

## **PROFESSOR SHEILA MARY FITZPATRICK FAHA FAAAS (USA)**

Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*

Professor Sheila Fitzpatrick is her generation's leading English-language historian of the Soviet Union. Her work has transformed the study of Soviet history, in particular scholarship on the Russian revolution and the Stalin years. She brought the rigor of historical training received at the University of Melbourne to a field which was dominated by political scientists and "Kremlin watchers" with little or no historical training. Professor Fitzpatrick was among the first non-Soviet historians who gained access to Soviet archives already in the 1960s, a feat many thought impossible at the time. Her work spanned social and cultural as well as political history of Stalinism. Her focus on understanding the practice of everyday life of both ordinary and elite members of Soviet society has revolutionised the way we understand the Stalin years. More recently, Professor Fitzpatrick has made a distinguished contribution to the history of migration from the Soviet world to Australia.

After leaving Melbourne for doctoral training in 1964, she worked in Moscow archives in 1966 on a study of the Commissariat of Enlightenment for which she was awarded a doctorate from St. Anthony's College, Oxford, in 1969. After temporary positions at the universities of Birmingham, Texas at Austin, New York, and Columbia, she was appointed Professor of History at the University of Texas at Austin in 1980, and Oliver H. Radkey Regents' Professor of History in 1987. In 1990 she moved to the University of Chicago, where she became Bernadotte E. Schmitt Distinguished Service Professor in Modern Russian History. In this position, she built the largest doctoral program in Soviet history in the English-speaking world. Her students went on to careers of their own at universities in the United States, Britain, Turkey, Japan, and Australia. Collectively, they are known as the "Chicago School of Soviet history" or simply the "Fitzpatrick School."

Professor Fitzpatrick moved back to Australia in 2012, where she took up positions at the University of Sydney and Australian Catholic University. She continues to research and write history and serve as a generous mentor to younger historians.

Professor Fitzpatrick's contributions to our understanding of Soviet history have been recognized by a Distinguished Achievement Award from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and an award from the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies. The American Historical Association, the peak body of historians in the United States, awarded her its highest accolade, the Award for Scholarly Distinction. Professor Fitzpatrick is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Australian Academy of the Humanities. She is Distinguished Service Professor Emerita at the University of Chicago.

Professor Fitzpatrick has a long-term affiliation with the University of Melbourne. She received her B.A. with Honours from this University in 1961 and worked as a tutor and a senior tutor in the History Department in 1962-1964. Later, she held Australian Research Council Discovery grants with University of Melbourne historians Stephen Wheatcroft and Mark Edele. In 2015, Melbourne University Press published her study *On Stalin's Team: The Years of Living Dangerously in Soviet Politics*, which won the Prime Minister's Award for non-fiction.