

In Memoriam

Michael Brecher

Michael Brecher, R. B. Angus professor of political science at McGill University, died on January 16, 2022 at the age of 96. There are so many academic fields on which Michael left his mark, and so many scholars with whom he collaborated, consulted, and whom he befriended over the years, that it is quite a daunting task to write about his remarkable career. Jon began a long collaboration with Michael in 1975, Hemda Ben Yehuda joined them in 1977, Pat joined shortly thereafter in 1980, and Kyle in 2006.

By 'team,' we mean the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) Project, which Michael founded in 1975 and led or co-led for the next 45 years. During this remarkable time, Michael authored or co-authored 29 books and over 110 articles and chapters, the majority on all dimensions of international crises; including onset, escalation, de-escalation, and outcome. Somewhere, there is a list of the more than 100 students who worked on the project over the years. Many have now become academic scholars themselves. Like Michael himself, two of these young ICB colleagues (Etel Solingen and Patrick James) went on to become presidents of the International Studies Association. Mark Boyer, another ICB-er early in his career, currently serves as the Executive Director of ISA. Many others have excelled in their respective academic work and have now generated their own academic followings.

Many of the students Michael taught were soon drawn into elaborate theoretical brainstorming sessions led by Michael, but always open to innovative contributions, extending the frontiers of research in new directions. Among the many seminar-generated early ICB innovations was the shift from actor perceptions to systems analysis in shaping policy and an emphasis on the important relationship between the two. Such informal and creative discussions had profound effects on the academic careers of those who were lucky to have Michael as a mentor. His contributions stretched across the globe, from Israel to the US, Canada, and beyond. The search for new research puzzles, the need for sound empirical support, and the value of joint quality scholarship and ongoing friendships became major takeaways which Michael passed on to the following generations of scholars who naturally followed his traditions and values, leaving a profound imprint on academia.

Michael began his career with an appointment to the department of economics and political science at McGill (later just political science) in 1952. There, he joined his brother Irving Brecher, a renowned economist. Michael did his doctoral work at Yale, while Irving did his at Harvard. Michael taught at McGill until his reluctant retirement in 2020, a remarkable stretch of 69 years—a feat that will be difficult for any scholar to match.

Michael started as a South Asia scholar. Among his early books were *The Struggle for Kashmir* (Oxford 1953), *Nehru: A Political Biography* (Oxford 1959), *The New States of Asia* (Oxford 1963), *Succession in India: A Study of Decision Making* (Oxford 1966), *India in World Politics* (Oxford 1968), and *Political Leadership in India: An Analysis of Elite Attitudes* (Praeger 1969).

He then switched gears, and having taken up part time residence in Israel, wrote two remarkable books on Israeli foreign policy:

The Foreign Policy System of Israel: Setting, Images, Process (Oxford and Yale 1972, winner of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award of the American Political Science Association), and *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy* (Oxford and Yale, 1974).

It was in 1975 that Michael founded the International Crisis Behavior Project, in collaboration with Jon Wilkenfeld and their graduate students in the international relations department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In this project, still alive and well under the direction of Kyle Beardsley and Pat James, Michael and Jon broke fresh ground in the analysis of crisis, conflict, and war. Their innovation took the form of an intensive inquiry into seven enduring topics/themes: polarity, geography, ethnicity, democracy, protracted conflict, violence, and third party intervention. These distinct analytic categories were guided by models from which hypotheses were derived and tested against the voluminous evidence generated by the ICB Project, which today covers all crises from 1918 to 2017 – 485 crises, 1015 crisis actors, and almost 200 variables at both the actor and system levels of analysis. Their leading book on the subject, *A Study of Crisis* (Michigan 1997) will be released as an open source ebook in spring 2022.

The objectives of these analyses were twofold: theory construction through a rigorous and systematic search for patterns of turmoil in this 100-year span of world history, and an indirect contribution to world order through the generation of knowledge to be communicated to policymakers and the attentive public alike about the pervasive phenomenon of crisis in the global system.

During the years of the ICB Project, Michael authored or co-authored a remarkable 18 books on the subject of crisis in the international system. The most recent of his books were *International Political Earthquakes* (Michigan 2008), *The World of Protracted Conflicts* (Lexington 2016), *The Dynamics of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Palgrave 2017), and *A Century of Conflict and Crisis in the International System* (Palgrave 2018). Remarkably, a year before his death, Michael was negotiating with the University of Michigan Press for a book to be titled *Secessionist Movements—State Conflict!*

Among the many awards Michael received over the years were the Distinguished Scholar Award—Foreign Policy Section of the International Studies Association in 1995, and the Lifetime Achievement Award of the American Political Science Association—Conflict Processes Section 2009. And as a political scientist, he received the Watumull Prize of the American Historical Society for his book on Nehru in 1960.

Remarkably, through all of this unbelievable scholarly productivity, Michael also managed to be one of the most esteemed teachers, mentors, and dissertation directors. He held visiting professorships at the Hebrew University, Stanford, Berkeley, and Chicago. He was a demanding co-author, going through multiple formulations of theory upon which both qualitative and quantitative analyses were based. He had a unique writing style, often typified by an aversion to ending sentences. He wrote clearly and carefully, able to move back and forth from the prose necessary to describe the lives and works of leading political figures like Nehru, Ben Gurion, and Sadat, to the more technical style required to convey complex statistical results.

