

Obituary

Alfred Stepan

22 July 1936 – 27 September 2017

Government & Opposition editorial board member

Alfred Stepan was a great political scientist. He was also a great colleague and a great boss. I had the chance to work with Stepan soon after he joined the Central European University (CEU) as its first rector in 1993. That was the time when Stepan was working with Juan Linz to complete their book *Comparative Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (1996). I remember being impressed that a scholar with such deep knowledge of Latin America could immerse himself so thoroughly and so quickly in the political life of Central and Eastern Europe. Stepan was a true comparativist.

That book came out shortly before Stepan left the CEU to become Gladstone Professor of Politics at Oxford – where he stayed only briefly before returning to Columbia University. We lost touch personally, but I remained deeply influenced by his work. The essays he wrote for *Government & Opposition* on democratic opposition and democratization theory (1997) and on the importance of the nation state or state-nation (2008) are two illustrations; his full contribution is much wider. Stepan represents a tradition in comparative politics that *Government & Opposition* exists to celebrate. It is the same tradition which former editors of the journal such as Ghiță Ionescu, Ernest Gellner, and Isabel de Madariaga used as the foundation for the wider *Government & Opposition* community. I remember clearly the support Stepan showed all of us at the CEU when Gellner passed away prematurely in 1995.

Twenty-two years later, Katharine Adeney and I hope the *Government & Opposition* community will join us in offering support and solace to all those whom Stepan has left behind – his wife Nancy, first and foremost. May he always be remembered warmly; he will be sorely missed.

Erik Jones

Co-editor, *Government & Opposition*, 20 November 2017