



PAUL ISRAEL SINGER: PRESENTATION

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"Paul Singer is one of the greatest economists we have ever had but he was, in fact, a great educator in the likeness of Paulo Freire. For him, everything was translated into an opportunity for learning. It has come to define solidarity economy as a pedagogical act in itself "(Valmor Schiochet, in this Journal).

Singer leaves us precious legacies. I emphasize, initially, those related to the role of the intellectual, especially emphasizing his permanent theoretical and intellectual independence, which gave him freedom for political and theoretical daring of immense repercussion and importance.

Intellectual is that which gives society a "restless consciousness" of itself (Sartre), allowing to break with the immediacy of the continuous flow of life, awakening reflection. Only those who do not accept "stereotyped clichés" (Said), have an "indocletizing spirit" (Altamirano, 2013: 48) and raise uncomfortable questions for rulers, institutions, established doctrines, and himself that we can truly call "intellectual."

That is, "restless consciousness" returns, as a boomerang, in its own self-criticism, allowing it to constantly evolve and surpass himself, which is decisive so that the intellect can feed himself and exist. In fact, as the saying goes - "living and learning" - the learning ability, of continuous learning, is a decisive part of life. Life is a learning process, cognitive processes are vital processes, of uninterrupted learning, demonstrated Hugo Assmann (1996: 27).

In this special edition of P2P&Innovation journal several articles illustrate the great and rare intellectual that was Paul Singer, who for many decades contributed decisively to inspire and renew several generations in several areas of knowledge. Particularly, the article by Hoyêdo Lins exposes the importance of Singer's reflections on the municipal administrations of this immense country for almost 50 years.



If "convictions are worse enemies of truth than lies" (Nietzsche), Singer is a fine example of one who has not been trapped by the illusions of his certainties or on a comfortable throne, dazzled by all his previous contribution, however relevant and who consecrated him as an economist and thinker. He never froze and ossified, as he did to, belatedly and humbly, recognize the importance of the ecological theme.

In the last two decades of life, when it was already celebrated as one of the classics of Brazilian economic thought, Singer embraces solidarity economy (ecosol). And by him is embraced. He recognizes then that the movement of the ecosol "is much richer than our formulations. It does not fit into our schemes" (Loureiro interview, 2008). This richness and complexity is evident in the articles by Nelsa Nespolo; Ioshiaqui Shimbo and staff of NuMI-EcoSol/UFSCar; Elisete Correggio and Sandra Schlichting; and André Souza, present in this journal.

Even though he had already been consecrated, it was simply an abyssal evolution, even to the point of understanding that he has entered a new field where he will be much more reactive and learn from the "other economy that is born with the people" than to direct and teach:

"What I love about solidarity economy is that it comes from below. And that we who stand on his forehead - and I have conditions today to say that I am because of the position in the government; I'm really pushed, I do not lead" (2008).

Between 1996 and 1997 he had approached ("re-created", he said) of the ecosol as a way of opening alternatives in the nucleus of the industrial economy (especially São Paulo) for the unemployed workers with the new technological revolution. A famous meeting took place at PUC/SP in September 199, convened by the GT of Solidarity Economy of Unitrabalho, a network recently created by CUT, and coordinated by Singer and Cândido Vieitez (Unesp).

After the presentation of the pioneering Cooperative Incubator of UFRJ by Gonçalo Guimarães, founder and coordinator of the same, focused on the economic organization of the low-income population living in the favelas and traditionally excluded from the industrial labor market, Singer was exhaustive and, from the top of his authority, said that "it was nothing of what he glimpsed for the eco." Closed that first day, early in the morning of the second and last day Singer opens the works stating that he had read that night a book about the "popular economy" of Coraggio that someone lent the day before and that until then he did not know. There he announced that he was repositioning himself because he had understood better the role of "the popular sectors" within the field of the Ecosol. One year later, in 1998, ITCP/ USP

was created, with Singer as its main driver and promoter. His enthusiasm spread to many young academics, as André Souza's article attests in this magazine.

Isabel Loureiro gave a revealing interview in 2008 with Singer. She then sought out material for a film about Rosa Luxemburg and was discovering Paul Singer as one of the three major Luxemburger thinkers in Brazil (Mario Pedrosa and Michel Lowy the other two). Asked about this "Luxemburg legacy", which he would have known since his adolescence, he replied that he "was not aware" of it until that moment of the interview, frustrating those who hasten to label him "Luxembourgish." It so happens that Singer simply read and was inspired by Rosa, without bothering to present himself as a disciple of this or any other.

For Singer, the great quality of Rosa is the "absolute refusal of orthodoxy," especially daring to criticize Marx himself, for "no contribution is definitive." Her virtue is simply to have exercised the thinking, which, by definition, is free and capable of doubting, or is not thinking. Thus, Singer concludes the interview iconoclastically, stating that Rosa herself, to become current and relevant today, needs to be "overcome," not worshiped and revered in a small fan club.

Orthodoxies produce sects and blindness. Singer continually struggled with the blindness of a certain left in accepting the reality of the markets. In this issue of P2P journal the article by Fernando Muller and Sjoerd Robijn helps to break the incredible blockages on markets that persist in persisting among those who seek alternatives to capitalism. In life, Singer demonstrated the central importance of facing and not compromising with any orthodoxies and powers (including leading him to publicly criticize the PT government itself, as Valmor Schiochet reveals in his article in this magazine). Consistent with this praxis throughout his life, he stated in another interview (2005) that "To consider Marxist when I discovered that being a Marxist would mean never questioning anything Marx had signed."

