the themes of cooperativism, communalism, and socio-emotional education. In my research, I am particularly interested in looking at agency, literacy and socio-emotional wellbeing through different pedagogies and cultures of education, specifically cultures of caring. Looking at popular education and philosophies of liberation, specifically through thinkers such as Paulo Freire and Enrique Dussel, what is an understanding of socialist education that transforms, and I quote here liberation psychologist Maritza Montero, “modes of relations, of identification, of action, and of being, and simultaneously transforming one’s environment?” I want to be brief to leave room for comments and as close to a dialogue as the time and arrangement allows. What does civic education look like that enters both agency and community at its pedagogical center?

With the aim of understanding to what extent the Cuban person learns to live in true solidarity with their comrades, not only a political education but a moral one. Importantly, how can we imagine steps towards a moral education? How is a culture of education formed to highlight solidarity and communalism in general education? Che Guevara spoke of a socialist pedagogy as having the ends of aligning the individual’s capacity for self-determination are parallel with those of social good, resulting in a combined moral and political commitment that become the same action.

How does this fit into the current economic changes towards cooperative and other new economic models? To what extent will the secondary and tertiary education on cooperatives serve this serve? To what extent are other cultural and educational shifts necessary? In thinking about alternative modes of education, such as the conferences headed by a social psychologist with the associates of the group CREA, as possibilities towards this end, not limited to cooperative education, but a broader engagement around critical thinking and collectivism, not economically but rather in terms of spirit. This resonates deeply with me, but one question I have is which comes first—the ethical or economic. It seems to me that this example provides an exemplary one in that it seems both are addressed concurrently.

Another example in Cuba I am interested in is the projects of Cuban artist Tania Bruguera that started this year entitled Instituto de Artivismo Hannah Arendt, a project for Cubans by Cubans around the idea of civic education, as an alternative to the lack of popular education in the schools, focusing on public political discussion, activism, and creating collectivity.

More broadly, I am interested in discussing, what is education toward socialist behavior? Thinking about the lack of answers this week in the area of cooperative education in Cuba, particularly for members, I am even more curious about ways popular and socialist education facilitate the type of critical thinking Jessica spoke about in her presentation, insofar as thinking about collectivism as it relates to liberation, consciousness raising circles, etc. and the possible relationship between lacking cooperative education and residual attitudes from previous economic models and traditional, versus dialogical, education in Cuba.

In the US, how can we move towards this education/culture, promoting the self-determined person whose individual and social motives coincide? What can education under capitalist empire learn from a socialist model, and what socialist/communist pedagogical aspects can be applied to education under capitalism. While I don’t believe we can talk about socialist education without a place, what aspects if any can we attribute as a possible ‘universal’, if any?