Michael stands among the memorable figures in our field and

his legacy will continue to expand. He is greatly missed by all of us, his family, and the wider academic world. ■

—Jonathan Wilkenfeld, University of Maryland

—Patrick James, University of Southern California

—Hemda Ben-Yehuda, Bar Ilan University

—Kyle Beardsley, Duke University

Martin Otto Heisler

Martin Otto Heisler, distinguished scholar of comparative politics, was born in Budapest in 1938 into a Jewish family. For over fifty years, Martin's work shaped comparative politics, international relations, and social science scholarship on the nature of European politics and democracy, ethnic identity, ethnic relations, migration, citizenship, and political and historical sociology. Martin passed away in February of 2021 in Lake Oswego, Oregon, where he and his wife (Professor Barbara Schmitter Heisler) moved after their 2005 retirements.

In a 2001 essay in *Light from The Ashes: Social Science Careers and Young Holocaust Refugees and Survivors*, Martin reflected on the relationships between his own experiences as a child and the fate of his family—what he called “my Holocaust”—and the scholar, citizen, and educator he became. He credits some of extraordinary horrors and the everyday challenges he survived in occupied, wartime and post war Budapest and his detached, observant, and analytical nature. Late in his undergraduate studies, the survivor, refugee and migrant gravitated to political science, social inquiry, and then to an academic career. While seeking shelter in the academy can be illusory, he did find an intellectual home in the exploration of tensions between secular citizenship, ethnic relations, migration, and the political, social and cultural institutions that surround us all and shape who we are as individuals and in our collectives.

Martin arrived in Los Angeles in 1956 with his father, one of only a few family members to survive The Holocaust. Between 1960 and 1969, he earned his BA, MA and PhD at the University of California, Los Angeles. He spent two years at the University of Illinois, before starting what would become four decades (1966–2006) at the University of Maryland, College Park, in the department of government and politics. During his time at College Park, he also taught and did

research at the University of Kentucky, the University of Aarhus (Denmark), the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (SNRS) Paris, the University of Warwick (UK) and the Institut d'Études Politiques (Sciences-Po), Paris.

His first book, *Politics in Europe*, shaped decades of scholarship on European and comparative politics. Decades of articles, book chapters and edited journals and symposia (collections) focused on ethnicity, ethnic politics, ethnic conflict, migration, the relationships with between identity and institutions, and the politics of history have influenced research and conceptualization of these topics across the social sciences.

Martin was active in several professional organizations, including the APSA and ISA (and several of its sections). In honor of his intellectual and personal leadership and his commitment to graduate student research and mentoring, ISA's section on Ethnicity, Nationalism and Migration (EMNISA)—which he co-founded—created the annual Martin O. Heisler Award for the best graduate student conference paper or poster.

Martin sometimes described himself as an introvert, but those of us who knew him well thought he hid it well. He loved the intellectual exchange, debates, coffees, glasses of red wine, and lively dinners that conferences and workshops bring. His friends—former students and academic colleagues from around the world—will miss those yearly meetups with him.

Martin continued to travel, research, write, publish articles and blogs, and edit collections throughout his 15 years as an Emeritus Professor (2006–2021). See more here: <https://gvpt.umd.edu/feature/memoriam-professor-emeritus-martin-otto-heisler>.

He is missed every day by his wife Barbara, his daughters Laura M. Heisler and Diana A. Heisler, their spouses, his four grandsons, and his stepchildren Monika Schmitter and Marc Schmitter. ■

—Stacy D. VanDeveer, University of Massachusetts Boston

Steven Ames Peterson

In academia, true pioneers are often unheralded, if not outright ignored; they take chances with their careers and livelihood that most would not consider. These pioneers are rarely found in the elite institutions under the bright shining light of renown; more often they are found far from the fame systematically plying their craft.

Steven A. Peterson was just such a pioneer. As one of the Founders of the Association for Politics and the Life Sciences (APLS) in the early 1980s, he was a key part of the original steering committee comprised of Carol Barner-Barry, Lynton Caldwell, Peter Corning, Fred Kort, Roger Masters, Steven Peterson, Glendon Schubert, Albert Somit, and Thomas Weigele. Forty years ago, this group organized its first program for the 1982 annual meeting of APSA and published its first issue of the journal *Politics and the Life Sciences* that same year. Since then, Steve was a constant presence, first in building APLS as an organization and biopolitics as a field, and then as a steadying hand transitioning the organization and this journal to the next generation.

He was, perhaps most impressively, amongst the first generation of biopolitical specialists that organized their graduate education around combining biology and politics. Steve's undergraduate education at Bradley University led to a senior honors paper on biology

and politics. He subsequently attended State University of New York Buffalo's graduate program, creating his own special subfield within the political science program based upon mammalian ethology, primate behavior, genetics, and classic works in biology. His dissertation, which focused on the biological basis of student protest—then a constant and roiling part of American political life—reflected a pragmatic approach to dealing with pressing public policy problems.

It was there, at SUNY Buffalo, that Steve met and developed a fruitful research collaboration with his long-time friend, colleague, and fellow APLS Founder, Al Somit. Among many other notable achievements and initiatives, Steve and Al were the series editors of the long-running *Research in Biopolitics* edited collections, first for JAI and then for Emerald Press, and were the stalwart leaders of the similarly focused International Political Science Association Research Committee Number 12. And together, they gave the field of biopolitics renewed visibility with the 560-page edited volume, *the Handbook of Biology and Politics* (Edward Elgar, 2017).

Beyond these accomplishments in building the field of biopolitics, Steve's collaborations extended outwards to multiple fields and across a diverse array of individuals, as he took on the mentoring role of a highly productive academic. As author or editor of more than 25 books and 125 articles, including the path-breaking *Darwinism*,