

Norman P. Girvan

Quotes and Reflection on the Man, the Scholar, the national, regional and International Public Servant, par Exemplar*

On behalf of the entire faculty, staff and student body of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES), I wish to express the profound sorrow that we feel at the passing of Norman Girvan, Professor Emeritus, The UWI and first Director of SALISES.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1941...the young Girvan left to pursue his doctorate at the London School of Economics, returning thereafter to the Mona Department of Economics, where he served for many years, establishing himself as one of the leading economists of the region. Girvan's work, both as individual scholarship and as part of the New World Group that flourished throughout the Caribbean in the Sixties and early Seventies, sought to critique the nature and limitations of political independence and to redefine a space for Caribbean sovereignty as well as more inclusive notions of democracy. More specifically, through studies like the evocatively titled *Foreign Capital and Economic Underdevelopment in Jamaica* and *Copper in Chile*, Girvan argued that through the structure and operations of international corporations, the newly emergent nations of the Caribbean and Latin America were being denied a fair share of the surplus from the exploitation of their mineral resources. This, he suggested, contributed immeasurably to their inability to escape from a cycle of underdevelopment.

In this [retirement] phase of his life, Norman's work, if anything, gathered pace, with many critical interventions in both scholarly and new media, suggesting caution about and modification of the proposed Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union, greater engagement with Cuba, recognition of Haiti as an integral part of the Caribbean and, consistently, calling for deeper and more popular Caribbean integration. Above all, Norman, through his website 1804 CaribVoices, has emerged as a tribune for rethinking Caribbean history, understanding and fighting for the preservation of the environment, defending all causes associated with popular empowerment and, inevitably, redefining the Caribbean in all its component districts, as a common, sovereign space.

We express our deepest condolences to his wife Jasmine and children Ramon, Alexander and Alatashe as we reflect on and remember with gratitude a life

well-lived and the immeasurable contribution of this exemplary Caribbean citizen.

SALISES

Thirteen years ago, I met a humble but brilliant Jamaican man. Years after that meeting, I was still able to e-mail him with regard to my research work on Caribbean Integration. If I knew then the value of that open channel, I would have treasured it more. RIP Norman Girvan.

Ruel Johnson

This has just hit me like a ton of bricks.....Professor Girvan was indeed a brilliant light within the region. A gifted academician and a humble man. I shall miss our discourses, his kindness and support. May his soul find the peace it deserves!

Frederick Andrew Granger

A brilliant academic, a true colleague and a humble man who was always on the side of the oppressed. We at the Institute of International Relations, UWI are deeply saddened at his passing. His commitment to regional integration and his contribution to the intellectual life of the Caribbean have been outstanding. May his soul rest in peace.

Mark Kirton

Dr. Norman Girvan was a mentor, a colleague, a comrade and a friend. I am still in shock at his passing. I had hoped that he would be able to somehow recover from his injuries. I will always treasure the many stimulating and profound discussions we had, and the many laughs we shared. His departure leaves a gaping void. Another giant is no longer with us.

Isaac Saney

I communicated with a man named Norman Girvan for quite some years before I actually met him. Our conversations were around civil society and although I had no idea of the extent of his reputation and work at the time, he engaged me in a way that no other academic or person of influence did. Most important is that he was willing to listen and quickly understood the plight of civil society in

CARICOM and the wider ACP States as it related to the participation of civil society within the scope of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. It was not long before he started to champion the cause of civil society as he quickly learned the ins and outs.

When I eventually met Norman, it was at the Holiday Inn in Trinidad where we were attending a two or three day meeting. Somebody told me he was there and pointed him out. I went up to him and said “Norman!” He immediately turned and responded in a very friendly manner but as the meeting was about to begin, I retreated. Later, he came up to me, “Why did you not tell me who you were?” It was from then that I really got to know something about the man; a far cry from e-mail correspondence. Very humble, a humanitarian and a friend.

Roosevelt O. King

Professor Girvan Understood and Lived Caribbean Oneness (Published in Editor’s Column of Caribbean Times). George C. Brathwaite

As an initial honour, this writer joins the worldwide academic community and those right here in the region, extending sympathy to the family and friends of Professor Norman Girvan. Without much ado, this writer is pressed to share some of Professor Girvan’s thoughts regarding Caribbean unity, the elimination of poverty, and a few of his ambitions and disappointments regarding Caribbean integrated development.

This writer first met the Professor at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus around a decade ago, while participating in what is the annual Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) conference. Being a graduate, there was some sense of achievement when the supportive Girvan, introduced to me by Mrs. Cynthia Barrow-Giles (UWI Cave Hill Campus), shared encouraging words about the prospects of taking in my presentation which was to come the day afterwards, but he had read what he described to be an ‘interesting’ abstract.

