

Morton A. Kaplan in Memoriam

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Morton A. Kaplan, Past President of PWPA International and Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus at the University of Chicago, passed away September 27, 2017. He was 96.



Morton A. Kaplan presiding at the Liberal Democratic Societies conference in London, 1989

Kaplan, a WWII veteran, became famous in the field of international relations with the publication of his 1957 book *System and Process in International Politics*. Committed to the creation of a peaceful and stable international order, Kaplan sought ways to develop good relations and trust in the international system of states. His views were often critical of political realists who only promoted strategic self-interest and the unbridled wielding of power. He was a wide-ranging scholar integrating concepts from philosophy, linguistics, systems theory, and physics. Kaplan's most recent book *Transcending Postmodernism*, co-authored with Inanna Hamati-Ataya, was published in 2014.

Kaplan was fervently devoted to Professors World Peace Academy and organized three groundbreaking international conferences related to world social systems. All these conferences were organized into about 12 committees with 90 expert scholars presenting papers. PWPA leaders from about 90 countries around the world participated and learned about different systems of governance and how they might advise their own countries. Several volumes of books were produced from each of

these conferences.

The first was "[The Fall of the Soviet Empire.](#)" held in Geneva, Switzerland in August 1985, six years before the system collapsed. For this conference, he selected Professor Alexander Shtromas, a former communist legal scholar trained at the University of Moscow, and emigrated to England in 1972. One member of the CIA who had attended privately, later said he believed that this conference not only accurately predicted the collapse of the system but helped outline ways that the collapse and transition to a new system could be peaceful.

The second was "[China in a New Era.](#)" held in Manila, the Philippines, in August 1987. For this conference, he worked with Professor Ilpyong Kim, an Asian Studies scholar trained at Columbia University. This conference showed how China, under the leadership of Deng Xiao Ping, while keeping the Communist Party in control, abandoned central economic planning in favor of a better understanding of "the forces of production" and markets.

The third was on the future of [Liberal Democratic Societies](#) in a post-communist world. This was held in London, England in August 1989. Kaplan chose Professor Edward Shils professor at Cambridge University and head of the Institute for Social Thought at the University of Chicago to help him organize this meeting.

Kaplan was also a senior advisor to [International Journal on World Peace](#), a chairman of the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, and Editor and Chief of the *World and I*, a large (hundreds of pages) colorful monthly magazine published by the Washington Times. He also served several years on the University of Bridgeport Board of Trustees, promoting the education of students as world citizens.