

Petr ISKENDEROV**BALKAN ALLIES OF RUSSIA (LATE 19 – EARLY 20 CENTURY)**

Abstract. *In the late 19 — early 20 centuries, the Balkan allies, although they enjoyed the support of Russia, often acted in conflict with its policies, competing and conflicting with each other. Relations with St. Petersburg were complicated not only by the actions of Russia's geopolitical rivals, but also by the instability of the Balkan domestic political context, changes in attitudes and orientations of the Balkan elites. An analysis of the successes and failures of the Russian diplomacy of that time allows us to outline the directions of Russia's actions in the Balkans today. One of the main mechanisms of its strategy should be to work with a wide range of domestic political forces in the Balkan countries, not excluding the opposition.*

Keywords. *Balkans, Russian policy in the Balkans, Russia and the Balkans, domestic policy of the Balkans, foreign policy of the Balkans, Balkan Slavs, Balkan allies, diplomacy.*

Vladimir KONDRATEV**PROSPECTS FOR GLOBAL GROWTH**

Abstract. *Economic developments in the world are becoming more and more complex and global in their effects. Traditional economic and financial tools are often not enough to help economies recover from downturns. Many countries are facing structural challenges. Shocks are inevitable in market economy, yet, it is important to analyze the consequences of the measures taken, to understand what's the medium and long term perspectives are. Strategic decisions have become most significant.*

Keywords: *world economy, economic forecasts, medium and long-term prospects, basic factors of economic development.*

Anton KRUTIKOV**THE PHENOMENON OF JOZEF PILSUDSKI AND THE POLISH INDEPENDENCE CENTENARY**

Abstract. *The personality of Jozef Pilsudski is the most recognizable symbol associated with Poland's independence restoration. The Polish state's history in the 20th century was greatly influenced by the marshal's legend and his political legacy. Attempts to use Pilsudski's ideas and his name in today's politics have become a subject of controversy among both politicians and historians, giving rise to conflicts. Yet, despite diverging views, the main hero of Polish patriotic myth remains, for the majority of Poles, an important component of national identity.*

Keywords: *Jozef Pilsudski, Poland, Polish Independence, historical memory, national identity.*

Elena LOPATINA**RUSSIFICATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF INTEGRATION POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE (ON THE EXAMPLE OF PRIVISLINSKY KRAI)**

Abstract. *The article is devoted to the Russification policy pursued in the 1880s — 1890s by the government of Alexander III. The focus is on Vistula Land (Privislinsky krai), where Russification was carried out under Joseph Gurko, Governor-General of Poland and commander of the Warsaw military district, and Alexander Apuhtine, who served as trustee of the Warsaw school district. The author concludes that the policy of unification and Russification on the Polish lands was in fact situational and sporadic, while on paper, in official documents it appeared to be a coherent system of measures.*

Keywords: *Vistula Land, Russification, unification, policy of the Russian Empire.*

Igor MAKSIMYCHEV**THE END OF MERKEL'S EUROPE? ON THE UPCOMING END OF A POLITICAL CAREER**

Abstract. *The author analyzes Angela Merkel's political biography, key priorities and legacy. Both in domestic and international affairs, the results of Merkel's era appear to be contradictory. The position of Germany as informal EU leader brings not only benefits, and its image in the eyes of partners is deteriorating. Germany's place in world politics and the nature of its relations with Russia have become bitter issues.*

Keywords: *Angela Merkel, Merkel era, German politics, German foreign policy, German leadership, German-Russian relations.*

Natalia NAROCHNITSKAYA**KURIL ISLANDS DISPUTE: POLITICAL, HISTORICAL AND LAW PARAMETERS**

Abstract. *The article presents the Kuril Islands issue and dispute in contemporary Russia–Japan relations in a vast historical, legal and geopolitical context. The attention is drawn to mostly ignored legal implications of full and unconditional surrender, depriving Japan of sovereignty and making any reference to former status of islands irrelevant. The US role in concluding the Treaties of Portsmouth, San Francisco and the Soviet–Japanese Declaration of 1956 is highlighted. American pressure on Japan at all crucial stages, US military presence on the Japanese territory, the 200-mile economic zone under UN Convention on the Law of the Sea constitute inter alia a fundamental change of circumstances making provisions of the Soviet–Japanese Declaration of 1956 inapplicable on rebus sic stantibus basis. As there has never been a peace treaty with Germany the imperative of one with Japan seems dubious.*

Keywords: *surrender of Japan, loss of sovereignty, Soviet–Japanese Joint Declaration of 1956, article 2 of the Treaty of San Francisco.*

Petr YAKOVLEV**WORLD DEVELOPMENT: APOCALYPSE NOW OR GLOBALIZATION 4.0?**

Abstract. *The world approached the year 2019 burdened by a dangerous accumulation of political, financial and economic risks. Slowdown of growth, confrontation and resurging protectionist practices, sanctions and counter sanctions, over-indebtedness and environmental threats, military and diplomatic tensions in Europe and Asia — all have been perceived as a rollback of globalization. A total chaos is looming to replace previous world order, which, although far from ideal, has been at least manageable. The Buenos Aires G20 summit designed to tackle today's problems left too many challenges and discords without answer. The new concept of "Globalization-4.0" might seem a viable alternative to the neoliberal globalization pattern.*

Keywords: *world economy, specter of a global crisis, G-20, global economic and political challenges, threat of trade wars, globalization 4.0.*

Emil VORACHEK**THE CZECH CRISIS OF 1938. "ONLY THE USSR HAS ... CLEAN HANDS"**

Abstract. *The article explores one of the most important aspects of the Munich crisis — the position of the USSR and Soviet actions and opportunities as Czechoslovakia's ally. A wide range of archive documents, many of which first introduced, analysis of latest research display step by step and from various angles the aggravating crisis and Moscow's behavior at every stage. Particular attention is given to previously unknown diplomatic correspondence, allowing to reveal motivations of main actors and to detail diplomatic games played by states and the Soviet response.*

Keywords: *Munich crisis, Czechoslovak crisis of 1938, Munich agreement, Edvard Benesh, USSR foreign policy, Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty of Alliance.*