From the Series Editors

The Wildman Group arose during the mid-1990s as an informal discussion forum for those interested in labor and social history, with special emphasis on the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917. The Allan K. Wildman Group for the Study of Russian Workers and Society, as it eventually called itself, came to encompass many persons whose scholarly interests revolved around the Russian Revolution and related phenomena at a time when academic publishers, journals, and those who led graduate programs had often moved to different research priorities. The group’s interest in promoting continued research in revolutionary studies led to the 2002 publication by Slavica of New Labor History: Worker Identity and Experience in Russia, 1840–1918, a collection of new research about labor history from American and Russian scholars under the editorship of Michael Melancon and Alice Pate. The studies contained in the volume and the responses to them in the field demonstrated the continued vitality of late 19th- and 20th-century social history and its ability to place familiar historical episodes and phenomena in new perspectives. This factor gave rise to the idea of the Allan K. Wildman Group Historical Series, which Slavica agreed to publish. In order to broaden its scope to one more appropriate for a series, the group also renamed itself The Allan K. Wildman Group for the Study of Russian Workers, Peasants, and Intelligentsia during the Revolution and the Soviet Era. The Wildman Series now focuses on the entire revolutionary experience, especially in terms of the broad social strata most involved in making the Revolution and sustaining the state and society that resulted.

The Wildman Series’ third volume and second monograph, Jeffrey W. Jones’ Everyday Life and the “Reconstruction” of Soviet Russia During and After the Great Patriotic War, 1943–1948, reminds us of how little we know about the end of the war and the immediate post-war era in the Soviet Union. Jones uses the case of Rostov-na-Donu, totally devastated by the vast battles that raged around it, to reveal how people and party responded to the grim task that confronted them after the German forces were expelled. Society and state both strived to rebuild but comprehended the process differently. In the official “reconstruction” mythology, state and party leaders portrayed themselves as a vanguard, whereas local populations, mostly workers, saw them as a privileged elite. The chapters revolve around these conflicting interpretative ideologies, as expressed through official public sources, internal documents, police reports on the population, and interviews and memoirs. What
emerges is a portrayal, compelling and persuasive, of the physical realities of rebuilding the infrastructures of modern life and the ways various elements of society perceived the process. The Wildman Group believes that Jones’ study will help define our approaches to chronicling post-war Soviet life, the most exciting new field in Russian historiography.