

Sir Arthur Lewis—A Man of His Time; and Ahead of His Time**Norman Girvan****Distinguished Lecture, Year of Sir Arthur Lewis****UWI St. Augustine****February 20, 2008**

One day in 1959, as I was preparing to enter the University (then College) of the West Indies, I picked up the newspaper and read a banner headline “Lewis to be new Head of the UCWI. Underneath was the picture of a man who balding, bespectacled, and unmistakably black. That may be no big thing in this day and age, but in 1959 the people who had headed this institution, who ran most of the academic Departments, the people who were regarded as the natural repositories of academic accomplishment and administrative leadership, were people of another type. The impact of Lewis’s appointment as symbol of changing times can hardly be exaggerated—it would be as if, for instance, we were all to wake up on the morning of November 5, 2008 to hear that Barack Obama had just been elected President of the United States.

There is a sense that Professor Arthur Lewis, as he then was, was living proof of the knowledge that ‘Yes, we can’. He had been a St Lucia Island Scholar at age 17; he was the first West Indian to take First Class Honours at the London School of Economics, and a PhD in Industrial Economics at age 25. He was the first black member of the faculty of the L.S.E. and went on to become the first black Professor of economics at a British University. He went on to become the first black Nobel Laureate in Economics as well as the first West Indian Nobel Laureate in any field. Besides being the first West Indian Principal of the University College of the West Indies—and in that capacity he was instrumental in establishing St Augustine as the UCWI’s second campus—he was the

first Vice Chancellor of the UWI; and the first President of the Caribbean Development Bank; and eventually recipient of 29 honorary degrees and of numerous other awards.

These are the milestones, but it is the scope and volume of the Sir Arthur's scholarship over approximately half a century that one must find extraordinary, by any standard and in whatever age. At the time of his Nobel, Lewis acknowledged publication of 'ten books and about 80 other pieces' (Lewis 1994: I); but a collection of his papers published in 1994 by SALISES, then the ISER, runs into three massive volumes, each about three inches thick, with a total of 109 items whose wide subject matter bear record to the reach of his mind and of his interests. Thus: there are ten papers on industrial economics, twelve on world trade, eight on development planning, and twelve on dual economies and five on agricultural economics. On the economics of particular regions in the developing world we find seven on Africa, two on Asia, and five on the Caribbean. Other categories reflect Sir Arthur's engagement with the topical issues of his day or connected to his administrative work: there are six papers on the subject of race and economic development, six on education and three on politics.

At this point the editor, the late Dr Patrick Emmanuel, to whom we are all indebted for this Herculean effort, appears to have given up on further classification, for 25 items are placed into the category "other development issues" and another eight into a category known as, "various topics". And all this done before the age of the personal computer and the internet, which have given contemporary researchers access to quantities of information and a capacity to process it that were undreamed of in Lewis's time.

I hope to show, in this synoptic overview of Sir Arthur's work, that he was not only a man of his time in the subjects that he chose to investigate and the answers he came up with; but also ahead of his time, in that much of his work has continuing salience and resonance in the world of today. (He was also, of course, a 'head' of his time, by virtue of his intellectual brilliance and the many leadership positions that he occupied).

Making of Arthur Lewis

First, what do we know about the making and Arthur Lewis, the person; and Professor Lewis, the scholar? His own account of his career is characteristically concise and even self-deprecating. It is almost as if he would have us believe that his career was the result of a series of accidents. He says:

I became an economist when I really wanted to be an engineer, became a university teacher because there was nothing else for me to do, and became an applied economist because that was my mentor's subject. The rest of the story continues in the same vein (Lewis 1994: xxxix).

Earlier, Lewis attributed his accelerated progress through school to the fact that as a child he went through a period of illness which kept him at home, and he was home schooled for a time by his own father. Of his meteoric rise through the ranks of British academia to be appointed Stanley Jevons Professor of Political Economy at Manchester University at the age of 33; he says, "My luck held, and I rose rapidly" (Lewis 1980: 2).

