

Dear colleague

This letter is a formal invitation to join the research group ‘Geography and Identity,’ which along with two other groups forms the Russian part of an international Collaborative Research Network (CRN) on *Official and Vernacular Identifications in the Making of the Modern World*. Teams from China, Southeast Asia, and France will also be working in this CRN, which is organized under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies in New York. The activities of the Russian team are funded through a generous grant from the Ford Foundation in Moscow. The overall convenor of the Russian team is Professor Ron Suny (University of Chicago); the coordinators for the geography group are myself and Dr. Konstantin Aksenov of St. Petersburg University.

The overall perspective and theoretical orientation of the CRN is spelled out in an essay by Peter Sahlins entitled *Official and Vernacular Identifications in the Making of the Modern World*, which is now being translated into Russian. I will distribute this document when it is ready, and would ask that you keep in it well in mind throughout the entire course of your research.

The attached Programme sets out the goals, agenda, and composition of the ‘Geography and Identity’ group in more detail. Please study this document carefully.

Each principal researchers will be offered a stipend of 1000 USD for their efforts as group members. In exchange, they will be expected to adhere very carefully to the following schedule for submitting their research:

- August 1 2001: formal acceptance of this offer and all its conditions
- Sept 1 2001: an initial formulation of the research theme (1500 words)
- Jan 1 2002: a full progress report on research to date (2000 words)
- June 1 2002: submission of the final research project (7000 words)

**This schedule for submission must be carefully adhered to, as late submissions will delay the progress of the entire group.**

In addition to these written submissions, all principal researchers will be expected to attend two meetings: one in mid or late January 2002, and the other in mid or late June 2002. Research results will be presented and discussed here. **Attendance at these meetings is an essential part of the group work.** All researchers are expected to keep these periods on their calendars available, so that they will be able to attend the meetings when the dates are set.

The research stipends will be distributed in person, in two installments. The first installment of 300 USD will be distributed at the group meetings in January 2002, and the remaining balance of 700 USD will be distributed at the June 2002 meetings. We should emphasize that receiving the full stipend of 1000 USD is conditional 1) upon the submission of satisfactory research results according to the schedule just described, and 2) upon full and satisfactory participation in both of the planned meetings.

We are excited by the organization of this working group, which will experiment in new forms of research organization and collaboration. We hope very much that you will want to be a part of our group. If you agree to the conditions we have spelled out, please send your formal confirmation to **Konstantin Aksenov** in St. Petersburg.

Cordially,

*Dr Mark Bassin*

*Dr Konstantin Aksenov*