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T. H. Rigby Remembered

SHEILA FITZPATRICK

T. H. (Harry) Rigby (1925–2011) was the Sovietologist that everybody liked, regardless of political, national, or any other kind of dividing lines. It was easy to see why: he was such a benign person, friendly and unassuming, with a sly sense of humor, nonpolemical but willing to argue, generous in sharing his remarkable knowledge of Soviet politics. Everybody knew him, too, despite the fact that for most of his career he was based in Canberra, far away from the main centers of Soviet studies. An Australian with a gift for languages and a love of empirical research, he was a political scientist in the British tradition rather than the American. The words he wrote of his mentor, Leonard Schapiro, could equally be applied to himself: he remarks how English Schapiro was (despite not being English by birth), with his “suspicion of vague abstractions, ... distrust of panaceas, ... respect for hard facts, common sense and practical judgement” and rooted attachment to “tolerance, fairness and diversity.”¹ Rigby’s scholarly work was so universally approved that one might have expected it to be bland and middle-of-the-road, but not at all: in his own quiet and reasonable way, he was a trailblazer.

Harry Rigby was born in Coburg, a working-class suburb of Melbourne, and educated in state schools, where his bent was toward languages. He worked briefly as a clerk in the Australian Taxation Department before being called up into the Australian Army. Serving in New Guinea and Morotai, he was a “base wallah,” assigned to clerical rather than combat duty, but consoled himself with the thought that it would probably be more interesting than the Taxation Department. Sympathetic to socialism and the Soviet Union on the basis of Soviet wartime achievements and his reading of Hewlett

¹ T. H. Rigby, “Leonard Schapiro as Student of Soviet Politics,” in *Authority, Power, and Policy in the USSR: Essays Dedicated to Leonard Schapiro*, ed. Rigby, Archie Brown, and Peter Reddaway (London: Macmillan, 1980), 3. I have also drawn on Harry’s unpublished memoirs, written primarily for his family, and supplied to me by his niece, Carolyn Rasmussen, and daughter, Kate Rigby.

Johnson's *The Socialist Sixth of the World*, Rigby was one of many young Australian soldiers who briefly joined the Australian Communist Party before deciding its dogmatic tone was uncongenial and dropping out.² The low-key approach was typical of Harry—no breast-beating about Gods That Failed; no cutting-off of communist friends like the Australian political scientist and Soviet expert Lloyd Churchward; just a prudent silence about one aspect of his biography for the duration of the Cold War. Typical also (of Harry, not the Cold War) was the fact that it never caused him any real trouble. British Intelligence and the Central Intelligence Agency seemed not to care; Australia's Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) cared only marginally, and the Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB) was perhaps not even informed about it by the Australian Communist Party, which after Harry's letter of resignation to the Coburg branch in 1947 seems to have forgotten all about him.

A beneficiary of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (the Australian equivalent of the GI Bill), Rigby went to the University of Melbourne after the war, studying Russian with Nina Christesen and Politics with W. Macmahon Ball. As a political science student, he found both Marx and Max Weber appealing, although the Weberian influence was probably the deeper.³ Equally important as an event of the postwar years was Harry's marriage in 1947 to Norma, a Coburg schoolmate who shared not only Harry's background but also his unusual ability to appreciate and adapt to all sorts of strange milieux, from Oxford to Moscow; for the next 64 years, they were to be inseparable. Their son Richard was born in 1948.

In Harry's time—and in mine, too, a couple of decades later—what you did after taking a good Melbourne degree was to go overseas, preferably to Oxford or Cambridge. Harry went to London, a more sensible choice, and immediately met everyone in the then very small world of Soviet studies, which accommodated both the academic and intelligence communities of specialists. George Bolsover, director of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, was a man with a foot in both camps; in my time, 20 years later, he seemed like a sworn enemy of all types of intellectual activity, but Harry's memoir shows him in a slightly different light. To be sure, he was skeptical of Harry's enthusiasm for Weber ("In this country, Rigby, we're more interested in what goes on in the interstices"), but he did Harry and Soviet studies both a great service by sending him off to Violet Connolly at

² He gives an account of this in T. H. Rigby, *The Changing Soviet System: Mono-Organisational Socialism from Its Origins to Gorbachev's Restructuring* (Aldershot, UK: Edward Elgar, 1990), 2, and in his unpublished memoirs.

