
OBITUARIES

Sadly, four prominent Australian political economists – Ray Broomhill, Stephen Castles, Geoff Harcourt and George Venturini – have died during the last year. The editors of JAPE acknowledge their valuable personal contributions by publishing the following tributes.

Ray Broomhill

Ray Broomhill, a widely admired teacher, researcher and public intellectual, sadly passed away aged 73. Ray's intellectual curiosity, passion and expertise spanned the disciplines of history, sociology, labour studies, gender studies and political economy. He was a trans-disciplinarian before it became fashionable, collaborating locally and globally with fellow social scientists on the application of class and gender analysis. This greatly enriched his teaching which was a source of inspiration to the many students he taught and supervised, many who went on to play key leadership roles in the public sector, community organisations and the labor movement.

Born in 1948, Ray grew up in the working class suburb of Port Adelaide. He studied at the University of Adelaide where he completed a PhD in history focusing on the Great Depression. His 1978 book, 'Unemployed Workers – a social history of the Great Depression in Adelaide' drew strength from examining the great hardships of the depression through the eyes of those who experienced it – the unemployed and the homeless. He would draw on the methodological power of oral history and interviews again and again throughout his career to help understand the distributional impacts of crises, policy and change. With a deep understanding of the devastation caused by the Great Depression embedded in his intellectual DNA, Ray was uniquely positioned to mount powerful critiques of neo-liberalism.

A highlight of Ray's career was his contribution to founding Labour Studies and the Centre for Labour Research at the University of Adelaide. He taught political economy and gender work and society, while increasingly focusing his research on the emergence and consequences of neo-liberalism in Australia and globally. His edited book, *Banana*

Republic? Australia's Current Economic Problems, published in 1991 brought this analysis to a wider audience, something that Ray was able to do better than most through his regular slots on Radio 5UV and Radio Adelaide.

Ray's critique of neo-liberalism intersected with research undertaken in conjunction with his partner, Rhonda Sharp, on gender and inequality. Their trailblazing book, *Short Changed – Women and Economic Policies*, published in 1988, has helped to provide an intellectual and policy foundation for gender responsive government budgets to this day. Over the following thirty years, Ray and Rhonda would continue to publish jointly on gender and economics. Their recent work on gender, retirement incomes and the experience of households in Australia is testimony to their commitment to helping us understand inequality and the distributional impacts of public policies, always offering alternatives to remedy the problem.

Ray was a consistently generous mentor and supportive colleague. Early in my career, I was fortunate to work with him on our edited book, *Altered States – The Impact of Free Market Policies on the Australian States*, launched in 1996 by Jennie George, President of the ACTU. Ray and I continued to work together on projects for decades to come, with regular contributions being made by him and Rhonda to the *State of South Australia* series I edited.

Involvement in an international network of political economists was centrally important to Ray's work and personal life. With Paul Bowles, Stephen McBride and Teresa Gutierrez-Haces, Ray co-edited the book, *International Trade and Neoliberal Globalism: Towards Re-Peripheralisation in Australia, Canada and Mexico?*, published in 2008. Collaborations like this cemented Ray as one of Australia's foremost researchers on globalism and regulation theory.

We have lost a wonderfully compassionate person, someone whose warmth and wise counsel made the world a much better place for so many of us. Not everyone you know remains intellectually and personally committed to the pursuit of a fairer and more just world throughout their life. Ray's commitment to those goals only intensified along with his care for others.

John Spoehr

Stephen Castles

Stephen Castles, who has been a leading migration scholar and migration theorist since the 1970s, has passed away aged 77. Stephen has left a legacy of a remarkable contribution to an understanding of the complex, changing dynamics of global migration, the ways that this migration transformed sending and receiving countries and the lives of migrants themselves.

Although born in Australia, Stephen was raised in England and his first period as a migration scholar was European based. *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* (1973) – his first major contribution to the field – was very influential and made Stephen’s reputation within the global migration research community. When Stephen returned to Australia in 1986 as the Director of the *Centre for Multicultural Studies* at Wollongong University, he shaped migration research and policy in Australia. In 2001 Stephen became Director of the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University. In 2009 he returned to Australia to take up a position at the University of Sydney until his retirement in 2017.

