From the Editors

We launch this journal with a keen sense of hope and anticipation about the future of Russian and Eurasian studies and the role a rejuvenated Kritika can play within it. But as we look ahead, it is with appreciation for the many challenges the field currently faces as well as for its traditions and past achievements. The start of a new millennium is as good a time as any to think big thoughts and make bold plans. The past decade has witnessed appreciably more international and interdisciplinary cross-fertilization in the scholarship on Russia and the former Soviet Union, as well as some genuine advances in the dissemination of sources and ideas. But the field on both sides of the Atlantic still labors under the weight of parochialism of varieties both subtle and overt. Although our colleagues within Russia and the NIS obviously face very different academic conditions, we all confront practical, financial and organizational obstacles to the full flowering of internationalism and innovation. One of our field's great achievements - the outpouring of new research and documentary publications, especially within the former Soviet Union - has coincided with a situation in which it is increasingly difficult not only to follow, but even to know of the existence of particular works. While official constraints have fallen away, new, less formal obstacles to the flow of books and scholarly communication have arisen. If we were, then, to put all of Kritika's goals together into a single overriding aim, it would be to preserve and promote in Russian Studies the vehicles and virtues of intellectual exchange. We would do this across the many possible insularities of national particularism, hyperspecialization, fads, herd mentalities, close-minded disciplinarity, and, last but not least, garden-variety academic myopia.

The journal's trademark, and a primary means by which we attempt to put our rhetoric into practice, is the publication of lengthy, in-depth, analytical reviews. We will pay particular attention to works published in Russia, the former Soviet Union, Europe and elsewhere that are rarely if ever reviewed in North America. We plan to do innovative things with the form and content of our reviews: frequently, for example, we expect to juxtapose considerations of English-language works with works on similar themes written in other languages or scholarly traditions. Our reviews have a scholarly apparatus and, as significant works in their own right, undergo an intensive editorial process. The review is a frequently neglected art form; it embodies the kind of critical exchange Kritika hopes to foster. It involves, as we envisage it, some of the greatest challenges of the human sciences: interpretation, explanation, verification, contextualization, productive criticism and genuine appreciation. We have already found that dispensing with the constraints of the standard book review of circa 750 words can inspire scholars to produce work that is among their most creative and their most rigorous.

Kritika will, however, be more than a journal of reviews, despite their central importance to its mission. We will also regularly feature review essays and review articles that represent major statements on an entire body of literature; reaching out to a pool of contributors that will hopefully match the journal's cosmopolitan aspirations, we will publish research articles that meet the highest standards of scholarship and set new agendas for the field.

Volume one, number one of the new series, which you have in front of you, highlights some of the concerns that will be an ongoing part of the new Kritika. In periodic special issues, such as the present number on "Resistance to Authority in Russia and the Soviet Union," we plan to open up and explore major issues of approach and evidence in order to create and reconfigure
scholarly debate. It should be noted that several of the reviews here, and not only the six articles, amplify the examination of the issue's theme. In a section called "Reactions," we feature responses to our publications from figures outside as well as within the Russian field. As several articles and reviews in this inaugural issue also demonstrate, issues of historiography, methodology, and source criticism are close to the center of our concerns. Some of our other goals will be reflected more in upcoming issues, but they also have to do with breadth, depth, and bridging boundaries. Among them are a concern with comparatively-informed and international history, in order to transcend "national" blinders; an attempt to bring medieval, early modern, and long-term perspectives into the mainstream of our deliberations, as an antidote to chronological short-sightedness; and an effort to fruitfully bring together approaches and perspectives from various fields and subfields, in order to expand disciplinary horizons.

In crucial ways our success will depend on you, our readers and contributors. On a most mundane level, we are well aware that the book market and distribution system in the part of the world we study makes it no mean feat to identify and acquire all those works that deserve our attention. We are already devising means to solve such issues, but to be fully successful we will be dependent on many others for information and advice. The same might be said, more generally, about this invitation to forge new scholarly pathways even while preserving the highest traditions of our predecessors. We solicit your involvement and support as we begin this venture.

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