Nonetheless, Lewis's autobiographical statements show that he was very much a product of a dying colonial order, and was in turn a major intellectual contributor to the decolonisation process. He mentions, as one of his formative childhood experiences, his father taking him to a meeting of the local branch of the Marcus Garvey association, at the age of seven. He is very clear that this was the origin of his anti-imperialism, which led to his interest in the problems of underdevelopment, which in turn eventually led to his Nobel. So Marcus Garvey definitely had a hand in his winning the prize!

His mother, he says, always taught him that 'anything the Europeans can do, we can do.' (Lewis 1994: xlix); and also 'to make the best of what we have' (ibid: I). She had been widowed with five sons, four of them minors, and brought them all up on a shoestring budget (ibid: xxxv). These experiences fuelled not only his personal self-confidence, but also his later conviction, as a development economist, that poor countries could industrialise, no matter how slender their natural resources.

Arthur Lewis knew colonial racism at first hand, for the reason that he could not realise his ambition to become an engineer because of the colour bar to entry of the profession that the British Government imposed in its colonies (Lewis 1980: 2).

After graduation, even as he made his academic name in the field of industrial economics, he was doing his own research on the West Indian peasantry and the West Indian labour movement, meeting with ‘fellow anti-imperialists from all over the world’, and meticulously researching the economic practices of the British colonial empire.

At the end of the Second World War, after it became evident that the colonies would be granted independence, he lectured to colonial students who were preparing to go home to run their soon to be independent countries. Lewis challenged them: “forget about what the British did to you”, he said, “the point is, what you will do when you take power?” (I am paraphrasing here). Lewis regarded himself as an anti-imperialist; but his was not an anti-imperialism of bitterness or hatred, but one self-confidence and self-responsibility (Lewis 1994:xIv).

He was also influenced by the Fabian brand of socialism that predominated in the British Labour Party of the 1930s. One of his first publications, on *Labour in the West Indies* in the late 1930s, was a pamphlet published by the Fabian society that argued that labour had assumed the mantle of leadership of the West Indian national movement. This made Lewis essentially a social democrat and a believer in the mixed economy; but more eclectic than ideological in his approach to matters of public policy. He was quite comfortable in recognising the limitations of the free market and the necessity for public intervention in instances of market failure. He was, however, instinctively opposed to authoritarian rule, whether of the left or the right.

Methodologically, Lewis regarded himself as more of an applied economist and even economic historian, than as an economic theorist. As a young faculty member at the L.S.E. he says that most of colleagues were “concerned with elaborating the theory, with

turning words into diagrams and diagrams into equations (while) I was one of a minority engaged in testing the theories against the facts” (Lewis 1994:xxxvii). His approach to the teaching of development economics was policy-oriented and grounded in institutions, he spoke of the importance of recognising “the sociological background, of political linkages” (ibid: xivi).

Now Lewis identified three main areas of his research. The first, industrial economics, was the subject of his doctoral thesis, and it is the least well known and probably least interesting branches of his work. The second, the history of the world economy since the middle of the 19th century and the third, problems of economic development; became intertwined; and it is here that he made his most significant contributions. I will seek to illustrate my theme by reference to three of his seminal publications.

Industrialisation of the British West Indies

The first of these is *Industrialisation of the British West Indies* the work for which he is probably best known in this region. By way of background, I should say that Lewis had engaged in vigorous debate with the colonial authorities and with the British economist Benham, over the Moyne Commission Report and the Economic Plan for Jamaica. The article in question was the result of a stint with the Caribbean Commission, in which he studied Puerto Rico’s industrialisation policies and drew lessons for the British West Indies (Lewis 1949; 1950).

Lewis critiqued the prevailing economic orthodoxy, which held that the West Indies had a comparative advantage in the export of primary products, and should import manufactured goods. He argued that the overpopulation of the islands provided an economic rationale for an industrialisation strategy based on the export of labour intensive manufactures.

But since capital and technology were short in the islands, foreign investors should be invited in to do the job. Foreign investors would also provide the distribution channels in overseas markets, as they had done in Puerto Rico.

Lewis's ingenious use of the Ricardian theory of comparative costs and his copious use of statistics to buttress his case demolished the arguments of his (Colonial Office) adversaries; and his recommendations became the basis of industrial development policies in the West Indies in the 1950s. The article established his reputation in development economics. It also launched him on an illustrious international career as economic adviser in emerging countries in Africa and Asia.