Of course, already I had read several of his published works, but I was more impressed by his humility and support. Indeed, even as I progressed through to doctoral studies in the United Kingdom, from time to time, Professor Girvan would lend placid words of advice and encouragement.

Perhaps, my research focus over the last few years have tended to be influenced by some of Girvan's published together with insights gleaned from his active capacity to think in terms of solutions to any discernible problems. It is regrettable that I would not now be able to share a publication for which I am currently putting together for publication as was promised to the Professor.

It is clear that the Norman Girvan's view of Caribbean or West Indian identity is not dimmed by geographical incongruity, misplaced due to racial or ethnic differentiations, nor splintered by the diversity of language or culture. Indeed, his awareness allowed him to write the interesting 2001 book chapter calling for "Reinterpreting the Caribbean." In the article, Girvan acknowledged that "the definition of the Caribbean might be based on language and identity, geography, history and culture, geopolitics, geoeconomics, or organisation." No wonder that he often pushed the embrace of the Association of Caribbean States and the expanse of natural, mineral, and other productive resources that are all inherent to the region.

Professor Girvan definitely aspired to a region that would draw much more on its indigenous resources against the background of a wider and more inclusive Caribbean. In fact, being present at a symposium in 2006, it was more than useful insight after hearing Girvan's presentation on the report, 'Towards a Single Economy and a Single Development Vision.' His presentation captured the spirit of regionalism and collective endeavour and it was transcended in to the official documentation with a preface stating that:

"We envision a Caribbean Community in which every citizen has the opportunity to realise his or her human potential and is guaranteed the full enjoyment of their human rights in every sphere; in which social and economic justice is enshrined in law and embedded in practice; a Community from which poverty, unemployment and social exclusion have been banished; in which all citizens willingly accept a responsibility to contribute to the welfare of their fellow citizens and to the common good; and one which serves as a vehicle for the exercise of the collective strength of the Caribbean region, and the affirmation of the collective identity of the Caribbean people, in the world community."

According to Girvan, "popular support for integration" would require that "economic benefits are spread broadly across countries and social groups" since in terms of distribution and given the politics of identity, "it makes a difference to quality of life issues such as crime, health and education." These are

important considerations linking several events, interactions, and perceived interests with the politics of regional integration, intra-CARICOM migration, and integrated development.

Professor Girvan's life in these parts may be over, but for sure his work on defeating poverty and overcoming the underdevelopment which retarded progress in the Caribbean will remain a work in progress. His torch burned brightly to lead the way, and among us, there will be those that must continue to press the escape from poverty and oppression, from otherness and exclusion of one another, and to maintain a tradition of Caribbean resilience. Long live the memory and works of Professor Norman Girvan.

George C. Brathwaite

We write with pain of great loss, and for all of us an untimely loss. We are all thinking who can fill his shoes and really no one can. There is so much one can say and so much has already been said. I will speak briefly of the Consortium Graduate School experiment, a model of graduate teaching that we can all reflect on.

In the late 1980s early 1990s I was among a privileged group invited to teach in that programme and to teach on gender at that time still a new field to this region. to some of the region's promising young social scientists. Norman was one of the few mainstream scholars who recognised the intellectual robustness of gender analysis and its new and its revolutionary potential.

We were happy to have him in T&T we played mas in Minshall with Sonia Cuales and others and we had a serious and continuing tabanca when Minshall stopped bringing mas. It was a joy knowing and interacting with Norman. He was an outstanding human being. May his life and unfinished work inspire us all to do more.

Rhoda Reddock

Professor Girvan will be remembered for fearlessly standing up against injustice in various forms; his faith in regional integration when many were losing hope; being a critical alternative voice when we needed it the most; giving of himself and his talent to civil society and ordinary people; the creative/ captivating way he put his ideas across; his commitment to excellence and his desire to see others succeed and excel. He was an extraordinary human being! Rest well and in peace, Professor Girvan.

Annita Montoute

This is just a profound loss for the Caribbean. Norman was such a model for all of us, someone engaged in thought and action, listening carefully and encouraging others to find their own way to make a contribution to Caribbean development.

He reminds us through his life's work that all of us privileged to be in this wonderful space have an obligation to think about and act in the interest of the common good.

He seemed always up for the ready laugh, alert to the delight of certain Caribbean absurdities. A decent, decent man.

Let us grieve his passing, celebrate his life and continue his work.

Roberta Clarke

Note publiée par Camille sur le site Internet animé par Norman Girvan "CaribVoices 1804" le 14 avril 2014

En Haïti nous avons appris avec beaucoup de tristesse la mort de Norman Girvan. Pour toute la Caraïbe et pour Haïti c'est une perte cruelle et irréparable. Nous saluons ici la mémoire d'un très grand homme, un passionné de la lutte pour la justice et un convaincu de la nécessité de construire ensemble cette Fédération Socialiste Caraïbe dont nous rêvons tous.

