

Mauricio Solaún Giberga

Mauricio Solaún Giberga, professor of sociology and Latin American studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and former US ambassador, passed away in St. Petersburg, Florida on October 14, 2023.

Solaún was born in Havana, Cuba on September 22, 1935. During his years as a law student at the University of Santo Tomás de Villanueva, Solaún was a student of Dr. Guillermo Belt Ramírez, former Secretary of Public Instruction, former ambassador of Cuba to the United States and the Soviet Union, and former delegate of Cuba to the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS). It is unlikely that, at the time, Solaún would have thought that he would follow in the footsteps of this diplomat-turned-professor. He went on to earn a master's degree in economics from Yale University (1959) and studied at the University of Pennsylvania.

Like so many Cubans, Solaún went into exile, settling in the United States. In this country he dedicated his life to the academic profession, making himself known among students, professors, and researchers interested in sociology and Latin American studies. He earned a PhD in sociology from the University of Chicago and served for many years as a professor of sociology and Latin American studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

His academic career was interrupted when he was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to serve as US Ambassador to Nicaragua. With this appointment, Solaún became the first Cuban-American to be appointed ambassador to the United States, thus opening the door to many who have come after. In that diplomatic post, which he held from September 1977 to February 1979, Solaún witnessed the last years of the government of Anastasio Somoza Debayle and organized a mediation process carried out by the OAS. Many remember Ambassador Solaún's administration, which helped him resume his academic career.

Returning to academia, Solaún was invited to lecture in Latin America, Europe, and Asia. He returned to the classroom as a visiting professor at the Universidad de los Andes and the Universidad Pontificia Javeriana, both in Bogotá, Colombia, the Universidad de Belgrano in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, in Chile. He was awarded prestigious international fellowships and research grants,

including those from Carnegie (1963-1964), Mucia (1971), Fulbright (1971), and the International Legal Center (1973). At different times, he balanced his academic responsibilities with those of consultant for the United Nations Development Program for Chile, the Dow Chemical Company in Colombia, and the National Planning Department of Colombia. He was also a member of the American Sociological Association (ASA) and the Latin American Studies Association (LASA).

Solaún's literary contributions have left a significant imprint on Latin American studies. Among his works are *Sociology of Latin American Coups D'état* (1969), written with Manuel S. Alguero; *Chile: Models of Development and Political Options* (1973), written with Fernando Cepeda and Paul Oquist; *Discrimination without Violence: Miscegenation and Racial Conflict in Latin America* (1973), co-authored with Sidney Kronus; *Sinners and Heretics: The Politics of Military Intervention in Latin America* (1973), written with Michael Quinn; *Politics of Compromise: Coalition Government in Colombia* (1980), edited by R. Albert Berry and Ronald G. Hellman; and *US Intervention and Regime Change in Nicaragua* (2005).

Cubanía, or *Cubanness*, was never lacking in his work and in his life. He always sought to understand the Cuban people and the characteristics and processes that contributed to the collapse of the Cuban Republic. Dedicating his sociological and regional knowledge to the case of Cuba, he published research papers such as "Political Culture and Democracy in Cuba: Comparative Reflections" (1998) and "On Political Change in Cuba: A Comparative Introduction" (1999). At the same time, he was an active member of various Cuban exile organizations, including the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE) and the National Association of Cuban-American Educators (NACAE).

With his wife of over 60 years, Dr. Joan Davies Rosenbaum, and their daughter, Emma Cristina, he forged a beautiful home. After retiring, he lived in St. Augustine, Florida until finally moving to St. Petersburg. His academic and literary contributions help other generations to study the political and social processes of Latin America, many of them derived from the themes addressed by Solaún in his books. At the same time, his contributions to Cuban studies presented a serious and analytical approach to the subject and contributed to considerations for the construction of a future Cuba. ■

— Daniel I. Pedreira, Florida International University

Ola Listhaug

Ola Listhaug was an international scholar, a mentor to numerous students and younger colleagues, and an entrepreneurial university administrator. He passed away on September 14 and will be missed by many.

Ola Listhaug was born in the small community of Sjøholt in Western Norway, where he also eventually retired and died. Following studies at the University of Oslo, he moved to Trondheim and obtained his magister's degree in sociology in 1971. As a 24-year-old in 1973, he was engaged as an amanuensis in the newly established Department of Sociology and Social Studies (ISS), now the Department of Sociology and Political Science at NTNU. He obtained his PhD in 1988 and was promoted to full professor a few years later.

Ola's main field was political sociology, particularly electoral research and political behavior. He is probably best known for his contribution to the study of electoral behavior, with Stuart Macdonald and George Rabinowitz. In an article based on survey data gathered in Norway with extensive information on the issue positions of all parties with potential for achieving representation in the parliament, they found support for their directional theory in a European multi-party system. In contrast to the widely favored spatial model of electoral behavior, they found that parties which occupy a centrist position on an issue are not evaluated on the basis of that issue. Voters neither love nor hate a party in the middle. In order to build support on the basis of issues, parties must offer some strong stands. The authors were awarded the Heinz Eulau Prize for the best article in the *American Political Science Review* in 1991 for that work.