³ Rigby, *Changing Soviet System*, 2.

the Foreign Office Research Department for regional newspapers and down to Oxford to learn about obkoms from Ted Orchard, recently back from a stint in the British Embassy in Moscow. Through Orchard (whose library later became the nucleus of the St. Antony's College Soviet collection), Harry was commissioned by a man from the British intelligence agency MI6 to write up the data he was collecting for his dissertation on party leadership in the Soviet republics, which provided a useful supplement to his stipend.

Harry's political views had clearly shifted since the early postwar years, perhaps under the influence of these new London contacts. His thesis adviser at the London School of Economics (LSE), William Robson, was a Fabian socialist whom Harry found credulous about the Soviet Union, and whose comment on Harry's first draft chapter was that it smacked of Cold War propaganda. But, of course, Harry being Harry, their relations remained perfectly cordial. In 1954, the thesis on "The Selection of Leading Personnel in the Soviet State and Communist Party" was duly defended, with E. H. Carr one of the external examiners. This had worried Harry a little in prospect, as he thought Carr might share Robson's reactions, but in fact Carr found it interesting and instructive and therefore approved it. Everyone found Harry's thesis interesting, as well they might: it was an in-depth study of personnel selection, grist for the intelligence mills, and at the same time gave the academics a new insight into how party and state functioned in practice as well as in principle. When Harry made his first visit to Washington in 1954, on his way back to an appointment as senior lecturer in Russian at Canberra University College, he found "fellow spirits" in the State Department's Soviet research group, "both 'official' and academic," who already knew of his work; with his agreement, they made 300 copies of the thesis for distribution to U.S. government agencies.

Australians at this point knew little about the Soviet Union and cared less, but that changed in 1956 with the defection of a Soviet diplomat, Vladimir Petrov, and his wife, with attendant allegations and revelations about Soviet espionage generating a scandal with major and lasting impact on Australian politics. Harry himself was not called in as a consultant to ASIO over the Petrov case, perhaps because of the past Communist Party membership. But a friend of his from London days, Leonard Schapiro, was flown out to Australia on a hush-hush mission to help debrief Petrov. Schapiro, recently appointed to a lectureship in Soviet politics at the LSE, was embarking on a research project with generous U.S. funding that in due course produced his book *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, and he invited Harry to come back to London for a year to work as his research assistant on the project.⁴ Harry

⁴ Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1960).

accepted, taking unpaid leave from his Canberra job, and was thus back in a good vantage point for observation of the Soviet Union just in time for the exciting events of 1956. By another stroke of good luck, his old friend Ted Orchard, now head of the “Russian Secretariat” of the British Embassy in Moscow, invited Harry to join as its main internal politics man. The Russian Secretariat, a brain child of George Bolsover, had been set up in the 1940s for the dual purpose of giving young British scholars field experience and increasing the embassy’s reporting (intelligence) capacity. For the British, apparently, Rigby was enough of a known quantity for the party membership episode to be disregarded. He accepted with alacrity and in his Moscow posting as second secretary (1957–58) acquired invaluable experience of Soviet life on the ground to supplement the knowledge culled from close study of regional newspapers, party handbooks, and other written sources. As in every other context, he made friends, using his excellent Russian to talk to everyone he came across. The KGB, which had taken a very poor view of many of his predecessors in the Russian Secretariat, undoubtedly kept an eye on him but seems not to have singled him out for special attention. Perhaps his KGB watchers liked him, too.

Rigby returned to Australia in 1959, remaining for a few years as senior lecturer in Russian at Canberra College before shifting to a position more suitable to his expertise, professorial fellow (later professor) in the Political Science Department of the Research School of Social Sciences in the Australian National University (ANU). He quickly established a position as Australia’s authority on the Soviet Union, sought after by the media as a commentator. With his patterns of life and work more firmly set after the formative and less predictable early years, the important developments in his and Norma’s lives were the birth of their daughter Catherine in 1960 and their reception into the Anglican church,⁵ a break with the atheism of Rigby’s youth which occurred sometime after his sojourn in the Soviet Union. Professionally, Rigby’s significant Australian interlocutors included his ANU colleagues Robert F. Miller and Eugene Kamenka and the Hungarian refugee philosophers Ferenc Fehér and Agnes Heller. Fehér and Heller produced an important analysis of the Soviet system, *Dictatorship over Needs*, during their stay in Australia (1977–86).⁶ Rigby and Fehér collaborated on a conference and subsequently

⁵ For insight into Rigby’s religious belief, see his address “Christ and Truth,” delivered at the ANU in 1965, <http://zmkc.blogspot.com.au/2011/04/professor-emeritus-t-h-harry-rigby.html> (accessed 3 October 2012).

