



Gerald Karl Helleiner,

FRSC

Chancellor, when Professor Helleiner was asked, on the telephone, how he might be recognised at the airport, he replied, with a twinkle in his voice: "Six foot tall, grey beard, good looking." Here was an economist, Chancellor, who not only, as we can see, speaks truth, but who does so with a commendable economy of words, and who shows that the science of economics can be alive and well in men of most vivacious temper.

Gerry Helleiner arrived in Toronto on Christmas Eve 1939, a refugee from Nazism in his native Austria. He was barely three years old. Twenty-five years later, he was appointed Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Toronto, where he has been ever since. He became Professor in 1971, at the age of thirty-four. There may be a felicitous congruence between the cause of his first arrival in Canada and the focus of the life's work that we celebrate now.

Dr Helleiner has distinguished himself as a scholar, teacher and international consultant – a scholar who is at the same time, distinctively, a man of conscience. Here is a First-World economist who has dedicated his scholarship and his teaching to the cause of the economics of the Third World. He has been unstinting in his promotion of development economics as an important discipline in its own right. The pursuit of this cause has not been easy. He has been assiduous in his advocacy of support policies for developing countries. He is a leading authority on international trade, especially as it impacts on economic development in the Third World. One of his books, **International Trade and Economic Development** (1972) is a standard text. He has played a major role in the conceptualisation and design of trade and development policies for developing countries.

The compass point of his career was setting in this direction from early, and he prepared himself appropriately. As a graduate student at Yale, he was a member of an informal study group on development questions. He also showed a preference for focussing on Third World issues whenever his courses permitted. It was fitting that he became the first appointee to the Yale Economic Growth Centre, whose purpose was to study the experience of representative developing countries. In this connection, Helleiner spent a year as Associate Research Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, and Visiting Lecturer in Economics at the University of Ibadan. Between 1966 and 1968, he was Director of the Economic Research Bureau, University College, Dar es Salaam.

In espousing the cause of development economics, he has pursued, with rigorous scholarship and moral clarity, the line that conventional economic theory is often of questionable applicability to the problems facing the less developed countries. In the words of Cranford Pratt and Roy Culpeper, Helleiner has promoted the idea of "the establishment somewhere in the world of a graduate programme whose economics for developing countries would be taught free of the North American obsession with theoretical abstractions. He knew that he could never win [such] a battle at his own university" Happily, the African Economic Research Consortium, which he was instrumental in establishing, has been a partial fulfilment of that dream.

The AERC is only one example of his achievement as an institution builder. He was involved in the creation of the International Development Research Centre of Canada, and has served on its Board of Governors for two terms. He was a founder and a Chairman of the North-South Institute of Ottawa. His advice has been much sought after. He was a member of the Tanzania Advisory Group funded by the World Bank and nicknamed "The Three Wise Men." He served on the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Financial Flows for Africa, and on the International Advisory Committee of the UN University's World Institute for Development Economic Research. Since 1981, he has been Research Co-ordinator for the Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four, which advises developing countries on their relationship with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Nearer home, nearer that is to *our* home, he is a member of the Eminent Persons Group on Smaller Economies and Hemispheric Integration. This group, sponsored by the University of the West Indies and the Organisation of American States, is chaired by our Vice-Chancellor. He has been an external examiner for the Consortium Graduate School here at Mona, and last year he was an external reviewer of the Department of Economics.

One episode, which will have deep resonance on this rostrum, will dramatise why Gerald Helleiner matters to the world. It is recounted by Pratt and Culpeper. In 1981, "the Independent Commission on International Development Issues under the chairmanship of Willy Brandt appeared to be very close to a final stalemate.

Hurriedly, two leading members of the Commission, Edward Heath [former British Prime Minister] and Sir Shridath Ramphal [then Commonwealth Secretary General], sought to save the situation." Heath and Ramphal were recognised as the unofficial leaders of "the two seemingly irreconcilable factions. They undertook to bring to the next meeting a text on the outstanding issues that was agreeable to [both of] them. Helleiner was Ramphal's nominee to the group that they appointed to draft [that text]. For several weeks in a row he flew each Thursday to London, worked intensively from Thursday evening to Sunday afternoon and returned to Toronto each Sunday. The Commission was saved and not a single class was missed!" A salutary example, Chancellor, for many who shall remain nameless!

1997 has been a year of golden harvest for Gerald Helleiner in terms of recognition of his work. A festschrift in his honour, entitled **Global Development: Fifty Years After Bretton Woods**, was published by Macmillan, who have also published, for the African Economic Research Consortium, a four-volume series on **Regional Integration and Trade Liberalisation** in Sub-Saharan Africa. This too is dedicated to Gerry Helleiner. He is one of four persons to whom the Jesuit Centre of Concern in Washington, DC has dedicated a volume entitled **The World's Monetary System**. He is the winner of this year's University of Toronto Annual Award for Excellence for faculty.

We believe, Chancellor, that it will give you great personal pleasure to crown this year of his ascendancy. I invite you to act on behalf, not only of the institution of scholars and the aristocracy of economics, but also on behalf of the entire Third World, and more particularly those whom Frantz Fanon has called "the wretched of the earth," by exercising the authority vested in you by the Council and Senate of the University of the West Indies to confer upon Gerald Karl Helleiner, Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, the degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa*.

Mona

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