One of the difficulties is reviewing the career of Stephen Castles is that over four and a half decades his immigration scholarship – with a range of co-authors – he has been so productive and his writings so prolific. The recurring theme is that Stephen Castles regularly anticipated new global migration issues so that his scholarship was at the forefront both theoretically and in policy terms.

Here for Good: Western Europe’s New Ethnic Minorities (1984) addressed the increasingly important issue of temporary migration, a theme that he returned to in later books, including *Back to the Future? Can Europe meet its Labour Needs through Temporary Migration?* (2006). His book *Citizenship and Migration: Globalisation and the Politics of Belonging* (2000) was at the cutting edge of the citizenship debate that still resonates strongly in Australia, Europe, Scandinavia and North America. At Oxford, Stephen’s publications addressed the increasingly important issue of forced migration to Europe, including *States of Conflict: Causes and Patterns of Forced Migration to the EU* (2003). Stephen’s global focus shifted his gaze to sending countries and fieldwork in Africa and the relationship between global migration and development in *Migration and Development: Perspectives from the South* (2008). *The Age of Migration* – first published in 1993 and now in its sixth edition – is still the most

influential migration textbook in the world and has been translated into Spanish, Italian, Turkish, Polish, Japanese and Taiwanese Chinese.

One of the key features of Stephen Castles' immigration scholarship has been the collaborative nature of his research. This is seen in the wide range of co-authors in his published work. Another has been his innovative, shifting focus, cannily anticipating new major global migration trends and issues and cutting the cloth of the theoretical lens that would be necessary to understand and interpret these trends and develop policy responses. A sociologist, Stephen always located his research in social theory though with an interdisciplinary focus, critical to a phenomenon such as global migration that transcends traditional disciplines. Another is the increasing global span of his fieldwork, of his focus on sending as well as receiving nations and his insistence that many nations are both. The global South is increasingly featured in his published work over the decades.

The other constant in his career has been Stephen's focus on policy implications and the importance of policy development. His insights and advice were eagerly sought by national governments and transnational institutions. Stephen's role as the first Chair of the Board of the Australian Bureau of Immigration Research had a substantial impact in placing the Bureau as a respected and influential international agency and had an important impact on Australian immigration policy. His Australia books, including *Mistaken Identity: Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia* (1988), *A Shop Full of Dreams: Ethnic Small Business in Australia* (1995) and *Immigration and Australia: Myths and Realities* (1998) reflect some of his influential scholarship. In his last book, written at Sydney University – *Social Transformation and Migration: National and Local Experiences in South Korea, Turkey, Mexico and Australia* (2015) - Stephen returned to the themes he addressed in his first book but in a different way: this time the key focus is not the labour market and migrant workers per se but the transformation of the places of migrant settlement and of migrants' lives post-migration.

Stephen Castles was a humble and unassuming man. His many graduate students found him very approachable, generous with his time and knowledge and so valuable as a guiding hand on their newly emerging academic careers. He was a giant in the international field of migration studies. His influence and memory will long resonate within the academic, government and community sectors that comprises the international

community of migration scholars and his broad global network of friends and colleagues.

On a final personal note, Stephen was the most significant influence in my own career. I accidentally fell into migration research: I fractured my patella in my first ever game of Rugby League with the Sydney University team. Groggy after an operation at RPAH hospital to reattach my kneecap, I read a short article on 'Immigrant workers in Europe' in a British magazine called *Society*. The author was Stephen Castles. It struck me in my hospital bed that Australia, too, had migrant workers. I resolved to follow this up once I left the hospital. I did. I changed my M. Ec. thesis topic to 'The Political Economy of Post-War Australian immigration', adopting the Castles and Kosack's Marxist political framework to the Australian situation. This appealed to my Marxism and my role in the formative years of the Political Economy movement at Sydney University. When Stephen returned to Australia in the mid-1980s we established a strong friendship. He supervised my PhD thesis on immigrant entrepreneurs in Australia and was a strong and continual influence on my own career as an Australian immigration scholar.