⁶ Ferenc Fehér, Agnes Heller, and György Márkus, *Dictatorship over Needs: An Analysis of Soviet Societies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

a volume on political legitimation.⁷ Rigby's students at the ANU included the political scientist Stephen Fortescue, now at the University of New South Wales and editor of Rigby's *Festschrift*,⁸ and, at an early stage of her career, the literary scholar Katerina Clark, who wrote her MA thesis on "Public Values in Post-Stalin Literature: Attitudes towards Authority, Human Welfare, Political Repression, Truth, and Justice in Soviet Fiction Published between 1953 and 1957" under Rigby's direction. He remained at the ANU—with periodic trips to Britain, Europe, the Soviet Union, and the United States—until 1994, having continued as a research fellow for several years after his mandatory retirement from the professorship at 65.

The corpus of Rigby's major publications—mainly in the form of articles attentively read by the field at the time, a number of which have remained classic—spans the period from the late 1960s to 1990.⁹ The 1954 dissertation and all the detailed detective work on party membership and recruitment that went into it laid the foundation for many of his later publications, starting with *Communist Party Membership in 1968* and continuing throughout his work on political elites, culminating in the 1990 volume *Political Elites in the USSR* (which includes a condensation of two remarkably fresh chapters from his dissertation).¹⁰ His student Stephen Fortescue recalls "his deep knowledge of and fascination with who knew whom, who came from where, who signed an obituary, and, very importantly, who worked and had worked where. His office was full of card files of biographies; he had all the handbooks—the Soviet volumes of biographies of Central Committee members, the CIA handbooks, etc; he had research assistants ... combing newspapers for personnel details."¹¹ But this was not just mindless fact-grubbing. The characteristics of the Bolshevik Party of the early Soviet period revealed in Rigby's analysis—predominantly young, male, lower-class, and Russian—

⁷ T. H. Rigby and Ferenc Fehér, eds., *Political Legitimation in Communist States* (London: Macmillan, 1982).

⁸ Stephen Fortescue, ed., *Russian Politics from Lenin to Putin* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), with contributions from Fortescue, Sheila Fitzpatrick, Graeme Gill, Leslie Holmes, Archie Brown, Peter Reddaway, and Eugene Huskey.

⁹ Rigby's two monographs are *Communist Party Membership in the U.S.S.R., 1917–1967* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968) and *Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom 1917–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). *Political Elites in the USSR: Central Leaders and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev* (Aldershot, UK: Edward Elgar, 1990) and *The Changing Soviet System* (1990) are collections of thematically linked articles, most of which had previously appeared in journals.

¹⁰ See Rigby, *Political Elites in the USSR*, chap. 5: "The Nomenklatura and Patronage under Stalin."

¹¹ Stephen Fortescue, "T. H. Rigby on Soviet and Post-Soviet Russian Politics," in his *Russian Politics from Lenin to Putin*, 14.

were of great analytical interest, as were the lines of potential conflict arising out of them that he discerned.¹²

One of the first things Rigby learned from his data was the importance of patronage in the Soviet political system, a theme that he had first developed in his dissertation and pioneered for Soviet studies in his classic articles of the early 1980s, “Early Provincial Cliques and the Rise of Stalin” and “Was Stalin a Disloyal Patron?”¹³ In “Early Provincial Cliques,” Rigby, moving beyond the accepted picture that Stalin, through his control of the Central Committee Secretariat, had built up a network of “his” men to defeat Trotskii and later Zinov’ev, pointed out that clientelist relationships, which emerged spontaneously from the very earliest days in power, were a part of the Party’s *modus operandi*, Stalin being not their inventor but their beneficiary.¹⁴ In his thinking about informal relationships in Soviet society, Rigby was influenced by the new work of economists like Gregory Grossman on the Soviet “second economy,” which focused attention on phenomena like *sviazi* and *protektsiia* that were long familiar to Rigby, if not to the normal run of political scientists. Rigby postulated a “second polity” centered on clientelist relationships that existed alongside the formal political structures.¹⁵ Among political scientists, Rigby was perhaps the first to think in these terms, and certainly the first with the detailed knowledge of the Party’s *modus operandi* to drive his points home. “Was Stalin a Disloyal Patron?” shows Rigby puncturing some received truths with remorseless data-backed logic and a hint of mischief that seems like a gentler version of the iconoclasm of his British contemporary, the economist *enfant terrible* Peter Wiles. To be sure, as Rigby concludes his analysis of the fate of upper-echelon Communists in the Great Purges, it was dangerous to be a member of Stalin’s circle of close associates—but not nearly as dangerous as being a member of the wider party elite who was *not* an intimate.¹⁶ Indeed, he suggests, it could scarcely have been otherwise: Stalin operated ruthlessly, like a “Mafia boss,” but every Mafia boss knows that his henchmen “will need reasonable expectations of his continued favor and protection, or they may decide that the dangers of betraying him are less than the dangers of continued loyal service.”¹⁷