Notre ami et camarade Norman Girvan a produit des réflexions théoriques d'une grande importance qui permettent de mieux comprendre les spécificités des systèmes économiques de la Caraïbe ainsi que pour concevoir des systèmes alternatifs fonctionnant au bénéfice des couches majoritaires. Il a beaucoup travaillé sur la problématique de l'intégration régionale dans la grande Caraïbe et contre les accords de libre-échange. Son document critique sur les Accords de Partenariat Économique (APE) constitue une référence pour tous ceux qui luttent contre la globalisation néolibérale et la religion du libre-échange.

Il a toujours été un ardent défenseur de l'ALBA et nous avons eu la chance d'assister à la conférence magistrale qu'il a prononcée sur Hugo Chávez à la Havane au début du mois de décembre 2013. Anti-impérialiste convaincu Norman n'a jamais ménagé ses efforts pour lutter auprès des projets de récupération de la souveraineté des Peuples dans notre région.

Norman a été aussi un ardent défenseur de la cause de l'intégration d'Haïti au sein de la Caraïbe et a toujours souligné l'importance de la révolution haïtienne

de 1804 comme référentiel central dans le cadre de la construction d'une souveraineté populaire régionale. En témoigne le titre du site qu'il a lancé en 2012: "Caribvoices 1804". Il a soutenu concrètement le peuple haïtien dans plusieurs conjonctures clés notamment lors du combat contre le coup d'État qui a renversé Jean Bertrand Aristide en septembre 1991.

Norman a participé activement à un séminaire organisé par la PAPDA en 2011 à Port-au-Prince sur les enjeux de la reconstruction post-séisme dans notre pays au cours duquel il a présenté une remarquable communication sur les stratégies de développement autocentré.

Merci Norman tu seras toujours avec nous dans nos recherches de voies alternatives et dans nos combats pour une caraïbe souveraine.

Tes camarades haïtiens t'embrassent. La PAPDA te salue tendrement et les organisations membres de l'Assemblée des Peuples de la Caraïbe (APC) continueront d'arroser les belles semences socialistes que tu as plantées.

Camille Chalmers Professeur UEH / Membre de 2 Groupes de Travail de CLACSO sur l'intégration / Directeur Exécutif de la Plateforme haïtienne de Plaidoyer pour un Développement Altermatif (PAPDA) / Membre du Comité Exécutif Régional de l'Assemblée des Peuples de la Caraïbe (APC) / Membre du Comité de coordination continentale de Jubilee Sud Porte parole "Pati Kan Pèp la"

Note published by Camille April 14, 2014

In Haiti we learned with great sadness the death of Norman Girvan . For the Caribbean and Haiti this is a cruel and irreparable loss. We salute here the memory of a great man, a passionate struggle for justice and convinced of the need to build together the Socialist Federation Caribbean we all dream .

Our friend and comrade Norman Girvan product theoretical reflections of great importance to better understand the specifics of the economic systems of the Caribbean and to develop alternative operating systems for majority layers. He has worked extensively on the issue of regional integration in the Wider Caribbean and against the free trade agreements . Critical paper on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) is a reference for all those who struggle against neoliberal globalization and religion of free trade.

It has always been a strong supporter of the ALBA and we had the chance to attend the keynote address he delivered on Hugo Chavez in Havana at the

beginning of December 2013 Anti-imperialist . Convinced Norman n ‘ has always worked hard to fight with recovery projects the sovereignty of peoples in our region.

Norman was also a strong advocate of the cause of the integration of Haiti in the Caribbean and has always stressed the importance of the Haitian Revolution of 1804 as the central repository as part of the construction of a regional popular sovereignty . Evidenced by the title of the site he launched in 2012: ” Caribvoices 1804 .” He argued specifically the Haitian people in several key junctures particularly when fighting against the coup that overthrew Aristide in September 1991.

Norman has actively participated in a seminar organized by the PAPDA in 2011 in Port-au-Prince on the challenges of the post-earthquake reconstruction in our country in which he presented a remarkable paper on strategies for self-reliant development .

Thank you Norman you will always be with us in our search for alternative ways and in our struggle for a sovereign Caribbean .

Your fellow Haitians embrace you .

PAPDA greet you affectionately and members of the Assembly of Caribbean People (APC) organizations will continue to water the beautiful socialist seeds you have planted.