The dual economy model

During this time, Lewis was troubled by a question that had been with him since his undergraduate days: why were prices in international trade always moving in favour of industrial goods, exported by the rich countries, and against primary products, exported by the poor? "The question", he says, "was central to my life, since my home country was subject to violent swings in agricultural prices that played havoc with attempts to manage the economy with some stability" (Lewis 1994: xlii). There was also a historical question: why had real wages remained constant in Britain during the first 50 years of the industrial revolution while profits and savings had increased?

The answer to both questions, he says, came to him one day in August 1952 while walking down a road in Bangkok. Assume that the supply of labour is not fixed, as in the neo-classical framework, but unlimited, due to population pressure (one suspects that he was surrounded by an army of vendors at the time). This, he said:

will keep wages down, producing cheap coffee in the first case and high profits in the second case. The result is a dual (national or world) economy, where one part is a reservoir of cheap labour for the other (Lewis 1980:3-4).

This flash of insight became the basis of Lewis's celebrated 'dual economy' model of economic development with unlimited labour supplies; by which economic development takes place through the reinvestment of the surplus of the capitalist sector, which draws labour from the overpopulated subsistence sector at a constant real wage. When the economy is opened, the capitalist sector exports its produce to world markets at low relative prices because it is able to recruit cheap labour from the subsistence sector; and this will continue to happen as long as productivity in the subsistence sector remains low (Lewis 1954).

The model launched Lewis on a path that culminated with the Nobel, and figures prominently in the citation. According to one scholar, its appearance in 1954

...created a sensation...it placed the emerging field of development economics squarely on the map of the economics profession, providing it with a set of bedrock working theorems... (that) set the field of development economics apart as a distinctive field of study (Tignor 2004: 697).

In the half century since its publication the model has been critiqued, defended, elaborated and refined (including by Lewis himself) and applied to a variety of situations in several books and numerous articles. In a review published in a special issue of the journal of the Manchester School to mark its 50th anniversary, two scholars conclude,

(its) continuing salience is a lasting testimony to the author's extraordinary ability to combine theory and history into a coherent framework that can aid our understanding of the problems of underdevelopment (Kirkpatrick and Barrientos 2004: 688).

Sir Arthur's own account is somewhat more succinct. Writing in 1979, he says that its publication in 1954,

was greeted equally with applause and with cries of outrage. In the succeeding 25 years other scholars have written five books and numerous articles arguing the merits of the thesis, assessing contradictory data, or applying it to solving other problems. The debate continues (Lewis 1980: 4).

But the model's treatment of the problem of declining terms of trade between primary commodities and industrial goods continues to have salience today. For example, studies by UNCTAD show that the real prices of non-fuel primary commodities fell steadily from 1960 to the end of the 1990s¹; and hence 'Between 1970 and 1997, the cumulative terms of trade losses for non-oil-exporting countries in Sub Saharan Africa amounted to 119 per cent of the regional GDP in 1997.'² Only recently has the trend been arrested due to the rise in commodity prices resulting from demand from the rapidly growing Chinese economy.

But the problem is now being experienced by exports of labour-intensive manufactured goods from the developing economies. In other words the labour-intensive manufactures exported by developing countries have now taken on the same characteristics of their primary commodity exports. UNCTAD's analysis attributes this to the unregulated employment conditions and the existence of surplus labour that prevail in many developing country exporters of these manufactures. Without going into details, the mechanism identified by UNCTAD is essentially the same as Lewis's; that is the availability of cheap labour to the export sector due to low productivity per head in the traditional sector.

Indeed Lewis anticipated this development as early as 1978, when he wrote "...we must recognise that the opening up of the markets of the industrial countries to imports of light manufactures from the tropics is essentially of the same kind" (as the exports of tropical

¹ UNCTAD TAD/INF/PR/45; 18/06/02; sourced from the UNCTAD website 11/03/05

² UNCTAD TD/B/50/CRP.3. 10 October 2003; pp. 4-5. Sourced from the UNCTAD website 11/03/05

commodities) “*it is an additional opportunity to sell low-wage labour*” (Lewis 1978: 244, emphasis added). In retrospect, this was a highly prescient comment.