Jock Collins

Geoff Harcourt

Geoffrey Colin Harcourt and his twin brother John were born in Melbourne on the 27th of June 1931. Geoff attended the University of Melbourne where he flourished while studying accounting and economics, achieving first class honours and a subsequent Master of Commerce degree. At the University of Melbourne, he was exposed to the economics of Keynes and the Cambridge School, which exerted a profound influence on all his subsequent work. During this time, he also met and married Joan Bartrop, the love of his life, with whom he had four children – Wendy, Robert, Tim, and Rebecca – to whom Geoff referred as his 'balanced growth path'.

Geoff was awarded a PhD scholarship to study at Cambridge, where he was supervised by Nicholas Kaldor and Ronald Henderson. He absorbed the atmosphere and the intellectual stimulation of being among the great

Cambridge economists. Joan Robinson, in particular, was an important influence. Geoff attended her lectures, and closely studied her 1956 magnum opus *The Accumulation of Capital*, which had a deep effect on his subsequent development: Geoff, with Prue Kerr, would later edit and write the introduction for the third edition of that book. He was awarded a PhD in 1957 for his thesis, 'a study of the implications of the use of historical-cost accounting procedures to set prices and dividends, and levy taxes in a period of inflation'.

Cambridge became Geoff's centre of gravitation. He returned often, before moving there permanently in 1982 to take up a University Lectureship. In 1990 he became a Reader in the History of Economic Theory, until retiring in 1998, when he was made an Emeritus Reader. He was a Fellow at Jesus College during that time, and its President from 1988-89 to 1990-92. In between, he was appointed to a lectureship at the University of Adelaide in 1958, and then to a personal Chair in 1967, and Professor Emeritus in 1988. After his retirement from Cambridge, he became a visiting Professorial Fellow and then an Honorary Professor at the School of Economics at the University of New South Wales, where he spent his last decades. In the light of this, it is not surprising that Geoff regarded himself as 'an Australian Patriot and a Cambridge Economist' (Harcourt 1995).

Geoff received many significant awards during his life and, in 2018, he was made a Companion of the Order of Australia for his 'eminent service to higher education as an academic economist and author, particularly in the fields of Post-Keynesian economics, capital theory and economic thought.'

Geoff was driven by a strong commitment to social justice, which also informed his academic and policy work. He had a life-long commitment to equity and equality, working towards alleviating poverty and against social and racial discrimination. He also had a great love of sports, both as player and spectator, particularly Australian football and cricket. In honour of his passion for Australian football, many of his papers are written in four quarters.

Geoff had a gift of putting people at ease, talking to anyone, from the Crown Prince to awestruck students, while displaying his mischievous sense of humour. He was genuinely interested in everyone he met. Geoff loved jokes and didn't really mind their origins. I fondly remember Geoff and I driving from Cambridge to Canterbury for a conference. On the way

down I told Geoff a joke; on the way back he told it to me. Needless to say, his telling was a substantial improvement.

Geoff's contribution to economics, both theory and policy, was outstanding. In over 30 books and 400 articles, numerous lectures, seminars and interviews he had a significant impact on the discipline. Geoff made economics more humane, and humanised the 'dismal' science. His contributions to economics covered a broad range of areas from esoteric pure theory to applied policy, always with the aim of trying to make the world a better place. He provided original insights, and was able to explain difficult and complex ideas in an accessible form, while often showing his sense of humour.

In his important article and subsequent book on the Cambridge capital controversies, Geoff provided a masterful guide to one of the most technical debates in economics. Cambridge University Press is publishing a 50th anniversary edition of the book later this year, with a new preface by Geoff and afterwords by Avi Cohen and Tiago Mata.

The capital theory controversies were a series of debates in the 1950s-1970s on high theory, between economists mainly based in Cambridge, England (Joan Robinson, Piero Sraffa, Luigi Pasinetti) and at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts (Paul Samuelson, Robert Solow). Although the debates were ostensibly about the problem of measuring capital, they were ultimately about the nature and meaning of capital, and the question of the most appropriate way to analyse a contemporary capitalist economy. Geoff unravelled the debates so that they became intelligible, with both clear style and humour, evident particularly in the chapter and section titles, such as the section pointing to an error by Kaldor titled 'Excuse me, Professor Kaldor, but your slip is showing'.

