

**Gustavo Castro Caycedo**

**From Love to War**

**Journalism Without Limits**

**And Gabo said: “Paolo Lugari is the inventor of the world”**

**October 12, 2018**

**Professor Paolo Lugari Castrillón, son of a mother from Popayán, was born in Italy, but has lived in Popayán since he was four years old. He is a world-class Colombian. Professor Lugari, whose work serves as a universal example, does not engage in public relations and maintains a low profile. As is often the case, he seems not to be a “prophet in his own land” because he is not as well-known as he should be.**

**The United Nations University, based in Tokyo, awarded him the Zero Emissions World Prize in 1997. He also won the National Environmental Prize. His presentations on behalf of Colombia at the United Nations World Conference on Human Settlements in Canada in 1976, and at the United Nations World Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries in Argentina in 1978, were lauded. He was the keynote speaker at the**

**World Conference of the legendary Club of Rome in 1983, and its founder and president, Aurelio Peccei, after visiting Las Gaviotas, said: "This is what the world needs."**

**Spanish President Felipe González, Maestro Alejandro Obregón, and Nobel laureate Gabriel García Márquez visited the Centro Experimental las Gaviotas, and upon meeting him, Gabo said: "Paolo Lugari is the inventor of the world." In his book, "Renaissance in the Tropics," Mario Calderón Rivera wrote: "When the Club of Rome issued its warning to the world about 'the limits to growth,' five years had already passed since Paolo Lugari Castrillón's hypothesis on renewable energies and appropriate, non-aggressive technologies had been validated in Colombia." The fact that the renowned Carnegie Mellon University, a leading international institution in robotics and engineering, has recognized him and his Experimental Center as a universal example underscores his global importance. This university has produced nineteen Nobel laureates, eleven winners of the Turing Awards, 41 Tony Award winners, 98 Emmy Award winners, and seven Academy Award winners. This Colombian expert on biodiversity and world pioneer in harnessing solar energy asserts that "there is no energy crisis, only a crisis of imagination." Forty-six years ago, he created a sustainable community on a vast plain while searching for energy sources that would not harm the atmosphere. He is developing a "family home that is**

**autonomous and intelligent, generating its own energy." renewable energy."**

**The Wall Street Journal: "Las Gaviotas," an example for the world**

**Professor Lugari has been featured by The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Christian Science Monitor, Der Spiegel, The Wall Street Journal, Le Monde, The Journal de Genève, The Hong Kong Standard, Newsweek, Audubon, Reader's Digest, Excélsior, Mexico's Exterior magazine, the IDB magazine, and other media outlets.**

**The Nation, from England, said: "Las Gaviotas,' the only utopia realized in the history of the world." The Los Angeles Times stated: "Las Gaviotas,' a technotopia, is a model for the world." And Bib Magazine noted: "Biodiesel, the first time it has been made with palm oil in the world." Fritjof Kapra highlighted "Las Gaviotas" in The Hidden Connections. The Wall Street Journal headlined on its front page: "Las Gaviotas,' an example for the world." The Hong Kong Standard praised Lugari, and the UN declared, "Colombia is building the world's largest facility."**

**Paolo Lugari, renowned worldwide for his sustainable development projects and renewable technologies, is a speaker at academies and universities abroad. In Colombia, the Academy of Exact, Physical, and Natural**

**Sciences honored him with the Luis Eduardo Mora Osejo Medal.**

**He learned from his father, with whom he traveled throughout Colombia. On one trip with his father and a brother, traveling by jeep, on foot, by boat, and by small plane, they arrived at a plain in Vichada, “accompanied by solitude and the wind. It was an island surrounded by land.” He told himself he had to return there, and in 1971 he did, 46 years before writing this article. He created the Centro Experimental Las Gaviotas on a vacant lot, where he built houses, a health post, a school, and a plant “that respects nature.”**