The agricultural revolution

A second lesson that has continued relevance is the importance of affecting an agricultural revolution, raising the productivity of domestic food production, the supply price of labour to the commodity sector would increase. This would counter the tendency for declining terms of trade; raise rural incomes, creating a market for the goods produced by the industrial sector and facilitating all-round improvements in living standards. (Hence), Lewis regarded the agricultural revolution in developing countries as equally important to the industrial revolution. In his 1950 article on West Indian industrialisation he was at pains to point out that industrial and agricultural development in the region were not alternatives but had to proceed in tandem with one another. Unfortunately, governments in the Caribbean and in many parts of the developing world have often failed to appreciate this simple truth. Everywhere today we are seeing the results of decades of neglect of the domestic agricultural sector, in the form of rural poverty, rural-urban migration and the growth of urban mega-cities with the attendant social pathologies.

Lewis’s legacy calls on us to redress the imbalance by raising the return to agricultural activity, by making the conditions of rural life more attractive, by investing in human and physical capital for the agricultural sector and by providing the other kinds of government support needed (ibid:18).

Lewis and the New World Economists

This brings me to the controversies surrounding the differences between Lewis and the New World Economists; a group in which, of course, I count myself. The differences were mainly over the role of foreign capital in industrialisation strategies; which Lewis advocated and the New World economists critiqued; and over what is the appropriate

model for understanding West Indian economies; with Lewis using his dual economy model and the New World economists opposing this with the plantation economy model.

However, the New World critiques were often advanced as polemic in which the Lewis model of Industrialisation--which ascribed a leading role to foreign investors—was ridiculed as ‘Industrialisation by Invitation’ This term was invented by Lloyd Best, and it became associated, in the late 1960s, with unemployment, foreign control, over the economy, dependency, and lack of transformation—all the main problems of the time. This diagnosis was embraced by the new generation of young radicals as part of a political project. And there is no doubt that the attacks on Lewis could become personal. To many of my generation Arthur Lewis, with his English accent and bearing similar to that of an English academic, was the epitome of the black Englishman. This perception that was also fuelled by his critique of the American Black Power movement—Lewis argued that it should focus on acquiring mainstream educational skills rather than on Black cultural studies—and his view that the steel band was not an appropriate representation of West Indian national culture. As recently as 2002 instance we find Lloyd Best making the following statement

That generation did not understand the problem. They had a lot of very good ideas which were expressed in the Lewis proposal for economic development, but Lewis was an Englishman. When I say that, people think I am trying to denounce him or pull him down. Quite the opposite. He was epistemologically an Englishman; he was brought up by Ricardian and Smithian theories and he was Stanley Jevons professor in the University of Manchester. He had to be an Englishman. And his great achievement was that he was an English economist who understood what economic transformation had been in England, and he developed a model that was suitable to most countries in the world. The country it was not suitable for was the West Indies, the Caribbean (Best 2003: 426).

Now when you read that statement in its entirety it is clear that when Lloyd called Lewis an Englishman he was speaking epistemologically, although he also threw in personal culture for good measure! But attacks of this kind evidently hurt Lewis, the staunch anti-imperialist who had taken on English economists over the West Indies’s ‘right to industrialise’, and beaten them.

I am told by Kari Polanyi Levitt that Sir Arthur admitted as much to the late Willy Demas. I recall attending the CSA Conference in Barbados in 1989 when Lewis was the honouree, and after listening to three hours of tributes, including some from his erstwhile critics, Sir Arthur came on the stage and told a couple of funny stories, all of which were about people who had once been pilloried and were now being praised. In one of them, a famous Senator meets a journalist who had attacked him in print for many years. The Senator asks the journalist what he really had against him, with the journalist replying “You were so famous and people said that so many good things about you, I figured you would be a good target”.

