

OBITUARY

THOMAS J. BLAKELEY (1931–1989)

It is with great regret that I am writing to inform our readers of the death, on September 22, 1989 in Boston, of Thomas J. Blakeley. “Tom”, as he was known to virtually all his associates and friends, was the guiding light of *SST* throughout the so far nearly thirty years of its existence. As if that were not enough, he took upon himself the arduous task of promoting and editing the present fifty-two volumes of *Sovietica*. In this way, he ensured his legacy in the academic world, but also in the context of East-West relations, more recently in the age of *glasnost* and *perestrojka*, as the most constant exponent of philosophical Sovietology. Let me briefly recall some stages in the career of this dedicated man.

He came to Fribourg, Switzerland, in the mid-fifties to study philosophy. As his interests shifted to contemporary thought he soon became a central figure in the circle of students and scholars who together formed the first generation of competent philosophical Sovietologists. In this connection, he was actively involved in the foundation of the Institute of East European Studies in 1957 where soon thereafter the initial volumes of *SST* and *Sovietica* appeared. Upon leaving Fribourg in 1964 he travelled first to Africa and then settled in Boston where he was appointed Professor of Philosophy at Boston College. He participated there in the establishment of the interdisciplinary Center for Soviet and East European Studies, and became well-known for his active encouragement of research on the many aspects of the complex and extensive tradition of Marxist doctrine. It is in this last respect that he was successful in attracting a diversified and ever wider audience for *SST*. At the end of his life Professor Blakeley was instrumental in persuading Chinese philosophers concerned with Soviet thought to enter into contact with their Western counterparts, and even managed to solicit some contributions from them for the journal.

Professor Blakeley’s own publications in this area have become standard “references” since they provide fundamental information within a systematic analytic exposition that enables criticism “from within” in the best philosophical sense. Especially important in this respect are his books, *Soviet Scholasticism* and *Soviet Theory of Knowledge*. There is no scholar in the area who is

not indebted to Prof. Blakeley for his untiring, systematic preparation of the Bibliography of Soviet Philosophy, which has been a regular feature of *SST* since its inception. To appreciate the significance of this undertaking, our readers need only to be reminded that no comparable Bibliography exists in the Soviet Union.

Today, as the Soviet Union is perhaps entering into a new phase, we can well anticipate changes in the content and style of Soviet philosophizing. Professor Blakeley's expertise and perspective will be sorely missed in the attempt to assess these developments

Fribourg, Switzerland

JOSEPH M. BOCHEŃSKI

IN MEMORIAM

THOMAS J. BLAKELEY

With great sorrow we have learned that Professor Thomas Blakeley has passed away.

Professor Blakeley has edited our journal *Studies in Soviet Thought* and our book series *Sovietica* since 1959 and has contributed greatly to the present prestige of these publications. We will remember him as a very pleasant person and a good friend to whom we owe much gratitude.

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