¹² See “The Soviet Political Elite under Lenin,” in Rigby, *Political Elites*, 12–42 (first published *British Journal of Political Science* 1 [1971]).

¹³ “Early Provincial Cliques and the Rise of Stalin,” *Soviet Studies* 33, 1 (1981): 3–28; “Was Stalin a Disloyal Patron?” *Soviet Studies* 38, 3 (1986): 311–24. Both articles are reprinted as chaps. 3 and 6 of Rigby, *Political Elites*, 43–72 and 127–46.

¹⁴ Rigby, *Political Elites*, 69.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 43.

In the heated Sovietological debates of the 1970s, Rigby was a participant who staked out his own middle ground, not polemically but with his characteristic gentle authority.¹⁸ Never enamored of the concept of totalitarianism, and one of those invited by Robert C. Tucker to challenge it in the 1975 Stalinism conference at Bellagio, he was not an advocate of discarding the totalitarian model entirely.¹⁹ Still, a note of weariness entered his prose when he had to write on the subject, for, as he put it in a 1972 article, the word totalitarianism “has acquired such conflicting and misleading connotations and become embedded in such dubious social attitudes that its use tends to obscure rather than to communicate the reality behind it.”²⁰ More sharply, he noted a few pages later of Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski’s famous *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* that, despite the fact that the “authors illustrate their arguments largely from Soviet experience, one scarcely recognizes the actuality of the USSR” in their work.²¹ For Rigby, a man with almost two years on the ground in the Soviet Union, the reality test was always crucial. His own observation had not led him to the conclusion that Soviet society was atomized or that the Soviet regime ruled purely on the basis of coercion (a proposition he would in any case probably have rejected as implausible).²² Max Weber influenced his thinking about political legitimacy and the various ways in which it is acquired. He and Fehér published a whole volume on it together;²³ and as Fortescue notes, he was always “critical of Western scholars who were reluctant to grant communist regimes any legitimacy.”²⁴

Though often skeptical in his response to theorizing, Rigby was not such a “methodological conservative” as his mentor, Leonard Schapiro, nor as wholly dismissive of contemporary social science.²⁵ While he was generally lukewarm about the attempts of Sovietologists like Frederic Fleron and Jerry Hough to get Soviet studies into the mainstream of American political

¹⁸ I owe this apt phrase to Carolyn Rasmussen.

¹⁹ The conference volume was published as Robert C. Tucker, ed., *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977). Rigby’s contribution (53–76) is “Stalinism and the Mono-Organizational Society.”

²⁰ T. H. Rigby, “‘Totalitarianism’ and Change in Communist Societies,” in Rigby, *The Changing Soviet System*. The article was originally published in *Comparative Politics* 4, 3 (1972): 433–53.

²¹ *Changing Soviet System*, 131. The reference is to Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956, 2nd ed. 1965).

²² See Fortescue, *Russian Politics*, 7.

²³ Rigby and Fehér, *Political Legitimation in Communist States*.

²⁴ Fortescue, *Russian Politics*, 2–3.