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**Several authors have written about Professor Lugari and Las Gaviotas. Alan Wisman wrote: Las Gaviotas: A Village to Reinvent the World. The Chelsea Green Publishing Company of Vermont called it: A Great Reality. South Korea featured Las Gaviotas in a beautiful book. Other publications have covered his work: State of the World, which ranks Las Gaviotas among the most important projects in the world, as did The Worldwatch Institute and The Spiegel Extender.**

**Styerl Melles Jr., in Introduction to Environmental Science, presents Las Gaviotas “as a solar village in Colombia.” The Japanese magazine Architecture Process praised the World Environment Prize, which he won, and**

**highlighted his hospital, saying: “Paolo Lugari Castrillón and Las Gaviotas are one and the same.”**

### **“Let’s Make Colombia a Forest”**

**For Paolo Lugari, “trees are the foundation of ecosystems,” which is why he is strongly supporting the project led by Ariel Armel, president of the Colombian Confederation of Consumers, “Let’s Make Colombia a Forest,” which aims to establish a forest in every municipality.**

**Las Gaviotas has generated stable, well-paid employment for more than two hundred families who live, eat, and are educated there, occupying the housing.**

**Professor Lugari transformed this “barren” region of Vichada, between Puerto López and Puerto Carreño, into an eleven-thousand-hectare oasis, eight thousand of which he planted with Caribbean tropical pine. It is the largest forest in the country and, according to him, “owes its success to a fungus that adheres to the pine roots and forms mycorrhizae, which are biological fertilizers.” There, he planted more than 250 different native plant species under the shade of the pines, creating a rich biological resource.**

**The pine trees aren't for timber, but to live and transform the plains into a forest, generating a positive environmental impact. The “Caribbean pine” is harvested**

**for its sap (like rubber), and its resin generates jobs, resources, and peace.**

**Las Gaviotas community is economically self-sufficient and generates all the energy it needs through renewable sources. There, people live with enthusiasm, open to imagination, and work by integrating the social, economic, and environmental aspects. There are no hierarchies, only trust and decisions made by consensus. Paolo Lugari Castrillón has managed to consolidate an industrial culture that makes peace with diversity, the air, the water, and the soil. There, they produce biofuel for their plants and machinery, as well as 40% of the rosin consumed by Colombia, a raw material for manufacturing paint, lacquer, varnishes, adhesives, sealants, and chemical-free depilatory waxes.**

**Using solar energy lowers costs and creates jobs. Las Gaviotas has created the world's largest center of this type of energy and has produced the largest solar panels in Latin America. And in Las Gaviotas, the remarkable process of producing double-effect windmills, hand-operated water pumps, children's water-draining platforms, and thirty-kilowatt microturbines also takes place. It's a large Maloka (traditional communal house), where science and technology are taught, and where chimneys and solar oil cookers are made. Alternative energy sources and biodiesel production plants using palm oil are being developed there, and this biodiesel, 85% less polluting than diesel, was produced for the first time**

**in the world. Its experimental farms are dedicated to research and various agro-industrial projects.**

**Professor Lugari, upon receiving the decoration from the Academy of Exact and Physical Sciences, before members of its board of directors, the director of the Highest College of Academies, researchers, deans and rectors of universities, and some collaborators from his center, said: “Receive warm greetings from the microcosm of Las Gaviotas, located in the vastness of the Orinoco basin, far from everything and close to nothing, where things still lack names, as Gabriel García Márquez said. It is a non-linear project, a project of transversal thinking. There, we move from utopia to topia. In other words, from dream to reality amidst the beauty of extreme difficulty. Las Gaviotas is an imperfect but decent, sustainable, futuristic, creative, joyful, and long-lived community, where human bonds matter more than an organizational chart. Mini-crises lead to an order in motion, which validates our coexistence. Hatreds become biodegradable.”**

**Green Newton also praised Las Gaviotas.**

**Alan Weisman, in his book Las Gaviotas: A Village to Reinvent the World, says: “He could not have imagined that forty years later, Paolo Lugari’s experiment would become a paradigm of sustainable development.”**

