The essays in Part 1 of this double issue of The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review are unusual. The hegemonic preoccupations of Anglo-American historiography are put to one side, in favor of views from left field. The essays offered here are by distinguished and emerging Russian and Australian historians. Their work exemplifies a new direction for the "social" history of revolutionary societies like Russia/USSR/Russia.

The revolutions of 1989-91 are as important in shifting paradigms as those of 1917. Then as now, Russian history can never be the same.¹ The insular days of Revisionist "social" histories gazumping Cold Warriors' "political" ones now seem to be numbered. The days, too, of a yawning methodological or thematic divide between Russian and "Western" ways of writing and researching the social history of Russia seem spent as well. But one thing is still unclear: What will replace them?

These essays derive from an unprecedented regional conference organized by Stephen Wheatcroft, held at the University of Melbourne in July 1998 under the umbrella of the Australasian Association of Communist and Post-communist Studies. Sponsored in part by the Ford Foundation, this event was the first to unite Russian and Chinese scholars with their Australasian colleagues. They met in Melbourne with a leavening of US, Canadian, French, British, Uzbek and Turkish specialists as well.

The essays offered here are venturesome works analyzing aspects of the rural frontiers of late-Imperial and early-Soviet history. They are also forays into a new historiography. They are unusual in focusing on relations between social groups and classes. They chart understandings across cultures; the powers and hegemonies found in these histories are no longer presumed to be mere functions of followers' class consciousness or leaders' voluntarisms. The Russian and Australian authors of these essays never seem to see the classes and leading groups in their new "social" histories as sovereign and self-sufficient. A single class or group is no longer

¹ See L. V. Poliakov, Modernatsionnyi protsess v Rossii: Sotsial'noe sdvigi i kritits identichnosti (Moscow: Institut filosofii RAN, 1994); A. N. Iakovlev, Predislavie. Obval. Posleslovie (Moscow: Novosti, 1992); the editorial note of Alan Wildman in Russian Review, 52 (1993); Adrian Jones, Late-Imperial Russia: An Interpretation: Three Visions, Two Cultures, One Peasantry (Bern: Peter Lang, 1997), Preface.
their only focus. They treat the themes in their new social history as a discourse between and across groups instead. It becomes a kind of lived idiom (sotsium or mentalitet in Russian, discours or sociabilité in French). The subjects of these new social histories are no longer just a class whose condition and consciousness is determined by socio-economic forces, nor just a rank-and-file whose condition and consciousness is determined (in the "old" political history) by the ideas and policies of leaders and parties, nor just its inverse (in the "old" Revisionist supposedly social history) in which the condition and consciousness of the rank-and-file determine the ideas and policies of leaders and parties.

Taken together, the essays suggest a paradigm for a renovated Russian social history. They show that historians of Russia live in interesting times! After the oddity and unexpectedness of the revolutions of 1968 and 1989-91 – those upheavals that broke every rule of what a revolution is and was, or what it could, should and would be! – a reconsideration of scope and meaning of social history is under way.3

Analyzing peasant nakazy and disputes in the archives, Tatiana Leontieva shows how peasants and clergy interacted in Tver' province, finding nothing to resemble the worlds of faith and community (sobornost') so vaunted for the peasant Russia of Slavophile romance and Populist tradition. Leontieva's essay is a superb example of the new "social" history of Russia, one divested of all the old structuralist orthodoxies.4 Dmitrii Liukshin examines writings about, and evidence of, deeds of peasant violence in Kazan' province, discovering "a communalist revolution" (obshchinnaia revoliutsiia) of the mind, a distinct peasant "psychopathology" (psikhopatologiiia). He is a new one of an old breed, a conservative Russian historian, a new Kavelin.5 By re-reading published ethnographic sources, Adrian Jones reconstructs peasant attitudes to property in the Russian village, suggesting Russia was beset by two mutually-incomprehending cultures: peasants' parochial minds of hearth and home and educated élites' process minds of salvation and development.6 Using mostly mid-Volga sources, Salavat Iskhakov retrieves lost syncretisms of customary Islam with land tenure practices, revealing Moslem peasants' core notions of

5. Konstantin Kavelin, Krest'ianskii vopros: Issledovanie o znachenii u nas krest'ianskogo dela, prichinakh ego upadka, i merakh k pod'iatiiu sel'skogo khoziaistva i byta posel'ian (S P. Petersburg: Stasiulevich, 1882).
6. A fuller version is Jones, Late-Imperial Russia.