Even more revealing, perhaps, is a story told by Lloyd Best of having once sharing a public panel discussion with Arthur Lewis, in which several members of the audience attacked what Lloyd had said, often misrepresenting his position. Lloyd says that Lewis passed him a note which went something like this: “They will not only attack you for what you have said, but also for what you have not said; and for things that you never even dreamed of saying”. Lloyd would have appreciated the subtle irony, for in expressing his sympathy, Lewis was also suggesting that Lloyd had become the victim of what he himself had done to Lewis. Best later confessed, in one of his Lewis memorial lectures, that every generation has to commit, as he called ‘intellectual patricide’ in order to distinguish itself from its predecessors—a comment not only on his critique of Lewis but also of the later critiques that were levelled at the New World Economists by a succeeding generation.

While on this subject I should say something about the allegation that I have heard in some quarters, that Arthur Lewis fired Lloyd Best from the University in 1961, when Lewis was principal and Best was a young Research Fellow at the ISER. It is indeed the case that Best’s contract as a Research Fellow was not renewed, and that Lewis was instrumental in this decision, and that it happened in spite of frantic efforts by Lloyd Braithwaite, then ISER Director, to have Lloyd’s contract renewed. However, in an interview given in January 2005, at which I was present, Lloyd made it clear that he believed that Lewis had every right not to renew his contract because, as he put it, “I was

not doing the work that the university was paying me to do” which was to help Dr. Carleen O’Loughlin prepare national income statistics.

As I have said, the substantive differences between Lewis and the New World Economists were over the role of foreign capital in industrialisation, and behind this lay different models of development. In the Lewis model, foreign capital in industry is part of the solution while in the Plantation model it is part of the problem³. However, both Lewis and the Plantation School believed in the necessity of an agricultural revolution in order to support sustained economic growth and industrialisation and in this remains an issue today.

Growth and Fluctuations

The third seminal publication I want to refer to is *Growth and Fluctuations* (Lewis 1978). An interesting innovation in this book is his characterisation of the world economy as consisting of ‘core’ and ‘periphery’ regions, which he borrowed from the Latin American economist Raul Prebisch. The period of study is the era of great expansion of world trade in the latter part of the 19th century. Lewis’s question is why did this trade become a mechanism by which the core transmitted its growth to some parts of the periphery, and not to others?

The answer, he concludes, lies in government policy. The peripheries that developed had governments that invested in raising agricultural productivity and promoting manufacturing industry through industrial protection. Those that remained underdeveloped followed policies that promoted the use of cheap labour in agriculture and favoured cheap imports of industrial goods through low tariffs. In this lay the current division of the world economy into rich and poor countries, for the peripheries that developed were mainly those of the European settlement in the temperate zone whole

³ I have discussed this at length in my article ‘Lewis, the Plantation School and Dependency’ published in *Social and Economic Studies*, 54, 3 (September 2005)

those that remained poor were those in the tropical zone where colonial policies promoted mass immigration from Asia.

On the relationship between trade and economic growth, therefore, Lewis is very clear on his position. In the concluding chapter of his book, which represents virtually a lifetime of research and reflection, he states, that "...the long run engine of growth is technological change, and that trade cannot substitute for this except in the initial period of laying development foundations" (Lewis 1978a:245).

His analysis provides a much-needed antidote to the assumptions that underlie the current pressures towards global trade liberalization under the WTO and the current debate, for example, of the benefits to be expected from the Economic Partnership Agreement EPA with the Europe. The questionable assumptions are that trade liberalization and trade expansion are always--and necessarily--good for development. These assumptions have become the subject of a considerable critical literature by authors such as the United Nations Development Programme, the Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz, and the Harvard Economist Dani Rodrik, to name only some. The UNDP's path breaking report, *Making Global Trade Work for People* (2003) has shown convincingly that the presumed links between trade liberalization, economic growth and human development do not necessarily hold, and may even be perverse.

The thrust of Lewis's conclusions, which have been amplified in the UNDP Report, is that trade expansion is not an end in itself, but must be made to serve the ends of development, and that to do so there must be strategic and targeted policy interventions; to raise productivity in the case of one, to promote human development in the case of the other.

This of course runs against the current orthodoxy. As Professor Ha-Joon Chang showed in his book *Kicking Away the Ladder* (Chang 2002) many of the interventionist practices that the advanced industrial countries adopted at an earlier stage of their development, aimed at ensuring that trade served the ends of industrialisation, these very countries now

seek to prevent developing countries from adopting through the WTO agreement and regional trade agreements like the EPA (Economic Partnership Agreements between ACP countries and Europe.) This is why the last UNCTAD Conference asserted the necessity for developing countries to preserve 'policy space' in the design of trade agreements.