²⁵ Rigby’s characterization of Schapiro in *Authority, Power, and Policy in the USSR*, 2.

science,²⁶ he was nevertheless a contributor to a 1969 volume, *Communist Studies and the Social Sciences*, that exemplified this effort.²⁷ Rigby came up with two main conceptualizations of the Soviet system. The first was “cryptopolitics,”²⁸ his coinage of the mid-1960s to describe what he had earlier described as a “second polity,” by analogy with the “second economy.” “That the Soviet power system lacks a ‘market’ dimension expressed through a public competitive political process does not mean that it is free of competition for and conflict over its uses,” he wrote. “Politics there is, but for the most part concealed from public view, and pursued within and between the various offices and departments of party and government.”²⁹ The second concept, proposed by Rigby in the mid-1970s, was that the Soviet Union was a “mono-organisational society.”³⁰ By that he meant one in which “nearly all social activities are run by hierarchies of appointed officials under the direction of a single overall command,” and in which coordination is achieved not by market mechanisms but “*organizationally*” (Rigby’s emphasis) via the bureaucratic command structure.³¹ One of the advantages of the concept—at a time when political scientists were still struggling with the implications of a Soviet system without Stalin—was that, unlike the totalitarian model, it provided a way of understanding the Soviet system that could accommodate a Stalin but did not require one.

Given his attachment to the “mono-organizational” concept, it is not surprising that Rigby was somewhat uneasy with the notion of bureaucratic interest groups that scholars like Gordon Skilling were already applying to Soviet politics. Part of this uneasiness arose from his study of political patronage

²⁶ Ibid., 2, 23.

²⁷ Frederic Fleron, ed., *Communist Studies and the Social Sciences: Essays in Methodology and Empirical Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969). Rigby’s contribution, “Cryptopolitics” (116–28), is one of six methodological lead articles, the others being by H. Gordon Skilling, Robert Tucker, Paul Shoup, D. Richard Little, and Erik Hoffmann.

²⁸ This term was introduced by Rigby in the article “Cryptopolitics” (it acquired the hyphen later), first published in the British journal *Survey* (January 1964) and reprinted (with the addition of the hyphen) in *Communist Studies* (1969).

²⁹ T. H. Rigby, “A Conceptual Approach to Authority, Power, and Policy in the Soviet Union,” in *Authority, Power, and Policy*, 9–31.

³⁰ See T. H. Rigby, “Politics in the Mono-Organisational Society,” in *Authoritarian Politics in Communist Europe*, ed. A. C. Janos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); and Rigby, “Stalin and the Mono-Organizational Society,” (1977).

³¹ Rigby, “Stalinism and the Mono-Organizational Society,” 53. Hough first used the term “institutional pluralism” in his article “The Soviet System: Petrification or Pluralism,” *Problems of Communism* 21, 2 (1972): 25–45, and elaborated the concept in his “The Bureaucratic Model and the Nature of the Soviet System,” *Journal of Comparative Administration* 2 (August 1973): 134–67. Both articles are reprinted in Jerry F. Hough, *The Soviet Union and Social Science Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977).

networks, which led him to conclude that significant bureaucratic groupings were usually based on personal connections, not institutional affiliation.³² Another factor, no doubt, was his commitment to the “mono” component of his “mono-organizational society,” which tended to be undermined by too much emphasis on bureaucratic pluralism. Finally, Fortescue is surely right in noting that in Rigby’s private and public discussion of pluralism, there was an underlying “nervousness that pluralism would spill over into unjustifiable claims of a process of democratization,” adding the acute observation that Rigby, unusually for a political scientist, was not really interested in policy and did not do the kind of detailed analysis of specific policy issues that both underpinned and served to confirm, for example, Jerry Hough’s theoretical formulations on “institutional pluralism,” which treated bureaucracies as a particular type of interest group and emphasized their competition as part of the dynamics of Soviet politics.³³

Rigby’s initial formulations on this issue actually preceded Hough’s entry into the public discussion of interest groups and were not directed at him.³⁴ While Rigby was uneasy about some of Hough’s ideas, notably on political participation and the comparative approach,³⁵ he regarded his entry into the debate with “Petrification or Pluralism” (1972) as a major event,³⁶ and even accepted (with reservations) his concept of “institutional pluralism.”³⁷ The heat generated by the term “revisionist”—applied to Hough but rarely if ever to Rigby—tends to obscure the fact that the two of them had something very important in common: more than anyone else in the field, they were

³² Rigby, “Crypto-Politics,” 124.

³³ Fortescue, “T. H. Rigby,” 15–16.