Geoff was a founder and major contributor to post-Keynesian economics throughout his intellectual life – culminating in his books, *The Structure of Post-Keynesian Economics* and the two volume *The Oxford Handbook of Post-Keynesian Economics*. He enriched economics by making it more accessible through his clear, and often humorous, writing style and in his many biographical essays. These went behind the masks of economists to reveal not only their economic insights, but also the people that developed those insights. This is especially apparent in his definitive biography of Joan Robinson, co-written with Prue Kerr.

Underlying his theoretical contributions lay the importance of policy, on which Geoff not only wrote copiously, but also acted by advising

governments and commenting on contemporary issues. He believed that academics in general, and economists in particular, have a duty to advocate policies which would lead to a better world. Associated with writing and advocacy was a belief in a 'need for direct action if other more orthodox means proved ineffective' (Harcourt 2011:124) – which Geoff displayed with his important role in Australia's anti-Vietnam War movement.

Everyone who knew Geoff values the wonderful human being he was, as well as being a world-class economist. He enriched the lives of everyone around him. On a personal note, Geoff was my teacher, colleague, collaborator, mentor, and most importantly a very warm and dear friend. Geoff welcomed me into his academic and family life, and I share the immense sense of loss at the passing of such an inspiring human being. Geoff will be greatly missed. He was a true scholar and gentleman, and the world is so much a better place because of him.

Peter Kriesler

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George Venturini

George Venturini was a larger than life figure who attracted both admirers and detractors because of his forceful personality. He was a public intellectual, but with only a minor public in Australia, not least because of the mainstream media's indifference to his contributions. His conflict with the then Fraser government over the effectiveness and fate of the Whitlam-inaugurated Trade Practices Commission, and his disdain for the corruption in Australian politics in general, makes his life of relevance to political economists.

Dr Venturino Georgio Venturini was born in Massa Superiore (now Castelmassa), Italy, in September 1928. He graduated in classics, arts, social sciences and law through the universities of Ferrara, Italy, and Northwestern, Chicago. He practiced and taught law in Italy until 1958, when he took up post-doctoral studies at Northwestern University until 1962. After that he held Chairs in Canada and the United States, and taught at universities in Singapore, in Queensland, and in Victoria. After retiring in 1993, he maintained formal links with Monash University as Senior Research Associate in its School of Political and Social Inquiry, and with Swinburne University as an Adjunct Professor at its Institute for Social Research.

George advised governments in the United States, Malaysia and Australia. He served the Whitlam government (1975-77) as Trade Practices Commissioner, and the Wran government (1977-82) as Special Adviser on Corporate, Securities and Trade Practices Law.

George wrote eight books, four of them about Australia: *Malpractice – The Administration of the Murphy Trade Practices Act*; *Partners in Ecocide – Australia's complicity in the uranium cartel*; *Never Give In - Three Italian Anti-fascist Exiles in Australia 1924-1956*; and *The Last Great Cause – Volunteers from Australia and Emilia-Romagna in Defence of the Spanish Republic, 1936-1939*. George also edited five more books, four of them concerning Australia. He contributed chapters to books and about 100 articles and essays to learned periodicals and conferences. George was also the driving force behind the July 2014 SEARCH Foundation publication, *Iraq Invasion 2002 – Complaint against John Winston Howard to the International Criminal Court*.

George was a member of the Communist Party of Australia, and of the SEARCH Foundation, an ardent republican and supporter of First Nations

sovereignty. But the roots of his politics were in the Italian anti-fascist party of the 1930s, *Justice and Freedom (Giustizia e Libertà)*, whose descendant is now the Italian Radical Party. George was a young activist in the 1944 Uprising against the Nazi occupation of northern Italy. He said he only felt truly free under two governments – those of Italian Communist leader Palmiro Togliatti immediately after the defeat of the Nazis in 1945-48, and that of Edward Gough Whitlam's Labor government in Australia from 1972-75.