Arthur Lewis and regionalism

Finally I want to talk about Arthur Lewis and regionalism. Lewis was of course a regionalist; his regionalism was a natural consequence of anti-imperialism; his sense of history in the growth of the West Indian peasantry after Emancipation; the subject of one his first research papers while still an undergraduate; and the leading role of the regional labour movement in initiating political change in the 1930s; the market limitations of small size, which led to his call for a West Indian Customs Union as early in 1950; and his tireless efforts to preserve the West Indian Federation and, after its break-up due to the Jamaican Referendum, to broker a new Federation, first involving Trinidad and then a Federation of the Eight by personal diplomacy with the political leaders and the preparation of numerous technical papers on how its fiscal budget could be constructed..

Lewis's analysis of the failure of several Federal efforts from 1960-65 is the subject of his article, the *Agony of the Eight* (1998). His reasons for the failure boil down to a combination of Colonial Office incompetence and unwillingness to commit assured funding, and distrust among West Indian leaders due to an accumulation of bad experiences in the West Indies Federation and the subsequent negotiations. Amazingly, one of the main sticking points of reaching agreement was Antigua's insistence on keeping its own postal services as a unitary responsibility and the outrage this provoked from the Colonial Office! Lewis's concluding remarks betray his profound frustration and disappointment:

Ultimately West Indians will come together again in political association, but only after the present generation of leaders is dead.

Jamaica is out forever; should never have been in, since sentiment for Federation was never strong in that island. But it is the inescapable destiny of Trinidad, British Guiana and the other British islands to link their fortunes together (Lewis 1998: 24).

And later, he almost seems to contradict himself:

Trinidad offers a unitary state, but when the offer is accepted by Grenada, stalls indefinitely. Common decency suggests that this poor deluded island should now be released if Trinidad is not prepared to go ahead.

British Guiana fishes for Barbados and Antigua, in a Free Trade Area, thus promoting confusion, jealousy and disunion with other islands. Must The Eight also wait until the present generation of leaders is dead before they can take an obvious step?" (Lewis 1998: 25).

The agony of the eight, therefore, was the also the agony of Sir Arthur.

It needs to be said that by the early 1960s Lewis's reasons for Federation were not primarily economic, or even about the exercise of collective sovereignty because of the limitations of insular sovereignty. They were in fact related to what is now called good governance.

...the maintenance of good government requires a federal structure. In a small island of 50,000 or 100,000 people, dominated by a single political party, it is very difficult to prevent political abuse. Everybody depends on the government for something, however small, so most are reluctant to offend it.

The civil servants live in fear; the police avoid unpleasantness; the trade unions are tied to the party; the newspaper depends on government advertisements and so on.

This is true even if the political leaders are absolutely honest. In cases where they are also corrupt, and playing with the public funds, the situation becomes intolerable.

The only safeguard against this is Federation. If the government in island C misbehaves, it will be criticised openly by the citizens of island E. The Federal Government must be responsible for law and order, and for redress of financial or other abuses.

Thus the Colonial Office could not in good conscience make each little island independent on its own. To do so would be to betray the liberties of the West Indian people (Lewis 1998: 12).

He also gives as reasons the staffing of the public service, which is easier when there is federal career path available; and the willingness of international financial agencies to assist a Federal grouping rather than several very small states. But the fundamental reason he gives is the necessity for what he calls 'good government'.

I note for example that my colleague Hamid Ghany has classified as Lewis as a conservative because of his book *Politics in West Africa*, which critiqued the authoritarian tendencies evident in many newly independent West African states, and is consistent on Lewis stand on good governance. But if Sir Arthur may have been viewed as a conservative in the 1960s, today he would be seen as a reformer, for many the experience of insular independence in the West Indies has confirmed many of the fears that he expressed back then; and reforms of governance are very much on the agenda.

With regard to regionalism, the leaders of the 1960s are all dead, but are we any nearer to realising Sir Arthur's dream? What view would he take about the failure of the attempt at an OECS political union in the 1980s and the current project of creating an OECS Economic Union and the Caricom Single Market and Economy? Would he be optimistic or pessimistic, say that the glass of regionalism is half full, or half empty?