³⁴ In “Crypto-Politics” (121), Rigby rather oddly ascribes what he calls the “noisome red herring” of the idea that Soviet politics accommodated or was driven by conflict between “various political or social ‘forces’” to Herman Achminow’s *Die Macht im Hintergrund* (Ulm: Spaten-Verlag, 1950) and Roger Pethybridge’s *A Key to Soviet Politics: The Crisis of the Anti-Party Group* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962), neither of which had much influence in the North American debate. He did not update his 1964 text to include important contributions by Skilling (“Interest Groups and Communist Politics,” in *Communist Studies*, 281–97, first published in *World Politics* [1966]) and Joel J. Schwartz and William R. Keech (“Group Influence and the Policy Process in the Soviet Union,” in *Communist Studies*, 298–317, first published in *American Political Science Review* [1968]), although both were reprinted in the Fleron volume. For a later critique of the volume edited by H. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn Griffith, *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), see Rigby’s “‘Totalitarianism’ and Change in Communist Systems,” 135–40.

³⁵ See T. H. Rigby, “Hough on Political Participation in the Soviet Union,” *Soviet Studies* 28, 2 (1976): 257–61.

³⁶ See Fortescue, “T. H. Rigby,” 18–19.

³⁷ Rigby, “Conceptual Approach,” 25.

passionate data collectors, connoisseurs of obscure party handbooks and regional newspapers.³⁸

Although Rigby's academic field was politics, much of his work was historical, beginning with his early study of party recruitment under Lenin. In the 1970s, he returned to the Lenin period, focusing this time not on the Party but on Lenin's role in government as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom).³⁹

One can hear echoes of contemporary revisionist concerns, notably in Rigby's firm rejection of the notion that the genesis of Soviet one-party dictatorship can be understood just by reading Lenin's 1902 pamphlet *What Is to Be Done?*⁴⁰ There is a hint of the "had Lenin lived" theme, à la Moshe Lewin, in his emphasis on Lenin's objections to Sovnarkom's increasing subordination to the Politburo as the supreme policy-making body, already evident in 1922, and his "vain efforts to reverse the process."⁴¹ Yet Rigby avoids making discontinuity between the Lenin and Stalin periods a programmatic point, as some were doing at the time, noting merely that Sovnarkom was run over by the "new bureaucratic juggernauts which had been created to support the new absolutism: the party apparatus and the Vecheka," without taking a strong position on the then much-discussed issue of contingency or *zakonomernost*.⁴² Perhaps because of this, *Lenin's Government*, though respectfully received, did not constitute a major intervention in either the historical or political-science debates of the time. In retrospect, however, one is struck by Rigby's bold claim for something that resembles embryonic Weberian bureaucracy in Lenin's Sovnarkom: after only a few months in operation, Rigby states, Sovnarkom was already exceeding the contemporary British cabinet in operational rationality: "the machinery and procedures elaborated by Sovnarkom by the end of the Civil War were to be matched by the British Cabinet only during and after the Second World War."⁴³ Reread in the 2000s, Rigby's work from the 1970s looks very much like a precursor to some of Yoram Gorlizki's recent writing on Soviet government, including

³⁸ See his comment in a critique of Skilling and Griffith's *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics* that "Jerry F. Hough's contribution on the party apparatchiki is outstanding both in the richness of its data and rigor and sophistication of its analysis" (*Changing Soviet System*, 137).

³⁹ Rigby, *Lenin's Government*.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, x.

⁴¹ Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Random House, 1968). Quotation from Rigby, *Lenin's Government*, xi.

⁴² Stephen F. Cohen, for example, emphasized such a discontinuity in his paper on "Bolshevism and Stalinism" at the Bellagio conference, published in Tucker, *Stalinism*. Quotation from Rigby, *Lenin's Government*, 238.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 224.

the influential study of party and government in the postwar period he co-authored with Oleg Khlevniuk.⁴⁴

