



Robert Steven (1944-2001)

Rob Steven was a political activist, a scholar, a profoundly committed teacher, a loving father and a good friend to all those fortunate enough to have been close to him.

His activism spanned three continents – initially as a student organiser during apartheid in south Africa, where he was born. Winning a Rhodes scholarship in 1967, he left Africa to study in Oxford. From England he moved first to Canada, then to New Zealand (1974) where he became a Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch. In 1990, he arrived in Australia where became a Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor, in the School of Political Science at the University of New South Wales. Over more than thirty years he gained an international reputation as a Marxian political economist whose main field was Japanese politics. His books have become standard texts on class in contemporary Japan and on the impact and spread of Japanese Imperialism. His writing dealt with many other topics too, including class, race and gender. An article showing how these dimensions of Australian society had been shaped by our distinctive historical experience appeared in the previous issue of this journal.

Rob was also a highly committed and inspirational teacher. When students enrolled in a course he was to teach at the beginning of this year were told of his illness they were asked whether they had chosen the course because of Rob's reputation. Almost every hand went up – a silent salute.

I salute him too, from the bottom of my heart. He inspired his friends as well as his students with his abundant energy, personal charm, enthusiasm and his extraordinary capacity for an enlivening generosity. His illness was untimely in every possible way and he leaves behind him people from all over the world who were shocked and immensely saddened by his death on the 18th April, 2001.

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