This of course is a matter of speculation, but my guess is that he would argue that the legacy of the 1960s continues to dog the regional project. The primary rationale given for the CSME is economic, the need to cope with globalisation. Reform of domestic governance is nowhere being advanced as a reason, although it seems to me that Sir Arthur's rationale for this has been strengthened by the passage of time.

Reform of *Community* governance however is on the agenda, in order to address the 'implementation deficit' of Caricom which continues to prevent the full realisation of the CSME nearly 20 years after it was first launched. As we all know, the root of the problem is the desire to retain insular sovereignty, which was ultimately the problem with the Federal project of half a century ago. In the Rose Hall Declaration of 2003, the Heads of Government agreed to a system of governance that would give automatic application of

Caricom decisions in certain defined areas as having the force of law in member states, as happens in the EU. But they have consistently shrunk from taking the necessary steps to give effect to this.

The most recent event was the Report of the Technical Working Group on Governance, chaired, ironically, by Professor Vaughan Lewis, nephew of Sir Arthur; and a distinguished political scientist in his own right. (Sir Allen Lewis, Vaughan's father and Arthur's brother, was also a distinguished Caribbean jurist who became the first Governor General of independent St Lucia and was also Chancellor of the UWI). One must hope that Lewis III will succeed where Lewis I did not! The TWG came up with an ingenious, if rather complicated formula, by which a Single Caricom Act would be passed in each member state that will give effect to Community decisions. I believe that this recommendation has been accepted 'in principle' last July, but since then there have been several changes of government in the Community, and other pressing matters have intervened, including the escalating cost of living, soaring crime, and the EPA.

The problem of course is that the rest of the world is not waiting patiently while we engage in the usual dilly-dallying and prevarication on integration. 'Soon come' and 'just now' may sound cute in the Caribbean, but they cut no ice in multilateral fora. It is clear, for instance, that the proposed Economic Partnership Agreement with the Europeans could make the CSME a largely irrelevant exercise. The EPA is essentially a scheme of economic integration with Europe and coincidentally with the Dominican Republic. It will eliminate all customs duties on the majority of imports from these countries, free most service industries to entry by their service providers, partially liberalise investment flows, and commit Caricom states to adopt standards for competition, heightened intellectual property protection, transparency in public procurement, and e-commerce which they have as yet to agree among themselves. The EPA also sets up implementation machinery which has legally binding teeth where the Caricom system has not, backed by elaborate dispute resolution machinery which is carefully crafted to give you very little wriggle room.

The Agreement has not yet been signed and brought into force, so it is still not too late to avoid what some of us think will be a disaster, a set of legally binding obligations of indefinite duration that that we will live to regret, and not too long from now. But I am not optimistic. Our political decisions are driven by short-term considerations—i.e. preservation of existing benefits, no matter how short-term in nature—and few people, even in government, have the time or inclination to go over in detail what has been agreed to, and the devil in the EPA is in the detail.

Conclusion

Sir Arthur Lewis was a man of his time in his anti-imperialism, his nationalism, his regionalism, his belief, that anything they can do, we can do, his conviction that what matters is to make the best use of ones own resources, his theories of economic development for poor countries. He was of a ‘head’ of his time in his formidable professional accomplishments. And he was ahead of his time in maintaining the necessity for an agricultural revolution and insisting that trade should be at the service of development.

To me the most enduring part of his legacy is that he took it for granted that the purpose of scholarship is public service and service to community; and his belief that the West Indian people have it within themselves to bring about their own advancement. I end by recalling two of his concluding statements. The first is taken from seminal article, the IBWI, written in 1950:

A visit to the British West Indian islands at the present moment is a depressing experience...The British West Indians can solve their problems if they set to them with a will. But first they must find the secret that will put hope, initiative, direction, and an unconquerable will into management of their affairs. And this is the hardest task of all (Lewis 1950:43)

The second are the final words of the Agony of the Eight:

“Have we not that much statesmanship left in these little islands?” (Lewis 1998: 26)

I thank you for your kind attention.

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