**Gunter Pauli stated: “In Las Gaviotas, they live off the resources of nature without affecting its biological capital, in the middle of a biodiverse, planted tropical forest of eight thousand hectares, which allowed for the rebirth of a rainforest.” Edgar Morin, the great master of complexity, in his last book, The Way, extolled this achievement.**

**Ashok Khosla, former president of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, stated: “There is an exemplary project in Colombia that is not only self-sustaining, but has also managed to transform the savannas of Vichada into a tropical forest. There, one feels, thinks, and acts with tropical reason, which is the union of rationality with reality. Understanding our environment, the capacity to make connections that never end, and to delve into its complexity allows us to take advantage of it without destroying it. On the contrary, we strengthen its ecological foundations, which is the reason for our survival in the short, medium, and long term. The only dangerous desert is the desert of the imagination.”**

**Paolo Lugari notes: “At Las Gaviotas, we have always believed that reason, logic, and order reside in the profound and mysterious equations of creativity, especially since the 21st century will be the century of biology. We are in a constant search for temporal truths, as no culture has reached definitive conclusions. We view the equatorial tropics differently, making connections that propel us toward better lifestyles and living conditions.**



**Often, we encounter legal regulations, as also happens in other Latin American countries, that fail to recognize that 'everything is in everything,' as the pre-Socratic philosopher Democritus of Abdera said.” Julio Carrizosa Umaña, the undisputed dean of Colombian environmentalism, creator of significant national parks, and author of the National Code of Renewable Natural Resources and the Environment, once stated: “It is difficult to approach environmental complexity through legal thought.” Lugari says: “Hence the need for them to get to know us despite our remoteness, so we can connect with these ecosystems which, despite having the highest primary biological productivity on Earth, are inhabited by people living in sustainable poverty. In response to this problem, which is common to the tropical biome, we have been proposing, for more than twenty years, a plan accompanied by concrete actions related to water, air, food, and forests. Therefore, without claiming to possess the absolute truth and without relinquishing our right to challenge it, we have dared to put forward a proposal for the sustainability of human life. A human being can live up to four minutes without adequate air. Four days without adequate water. Up to 42 days without food.”**

**“It’s about saving humanity and other living organisms.”**

**He adds: “If 60% of the Earth were not covered by forests, by greenery, with the required vegetation density,**

**including marine plankton, the fundamental chemistry of the atmosphere, currently 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, and 1% argon and other gases, including carbon dioxide, could not be maintained. We would soon reach a point where the current atmospheric composition would make human life unviable, since humans, in the remainder of this century and the next, would not be able to biologically adapt to a new gaseous envelope, as the Las Gaviotas Center has been stating in various forums for over fifteen years. This is more serious than global warming, which would only make life uncomfortable with all kinds of disturbances.**

**Furthermore, achieving a planet with 60% vegetation cover, as the humanist Mario Calderón Rivera called it in his book about Las Gaviotas, titled Renaissance in the Tropics, especially considering that by 2050 we will exceed ten billion inhabitants, should be an urgent global goal. It is something that is within the economic reach of countries, and the appropriate technology and the required land are also available. That is why the past, present, and future are all about plants.**

**It is not about saving the planet, since this rocky spheroid will continue orbiting the sun for billions of years. It is about saving humanity and other living organisms.”**

**He concludes: “After installing the world’s largest solar-powered hot water system in Medellín, as reported by the United Nations’ global environmental information agency in 1979, we have been conducting all kinds of experiments**

**and tests until we achieved the capacity to design and build neighborhoods disconnected from public utility networks for water, sewage, and electricity, surpassing the quality of service at a cost no higher than that of social housing, taking into account the cost savings of not paying monthly utility bills.”**

**I would like to highlight two quotes from Professor Lugari:  
“Let us remember that pessimists will never be able to change the world, and losing hope would be unforgivable.”  
And: “I do not subscribe to the idea of those who say that the human race has no future if it does not colonize space.”**

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