George migrated to Australia in 1966. In Singapore beforehand, he had asked a local bookseller what he had on Australia. When the proprietor said only two books – D.H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo* and E L Wheelwright's just published *Industrialization in Malaysia* - Venturini bought both. That was his early introduction to Wheelwright's prescient work on the prospects of autonomous national development and the incipient dangers of the imperatives of what came to be called 'globalisation'. A long friendship with Ted ensued. Wheelwright's links with the Whitlam government's Attorney General, Lionel Murphy, were partly responsible for Venturini returning to Australia to be appointed in March 1975 as a Commissioner at the Trade Practices Commission. The TPC was the administrative arm of Murphy's 1974 Trade Practices Act.

The administration of the Act immediately ran into a head-wind of business resistance and internal acquiescence, not least from the TPC's weak Chairman, Ron Bannerman. Action against the global zinc and lead cartels (in which North Broken Hill was a key player), against the motion picture distributors' control of cinemas, against the soap and detergent industry for misleading advertising – all stalled. Anti-competitive mergers and takeovers continued apace. In internal memos, Venturini referred to 'the TP Omission', testing whether Bannerman would notice.

In an internal memo to fellow Commissioners, Venturini claimed:

During the major part of the last two years I have seen the intellectual independence of the commission mortified by the value and standards of business and the secretiveness of a powerful, crusty bureaucracy, impervious to any suggestion or criticism and callously set on its own ways, where disagreement and dissent are seen as the ratbaggy of intruders who cannot adjust. The end is, as in the past, the corporative conciliation of sectional pressures. Never mind the law, keep an eye on the pressure [...] Paralysis results from such timidity.

Venturini was impatient to deal with the mountainous backlog of restrictive practices and was indifferent to protocol, but the sacking of the

Whitlam government killed the ambition. Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser was reported on 28 March 1976 as saying that a review of the Act would do away with ‘many stifling and unreasonable regulations over business’. So it came to pass. John Howard, then Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, sought to institutionalise the gutting of the Act via the 1976 Swanson Committee inquiry. In June 1977, the Act was duly amended and its funding reduced. Legally unable to sack Venturini, Howard disbanded the Commission and re-established it without him.

In their 2006 *Australian Political Lives*, political scientists Arklay, Nethercote and Wanna describe Venturini’s *Malpractice* as ‘vitriolic’. They write: ‘Venturini does not share the affection for the public service which is so obvious in the works of [John] Bunting and [William] Dunk’. (Wanna is Sir John Bunting Chair of Public Administration at ANU.) It is a pity that these learned academics declined to inquire as to the reasons for Venturini’s vitriol.

Drawing on his experience as Trade Practices Commissioner, Venturini plunged into writing another book, *Partners in Ecocide*. The subject was a global uranium producers’ cartel, established in June 1972. Membership comprised France, South Africa, Canada and Australia, and Rio Tinto Zinc – the latter representing itself and the British government. This time, Venturini wrote from the vantage point of independence, with crucial insider material made available to him by Friends of the Earth, in turn sourced from a whistle-blower from RTZ’s subsidiary Mary Kathleen Uranium Ltd. The uranium cartel drew on the experience of the lead and zinc cartels and succeeded in raising uranium ore prices dramatically. Caught in the hike was the key wholesaler Westinghouse which had arranged long term supply contracts at lower prices. Westinghouse defaulted on its contracts and proceeded to sue the cartel members. Relevant here is that the Fraser government (under pressure from the producers) passed legislation in November 1976 to prevent document disclosure pursued in this litigation. Venturini notes:

The passage of an Act which is so alarmingly vague and reposes such wide discretionary powers in the Attorney-General have quite disturbing implications for parliamentary democracy and the principle of open government. Where uranium was concerned, the Australian Government accelerated the tendency to use the Parliament as a cipher.

