


## Peter Kriesler at sixty

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In 1964, Paul Samuelson published a classic article in the *Review of Economic Studies* (*REStuds*) entitled ‘AP Lerner at Sixty’. Lerner had been associated with *REStuds*, the journal started by the Young Turks of economics in the early 1930s, since its inception. The Editorial Board asked Paul to write the essay in honour of Lerner’s 60th birthday.

Peter Kriesler turned 60 in February 2016. He has been associated with *Economic and Labour Relations Review* (ELRR) almost from its inception and has worked extremely hard on its Editorial Board and as one of its Executive Editors since 2003. Many of his best articles are published in *ELRR* (as were many of Lerner’s in *REStuds*). Samuelson concluded his tribute to Lerner:

Always Abba Lerner has been on the side of the angels. It is customary, people say, for economists to become more conservative as they grow older ... Lerner seems to be an exception. He has not sold out to the interests nor ... bought into romantic idiocies. Like Knut Wicksell, he stands up to speak for the public interest as his scholarly findings interpret that interest, letting those who will charm college Deans.

The drum beat Abba Lerner answers to is that of science, and when he plays his pipe we economists of all ages become like the little children of Hamelin. (Samuelson, 1964: 178)

Such an astute evaluation could just as fittingly be applied to Peter.

Peter has published articles and books on theory, applied topics, policy and human rights. His first book, *Kalecki’s Microanalysis: The Development of Kalecki’s Analysis of Pricing and Distribution*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 1987. The book is the definitive statement on these aspects of Kalecki’s economics.

I wrote in the Foreword to the book,

In 1981 I examined a dissertation for Sydney University on ‘Kalecki’s Theory of Distribution’. It was a careful, critical but sympathetic evaluation of the evolution of Kalecki’s views on distribution from his earliest paper (in English) in the late 1930s to his last paper, published after his death, in 1971. It was written by a Sydney graduate with a passion for political economy in general and for Michal Kalecki’s contributions to it in particular. I was struck at the time by the excellence of the dissertation; it was clearly written, painstakingly researched, there was admiration for the author and enthusiasm for the subject, and there were perspective and judgement in the evaluation. I thought it the best study that I had read on this aspect of Kalecki’s work.

In recent years, it has been my pleasure and privilege to work with the author of that dissertation, Peter Kriesler, while he has extended his research works into Kalecki's contributions. The traits that I discerned before have come to fruition in the present excellent study of Kalecki's work on pricing behaviour and the distribution of income in capitalist economies. Peter Kriesler tells the story of the development of Kalecki's ideas in an authoritative and enthusiastic manner. He not only highlights Kalecki's very considerable achievements, he also points out the difficulties and shortcomings of his analysis and describes Kalecki's attempts at various points of his life to grapple with and overcome them.

... I believe that Kalecki's analysis of the political economy of capitalism is the most profound of the 20th century, as relevant today as when he originally developed it. I also believe that Peter Kriesler has performed an invaluable service for the economics profession by providing such an accessible and definitive interpretation of an essential part of that analysis.

Four volumes of selected essays by post-Keynesians from down under (Halevi et al.) were published by Palgrave Macmillan in early 2016. The large range of Peter's contributions is on display in the four volumes. Peter has 13 chapters in *Volume I: Essays on Keynes, Harrod and Kalecki*, 15 in *Volume II: Essays on Policy and Applied Economics*, 7 in *Volume III: Essays on Ethics, Social Justice and Economics*, and 9 in *Volume IV: Essays on Theory*. All are marked by clarity of thought and expression and are underlaid by passionate humane values. Some of the essays are jointly authored with one or more of the other three authors in the gang of four, a witness to Peter's collegiate spirit. Almost all of them grow out of his teaching, for Peter recognises that the first priority of a proper academic is his or her pupils.

Many happy returns, Peter, long may you continue to inspire us by your wonderful teaching, writing and exemplary editorial work.

## References

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