Editor’s Note

This Editor’s Note represents an expression of both sorrow and joy for me. First, Russia’s war of aggression is nearing its bloody first anniversary with no end in sight. This senseless conflict continues to impact the lives of millions in the post-Soviet space, and I cannot help but feel a profound sense of dismay for the many scholars in Russia, Ukraine, and elsewhere whose lives have been shattered by the choices of a single individual. The country whose history I have dedicated my life to studying is slowly destroying itself as it seeks to win an unwinnable war against, ironically, the nation where Russian culture was born. While it is my profound hope that future notes will possess a more upbeat tone, as a historian I know that predicting the future is an exercise to be avoided.

Now, on to a much more positive note and the reason for this special iteration of the journal. This issue of SPSR represents the culmination of a long effort of my fellow graduate school classmates to honor our mentor, Dr. Donald J. Raleigh, Professor Emeritus of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This Festschrift, the first issue of a multivolume celebration, demonstrates Professor Raleigh’s students’ deep appreciation for his mentorship and support for our scholarship. In particular, I want to thank Professor Sharon Kowalsky for her overview of Professor Raleigh’s significant impact on his students’ lives, both personally and professionally.

My relationship with Professor Raleigh began over thirty years ago when he visited my undergraduate institution to deliver a talk. At the time, my understanding of the then-Soviet Union was limited, but I was captivated by Professor Raleigh’s enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject. I resolved then and there to making working with Professor Raleigh a reality. A few years later, I was fortunate enough to accomplish this goal. Over the next six years as Professor Raleigh’s student, I learned our craft from a peerless mentor. His guidance as I completed my dissertation was particularly helpful. Professor Raleigh’s support and advocacy did not end after I received my Ph.D. In fact, with his guidance I was able to secure a tenure-track position in the field and publish my first two books. In addition, Professor Raleigh’s role in helping me to become editor of this journal was profound. I am proud that Professor Raleigh agreed
to serve on the *SPSR* Editorial Board, a role that he has held during my entire term as Editor-in-Chief. My sentiments about Professor Raleigh are not unique as any of his students will attest.

It is my hope that you will find this *Festschrift* to be both informative and worthy of the scholar it honors.

*Christopher J. Ward*
Editor-in-Chief