

We are extremely sorry to learn of the passing of former ISS professor Ken Post, who died on his birthday on 12 March 2017 at the age of 82. He was at ISS in the period 1969 – 1990.

Ken was a remarkable and unique colleague, great to work with, always willing to give his views and input and always happy to help out if needed but also sharp and extremely precise in his critique. He was a remarkable teacher. Many former students will remember his famous lectures. Entering the classroom, he could ask the students what was on the agenda, then lecture for 45 minutes without notes.

Ken Post was the author of numerous treaties and published more than a dozen books, many on the subject of Marxism, including "Socialism and Underdevelopment" and "Regaining Marxism". Ken Post was an adherent to, and a critic of, Marxist economic theory. Particularly, he proposed a re-shaping of Marxist ideology in order to move beyond capitalism without reverting to a Utopian notion of communism. But his interest was much broader, he also loved to read and even write science fiction (two books in the past few years, but not published). Books were his passion. His house was literally stuffed with piles of books.

Ken Post was born in 1935, in a working class family (his father was a construction worker) in the Medway Towns in southern England. The new Welfare State after World War II allowed him to attend grammar school, and to win a state scholarship to Cambridge University, where he was President of the Cambridge Union, played in the Cambridge Footlights, and laid the foundations for his career as a serious researcher and university teacher. Already in 1947, after reading about Marx's theory of surplus value, he realized that it described his father's work and therefore his family life, and decided he was a Marxist. That remained the case, and although not a 'joiner', his quest for a better understanding over the years brought him through Stalinism, Maoism and Trotskyism to Council Communism. Ken would occasionally mention that his pursuit of uncomfortable truths had led to him being under police surveillance in two countries and deported from one.

In career terms, he taught (in sequential order) in Nigeria, England, Nigeria again, the USA, England again, Jamaica and, as Professor of Political Science, at the ISS from 1969 until early retirement in 1990. His research was in and

on Nigeria (three books), the West African countries in general (one book), Jamaica (two books), Viet Nam (a five-volume study) and the Philippines (one book, unpublished). His last five books were on Marxist theory and the history of the international Communist movement.

In addition to the trips he made for his research and teaching, Professor Post went on missions of various kinds to many countries throughout the world: Algeria, Zambia, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Burma, Cambodia (where he was one of the first westerners to visit after Pol Pot was driven out), North Korea (where he discussed Marxist theory with Party experts for six weeks), Thailand, Ecuador, Guyana, Panama and Venezuela.

In retirement Professor Post published one novel and worked on several others, including an “alternative history” of Europe in which industrial capitalism never developed, leaving China (still ruled by emperors) as the leading world power.

Ken is part of ISS history. We will miss him. Our thoughts are with his friends, especially his long-term companion, Désirée Stahlecker.