Another central feature of Rosa Luxemburg highlighted by Singer, in the Loureiro interview, is that the "masses" are ordinary people, young people and peasants, who make and direct changes, not leading leaders, who tend to restrain them.

"Rosa Luxemburg was right. The great transformations, the social revolution in progress that exists today in the world is touched by people who see in this a concrete solution to their problems "(2008).

This lesson, well learned in his youth with Rosa, once again enchanted Singer when he came across the solidarity economy movement in the last stage of his life: "This view of the masses as carrying the impetus of change is something that has deepened in me, and I have rediscovered it in solidarity economy" (2008). For Singer the ecosol "Was not found by anyone

- it was not invented by the Church, it was not invented by the unions - it was a creation of people in difficult situations, but resorting to the social forces that are socialist, in the final analysis" (2008).

Intellectual is who is "completely inside" the movements of history, not the one that leads, because the new societal metabolisms do not hold more place for vanguards and organic intellectuals (Negri and Hardt, 2016: 139). This was also anticipated both by Fanon in 1961, when he warned of "the almost always nefarious role of the leader" (1968: 151); as well as by Ivan Illich in 1968, sending "to hell" the good intentions of outsiders with ready-made theories: "Come and see, come and climb our mountains, enjoy our flowers. Come and study. But do not come to help "(Illich, apud Acosta, 2016: 98).

For more than 13 years, Singer has coordinated SENAES (National Secretariat for Solidarity Economy, organ of the Ministry of Labor), and this edition brings a beautiful testimonial article by one of its collaborators, Valmor Schiochet, who accompanied him throughout those years. Being aware of state boundaries, especially his own as a state manager in the implementation of public ecosol policies, he never saw himself as operating a panacea that would redeem and save the poor. On the contrary, he was aware that in this field he acted more "as a passive role of support," which, although relatively important, would not replace popular organization, as complementary and subsidiary to it.

A militant and committed character characterized Singer, without prejudice to his academic quality. Within his vast intellectual production, he recorded his participation in the books "São Paulo, 1975: Growth and Poverty" (produced in 1975 by CEBRAP at the request of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of São Paulo); and "São Paulo: the people in movement," which he organized in 1980 together with Vinicius Caldeira Brant. They demarcate their deep involvement with the social processes of struggle and transformation underway in that difficult and dictatorial era, especially as they are works of unparalleled importance for the occasion, produced with the purpose of "contributing to the potential of organization and expression of working classes become known and can develop "(back cover of" São Paulo: the people in movement ").

Michael Löwy (1996) with Singer lived intensely in the 1950s and 1960s, and "considered himself a disciple." Asked how he would define Paul Singer, he did so: "One who at one and the same time had a solid Marxist economic background knew Marx, Rosa Luxemburg perfectly, and had a very strong union, worker and political engagement. He was concerned to maintain a bond with the union and the trade unionists, with the workers' struggles and with the left, seeking a Marxist political alternative outside the cadres of the Communist

Party and Social-Democracy, as it was represented exotically by the Socialist Party. "Paul Singer is a rare, precious and inspiring level of experience, intelligence, generosity, lucidity and open-mindedness. Leading from the Jewish culture, and solidly anchored in the existential-political world of São Paulo (as Eugenia Loureiro shows in his article in this Review), in Marxist and self-managed thinking and in economic reflection, one can not really reduce it to any of these fields, strictly speaking, for he never allowed himself to be imprisoned by narrow boundaries. Somehow, he transcended his status as "Paulist," "Marxist," "economist," and even "Jew."

In fact, even though he was recognized as one of the classic Brazilian economists, this condition was, indeed, the one that restricted him the least, because he always traveled widely and freely on the areas of geography, sociology, politics and history. You can not strictly fit it into one area. His status as a voracious reader of works from the most diverse areas since he was a teenager, together with the fact that he participated in the "Marx Seminar" in 1958, a multidisciplinary group that studied "The Capital", contributed much to his transdisciplinary resourcefulness: "We try through a joint effort to break the disciplinary barriers between us. I wanted to understand Weber. I consider Weber a great influence on me "(1999: 62).

Singer participated in a decisive foundational moment for Brazilian recent history, that of the PT at the Sion College, São Paulo, in February 1980. He was also one of the founders of CEBRAP in 1969, along with other teachers who, like him, were compulsorily retired from the USP by the Military Regime. Together with Erich Sachs he founded POLOP in 1959, when Michel Löwy, Emir and Éder Sader, Theotônio dos Santos, Juarez de Brito and Simon Schwartzman also participated. In his rich and coherent life history, he was also a factory electrotechnician, one of the leaders of the metalworkers' strike, weavers, graphic designers, carpenters and glassmakers who stopped for a month the industry of São Paulo in 1953, when he was 20 years old.

For the present edition we count on the decisive cooperation of André Ricardo Souza, leader of the Brazilian Association of Researchers of Solidarity Economy (ABPES), whose partnership honored and made this publication viable.

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