Camille Chalmers

Professor UEH /

Member of Working Groups 2 CLACSO Integration /

Executive Director of the Haitian Advocacy Platform for Development

Altermatif (PAPDA) /

Member of the Regional Executive Committee of the Assembly of Caribbean People (APC) /

Member of continental coordination of Jubilee South

Spokesman “Pati Kan Pèp la”

Camille Chalmers

In Dutch we say: “Wie schrijft die blijft”!! Through his publications Norman Girvan will continue to have an impact and motivate others in and outside the Caribbean!!

Norman Girvan's website and EPAlist and its many subscribers/readers all over the world were and are important for information sharing and knowledge about the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), WTO, ACP –EU, and international Trade issues since many many years.

We never met, but since 2008 we worked on international trade issues, informing the public and stakeholders, publishing articles, discussing issues, listening to the opinions of many in and outside the Caribbean.

Norman Girvan established an important Caribbean and global network.

His network brought together people from different Caribbean countries, English, Dutch, Spanish and French speaking, gave them a voice, and contributed to a real regional Caribbean cooperation.

Joyce Naar

I first met Norman at the London School of Economics in the early 1960s. Because we lived on opposite sides of the Atlantic for almost all of the intervening period, we have actually seen each other on only six occasions since then, three of which were in Africa (Zambia, Senegal and Nigeria) in the 1970s. At Norman's request, I began contributing a series of articles on culture and development to his website, in 2008. It was the beginning of a close collaboration that ended only with Norman's tragic accident.

There is no other Caricom national, to my knowledge, who can fill the many roles that Norman assumed and performed, with such brio, during his rich professional life. Norman rejected the prevailing conventional notion that it is not possible for an individual, acting alone, to have a significant social and political impact – a viewpoint that is often a facile excuse to stay on the sidelines and to refuse any active social engagement. Norman may not have succeeded in generating meaningful change in the region, as he had set out to do, but his seminal ideas, which ranged across the social spectrum, have transformed the way we view some of the important issues of our time. In that respect, Norman has laid the groundwork for future social and political change in the region.

Norman was a committed regionalist who considered Caricom integration an imperative necessity for the region's survival in a period of rapid globalization. Norman was an early convert to regionalism, as he indicated in his posted autobiographical note, "One thing Led to Another" (2007): "I entered Mona as a Jamaican nationalist and left as a Caribbean regionalist...Regionalism is a

passion and a recurring subject of my work.” Throughout his entire professional life, Norman invested a considerable amount of his time and intellectual energy in nourishing that noble passion.

Recognizing the interconnectedness of development issues very early in his professional career, Norman decided to adopt a cross-disciplinary approach in his work: “I began to think of myself as a kind of ‘transdisciplinary political economist—a hybrid creature that does not command ready acceptance in an academic environment marked by increasing disciplinary specialisation and compartmentalisation.” (Autobiographical note). Norman’s easy assumption of the role of an academic maverick who refused to be corralled within narrow disciplinary confines, and his willingness to pay the price for doing so, gave him the freedom to explore other disciplines in his constant quest for further insights into the nature of the development process.

Norman’s work was considerably enriched by his intrepid transgression of academic disciplinary boundaries. His cross-disciplinary approach enabled him to acquire a broader grasp and a deeper comprehension of the multifaceted challenges of development, particularly for small countries like those in our region. The classic single discipline approach would have deprived other development economists of a significant insight, namely, the central importance of culture in Caribbean integration. Norman explored that particular theme in a presentation he made at Cuba’s Festival del Caribe (2012), entitled “Caribbean integration: can cultural production succeed where politics and economics have failed?”

Norman explained that he subtitled his presentation “Confessions of a wayward economist” because he firmly believed that true integration can never be purely or even primarily a matter of economics; one that is driven by the calculus of costs and benefits. Norman’s voluntary use of the term “wayward” suggests that he considered his status as an academic maverick a badge of honour:

“Let me say that there is no question in my mind that culture, widely defined, holds the key to wider Caribbean integration. It is the means by which we develop a consciousness of ourselves as a regional people and of fostering mutual understanding and respect across the boundaries of language and ethnicity.”

“The sense of the Caribbean as a ‘community of culture’ that one experiences on these occasions stands in curious contrast with the difficulties that have been encountered in configuring the Caribbean as an economic and political

community. Can we therefore not propose the establishment of a Caribbean cultural community?”

If Caricom policy-makers were to give serious consideration to Norman’s proposal to establish a Caribbean cultural community as an alternative route to achieving Caricom integration, that proposal might turn out to be his most important and enduring legacy.

Norman’s passion for regionalism did not stop at Caricom’s present boundaries. It extended to the wider Caribbean, embracing as it did, Cuba, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic. More than any other Caribbean, past or present, Norman truly deserves the title, “Mr. Caribbean”.

Mervyn Claxton

*Source: 1804caribvoices

<http://1804caribvoices.org/articles/2014/04/remembering-norman/>