As for my own contacts with Harry Rigby, I don't think I met him before I left Australia in 1964 to do a Ph.D. at Oxford, though of course I knew of him, but I did encounter him at St. Antony's College a few years later, he being a guest at High Table and I a student. He must already have been researching his *Lenin* book, as he was interested in any traces of Malyi Sovnarkom, the operational bureau of the larger Sovnarkom I had come across in the archives of the People's Commissariat of Education (Narkompros) in the early 1920s while I was in Moscow. A few years later, we were together at the Bellagio conference that produced the *Stalinism* volume. It was not a happy experience for me because of my conflict with Tucker and Stephen Cohen, and I scarcely remember Harry's participation, though he was surely a voice of moderation and conciliation.⁴⁵ We first became friends when my then husband Jerry Hough and I spent a summer at the Australian National University in Canberra in 1979; my copy of Rigby's just-published *Lenin's Government*, inscribed to "Jerry and Sheila," is a memento of this visit. In the ongoing debates about revisionism and the totalitarian model, Jerry and I had adopted a much sharper polemical tone than came naturally to Harry, and we also had a tendency to push our challenges to conventional wisdom as far as they could go, which in Harry's terms was always a bit too far. We were somewhat bruised by the "revisionist" controversy that was raging at the time, expecting opposition and hostility at every turn, and I remember with what gratitude, and perhaps surprise, we responded to the warm sympathy and encouragement that Harry and Norma offered. This was a time in my life when I tended to suppress my Australian origins, particularly (for self-protection in the Cold War) my left-wing father, but it was a relief not having to do this with the Rigbys, who, being Australian, knew all about my father. It was on this visit, I think, that Harry mentioned his own wartime Communist Party membership, which took me totally aback, as I had thought of him up to then as part of the British academic/intelligence scholarly Establishment,

⁴⁴ Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace: Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1–6, 52–58, and *passim*. The contrast between the rational-bureaucratic processes on the government side and the "patrimonial" mores on the party side is further explored in Yoram Gorlizki, "Ordinary Stalinism: The Council of Ministers and the Soviet Neo-Patrimonial State, 1945–1953," *Journal of Modern History* 74, 4 (2002): 699–736.

⁴⁵ This led to my withdrawing my paper from the volume (Tucker, *Stalinism*) and publishing it separately in *Slavic Review*, and subsequently (as "Cultural Orthodoxies under Stalin") in Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

an anticommunist liberal like Leonard Schapiro with no blots on his past. In the 1990s, when I started to visit Australia regularly, our friendship became closer—and different, too, because with a new husband (Michael Danos) in the equation, closer to the Rigbys' age and quickly making friends with them, the generational gap became less significant. Perhaps this applied more to me than to Harry, however: the references in his memoirs to me, and particularly to our mutual friend Katerina Clark (daughter of the Rigbys' friend Manning Clark, and “now herself a distinguished professor at Yale,” as he writes several times in the memoirs), have a pleasing note of avuncular pride.

I have to add one footnote to my personal story of Harry. It comes from the VOKS archives in Moscow, VOKS being the Soviet society that dealt with foreign cultural relations. Working through these files, I encountered first one and then another letter from young Australian researchers asking for materials on their topic. The first, dated 6 June 1950 and handwritten in Russian, was from T. H. Rigby, of 48 Urquhart Street, Coburg, MA student at the University of Melbourne, who wanted Soviet publications on Southeast Asia and offered to send books in return.⁴⁶ The second, dated 19 March 1961, typed and written in English, was from Sheila Fitzpatrick, a fourth-year undergraduate at the University of Melbourne writing an honors paper on Soviet music, who made no reciprocal offer but asked that the materials be sent by airmail, since her paper was due quite soon.⁴⁷ Rigby's letter was short and all business; mine was longer, in an attempt to establish expertise, and included a nod, ingratiating but also tongue-in-cheek, to the importance of “better understanding between our peoples.” It was a shock to find these two documents suddenly popping up in an ordinary day of archival research, but satisfying too, by putting Harry and me on a continuum of the same long trek from Melbourne into Soviet studies. Reading the two letters, I liked Harry's better. It was interesting that he didn't try to ingratiate himself with VOKS, even though at that point in his life, he—unlike me—could probably have invoked “understanding between our peoples” without tongue in cheek.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Harry's family: Norma Rigby, Richard Rigby, Kate Rigby, and Carolyn Rasmussen. Richard, Carolyn, and Kate were kind enough to read and comment on a draft; Norma provided

⁴⁶ Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. 5283, op. 15, d. 467, ll. 6–7. A handwritten notation on the letter dated 20 June says “Select materials and send them.”

⁴⁷ GARF f. 5424, op. 30, d. 2, ll. 147, 198. Miss Maslova of SSOP (Soiuz sovetskikh obshchestv druzhy i kul'turnykh sviazei s zagranichnymi stranami), the successor organization to the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS), replied with a letter in English which promised books, disarmingly (because of her apparent sincerity) concluding, “I do share your opinion that the more we know each other the better we understand each other.”

inspiration through our friendship over the years. They, of course, bear no responsibility for any remaining mistakes of fact or interpretation.

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