

Walter MacKenzie Pintner, 1931–2015

Born in 1931, the historian and specialist in Russian Imperial history Walter MacKenzie Pintner attended the Ethical Culture Fieldston School of New York City as a child (class of 1949), did his undergraduate work at the University of Chicago where he obtained a degree in the Liberal Arts with a strong emphasis on economics (1951), and went on to complete his PhD at Harvard University in Russian history (1962). His experiences at the rich intersection of government, academic, and military interests in Cambridge during the early Cold War were to influence the rest of his career in research and scholarship.

He worked for a time at the U. S. State Department in its intelligence division (1956–1958), and was among the earliest of American graduate student researchers to go to the Soviet Union on the Inter-University Committee for Travel Grants (later IREX) academic research exchange program (1959–1960). One the few to reside in Leningrad (as opposed to the one other city open to American scholars at the time, Moscow); he retained a special love for that city for the rest of his life. Following the completion of his PhD he went on to teach first at Princeton University and then at Cornell University, where he remained for the rest of his professional career. His curriculum vitae reveals the many awards and fellowships he received as well as his intensive service to the institutions of Russian studies and scholarship more broadly, such as ACLS, SSRC, NEH, Fulbright, IUCTG/IREX, and more.

His first book, *Russian Economic Policy under Nicholas I* (Cornell University Press, 1967), analyzed autocratic economic policy with a special focus on the professional activities of Nicholas' finance minister Count Egor Kankrin. While some reviewers criticized the book for failing to address the broader social, political and economic issues of the period under consideration, others expressed appreciation for Pintner's careful adherence to the implications of his sources. As reviewer John P. McKay put it in *The Business History Review*, "In contrast to Soviet orthodoxy, he [Pintner] believes the state was more lackadaisical than apprehensive about industrialism and attending social problems. Also Kankrin . . . felt the bureaucracy incapable of implementing any policy, reactionary, liberal, or whatever. The state was exhausted simply by existing. Considerations such as these are the mark of a judicious synthesis, as this work most certainly is."

In his second major contribution to the field, Pintner collaborated with quantitative historian of Russia and the Soviet Union Don Rowney in a significant act of professional community-building by organizing, editing and publishing the article collection *Russian Officialdom: The Bureaucratization of Russian Society from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (University of North Carolina Press, 1980). This collection represented the state of the field of history of the Russian imperial state (including two contributions on the Soviet state) with all its strengths and weaknesses. Still in print, it remains a major and classic contribution to the field. The two men worked together intensively to encourage and gather the fruits of foundational historical research in this area through three professional conferences as well as by editing the collection.

In the third concentration of his scholarly activity, Pintner published a series of seminal articles on the history of the Russian Imperial military, again bringing to his work a sympathetic understanding of those who have the difficulties of responsibility, power, and weakness combined in equal measure. His early and innovative contributions to the new military history from the Russian perspective were unfortunately

never gathered for publication in a single volume. These included: “Russia as a Great Power, 1709–1856: Reflections on the Problem of Relative Backwardness, with Special Reference to the Russian Army and Russian Society” (Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Occasional Paper #33); “Russia’s Military Style, Russian Society, and Russian Power in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Russia and the West in the Eighteenth Century* (1983); “The Burden of Defense in Imperial Russia, 1925–1914,” *Russian Review*, 43 (3): 231–59; “The Nobility and the Officer Corps in the Nineteenth Century” in *The Military and Society in Russia 1450–1917* (2002); and “Russian Military Thought: The Western Model and the Shadow of Suvorov” in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (1986).

Walter was a wonderful colleague, advisor and mentor. Many of his students at Cornell, both graduate and undergraduate, went on to contribute broadly and significantly to the field. These included such specialists as Robert Johnson, Alexander Martin, David Engermann, and Caryl Emerson. He supported and mentored many others at various levels of professional development as well with a particular appreciation of intellectual integrity and commitment and a generous understanding of the meandering ways of intellectual insight and development. He was especially alert to the promise and difficulties of women in academia, offering sound mentorship and vital professional support as the author of this memorial had occasion to experience.

His final years after retirement were spent in the beautiful mountaintop home in Fallbrook, California designed by his beloved wife Sara Pintner, where the two of them resided until his death on July 9, 2015. He is survived by his wife Sara, his children Anne Burch and Robert Pintner, and three grandchildren, all of Anchorage, Alaska. His first wife, Mary Mathews Miller, died in 1968. He is sorely missed by all of those who had the opportunity to experience his openness and honesty, his immense kindness, and his quiet, alert appreciation of the world around him.

BARBARA WALKER
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Svetlana Boym, 1959–2015

Svetlana Boym, Curt Hugo Reisinger Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University, died August 5, 2016 in Boston. She had been ill for almost a year, but only a few knew the full extent of her disease. Always oriented toward present and future projects, she wanted us to think of her as a young artist, not a fatally ill person. She had never failed to surprise, delight, and inspire her community with her brilliant formulations, oral and written, with her creative work, which was no less varied and prolific than her critical writing, and with her ability to get right to the heart of a problem, to be always original, without trying, and, like her guiding intellectual lights Walter Benjamin and Hannah Arendt, never confusing the aesthetic, the ethical, and the political, although she had a rare talent for bringing them into close proximity. Of the many surprises she offered us, her death was the only one that was not joyous, luminescent, and mind changing.

“I agree with all of the previous orators,” was a favorite phrase, delivered with a merry mock-Soviet solemnity, but she would inevitably go on to disagree, graciously and constructively, but firmly, whether in committee meetings or on conference panels or in dinner-table conversations. Born in Soviet Leningrad, she early on showed signs of this independence, once refusing to disassemble and clean an AK-47, a required part of her school program. Her curiosity and sense of adventure brought her to an early love of film, philosophy, art, and foreign languages. She studied Spanish