Editor’s Note

Greetings and welcome to this third and final issue of SPSR for 2021. This issue contains the first half of a special issue as well as three standalone articles. Our usual offering of book reviews will return in the journal’s first issue of 2022 along with the second half of the special issue.

The aforementioned special issue, which begins here and will conclude in our subsequent issue, is entitled “Studies of the Siberian Anthropocene.” Edited by SPSR Editorial Board member Dr. Andy Bruno of Northern Illinois University (DeKalb, United States), the first half of this special issue includes Professor’s Bruno’s introduction as well as two articles by scholars from the Russian Federation.

This issue’s first standalone article, “Alexandr Serebrovskii and the Americanization of the Soviet Oil Industry, 1924–1929,” is authored by Dr. Jonathan Sicotte of the People’s Friendship University of Russia (Moscow). Sicotte examines the city of Baku (now the capital of Azerbaijan) as an example of the raw economic potential of early Soviet industry. This article’s focal point is Alexandr Serebrovskii, who as the head of Azneft (largest Soviet oil trust) was a pivotal figure in reviving Soviet oil production after the upheaval of the Russian Revolution and the Russian Civil War. In 1924, Serebrovskii visited the United States and was inspired to position Azneft to directly compete with American oil companies on the international stage. Sicotte reveals that although Serebrovskii’s plan was initially successful, it would leave a troubling legacy.

The second standalone article in this issue is a Russian language article entitled “Западное пограничье СССР в 1939–1941 гг. как «буферная зона» (случай Западной Белоруссии)/The Western Borderlands of the USSR in 1939–1941 as a ‘Buffer Zone’ (the Case of Western Belorussia)” by Professor Yanina Karpenkina of the International Center for the History and Sociology of World War II and Its Consequences (Moscow). Dr. Karpenkina argues that during the 1939–1941 period, Soviet policy in its newly acquired western borderlands was based on a need to quickly transform the annexed territories into a safe and impregnable border. As such, the pre-1939 Polish-Soviet border was preserved in the form of so-called “barrier zone” (зона заграждения). Along with a purge of the new borderlands’ population, the newly annexed territories were intended to protect the USSR from its ally of convenience Nazi Germany (until its June 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union) with two borders—the new border with the Third Reich and another with newly occupied eastern Poland.
This issue's third and final standalone article is “The Methodology of the ‘Russian World’ and ‘Russian Islam’: New Ideologies of the Post-Socialist Context” by Dr. Danis Garaev of Institute of Pedagogy, Psychology and Social Problems (Kazan, Russian Federation). Professor Garaev reveals that the creation of concepts of “Russian World” and “Russian Islam” was the work of the intellectual heirs of the Soviet academic Georgy Shchedrovitsky. Garaev examines how “Russian World” and “Russian Islam” were understood by the supporters of Shchedrovitsky’s “Methodological Doctrine.” This article stresses the importance of the non-Muslim (i.e. Soviet and Russian) roots of the development of Islamic institutions in post-Soviet Russia.

I invite you to enjoy this latest issue of SPSR and wish you a healthy and prosperous 2022.

*Christopher J. Ward*

Editor-in-Chief