When Venturini finished *Partners in Ecocide* in 1981, he could find no interest from major publishers in Australia where he wanted it published. As Venturini noted, this was a book about a non-existent subject – the

cartel which 'didn't exist'. Early enthusiasm for publication from a Labor parliamentarian and a union leader vanished. Lessons were learnt about where the mettle lay, if anywhere. Venturini had the book published by a small, loyal publisher in late 1982.

Venturini had several foibles. In verbal exchange his use of irony was so thick that one had to learn to translate to make sense of his meaning and intent. In writing, catering to a word limit was evidently an alien concept, although the Search Foundation indulged his passions. His 2007 *Never Give In* weighs in at 850 large-format pages: his 2010 *The Last Great Cause*, same format, is over 800 pages.

The arrival of digital non-mainstream media provided serendipitous opportunity. The *Australian Independent Media Network (AIM)* was an amenable outlet. In it, Venturini explored the downing of Malaysia Airlines MH17 over Eastern Ukraine on 17 July 2014, written in 12 instalments from November 2014 to January 2015. (Curiously, this series has disappeared from the *AIM* site.) The Abbott government received the fire of his fingers in no less than 50 instalments ('The facets of Australian fascism') during June and July 2016. The 2003 invasion of Iraq incurred his wrath in 40 instalments ('Bush, Blair and Howard') during November 2016 to January 2017. Battle over the long censorship of material relating to the Whitlam dismissal ('Medieval combat for 'the Palace Letters') went over 11 instalments from August 2018 to January 2019. The Timor-Leste spying case ('The spying on Timor-Leste case') took 8 instalments during November and December 2019. Finally, there was Australia dragged screaming into multiculturalism in 15 episodes ('Comedy without art') during January and February 2020.

In myriad other pieces on *AIM* or *Counter-Currents* Venturini expounded on the big moral issues over the last several decades. They deserved wider exposure in mainstream media, but the gatekeepers prefer woolly diversions, at best, and fake news, at worst – increasingly the latter.

Although George Venturini was Italian in his bones, he loathed the omnipresence of the Church. Even the Communists were Catholic, he quipped. Anxious to travel to Spain in the early 1950s, 'the formalities necessary to obtain a visa churned my stomach' (*The Last Great Cause*). Venturini found it repugnant that 'citizens of the Republic of Italy were required by the Spanish Embassy in Rome to submit a statement by the Catholic priest of the parish in which the postulant lived, certifying that the would-be traveller as 'of sufficient *limpieza* [cleanliness] to enter that

surviving slaughterhouse'. He found it intolerable that, after the optimism of the immediate post-war period, Italy under the very Catholic Alcide de Gasperi had been readily subsumed under American tutelage.

Venturini was no kinder to his adoptive country. His growing reaction was contempt for the Australian political elite whose perfidy he had unearthed in his research and writings. The sacking of the Whitlam Labor government in November 1975 was a crowning moment of despair. John Howard, that embodiment of reaction and duplicity, was for Venturini a particularly significant figure in the cesspit that is Australian politics.

Venturini was an unerring supporter of Lionel Murphy's record, given the controversy that marked Murphy's last years before his death in 1986. In 1991, Venturini delivered the Fifth Lionel Murphy Memorial Lecture (reproduced in the 1994 *Five Voices for Lionel*). In prose outlining the decisive detail, he highlighted Murphy's consistent battles – as a lawyer, as Attorney-General and as High Court Judge – for principled ethical positions against a Constitution suffused with colonial cringe (ignored by naïve advocates of an imminent Republic down under), against a complicit judiciary, for the rights of Indigenous communities, for free speech, for the right to strike, and for people wrongly gaoled (Lindy Chamberlain, Tim Anderson) through blind and corrupt processes. Venturini lamented that the fact that proposals for Constitutional reform (Australians are subjects rather than citizens) did not look to Continental Europe for ideas, that there was no Bill of Rights in Australia, and that so few people were concerned about its absence.

George Venturini died peacefully and proudly, defiant of convention to the last, on 13 May, 2022, aged 93. He was living near Morwell in Gippsland, Victoria, with his wife Lorraine. The date of his passing was Friday 13th – the lion-hearted Venturini would have appreciated the irony.

Evan Jones and Peter Murphy