



Dear Reader,

**W**ELCOME to the first issue of the second year of *State, Religion and Church*. Last year, we launched this pioneering journal with the mission of “bringing Russian contributions to religious studies into dialogue with global developments in the field.” Fostering international scholarly cooperation, in addition to the promotion of high-quality Russian scholarship among a non-Russian readership, are among our primary goals.

The articles selected for this special issue were all originally presented at the international conference “The Varieties of Russian Modernity II: Religion, State and Approaches to Pluralism in Russian Contexts,” which took place at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) from May 14–16, 2014. Organized by Christopher Stroop, Alexander Agadjanian and Dmitry Uzlaner, in conjunction with RANEPA’s Center for Russian Studies, the conference represented a continuation of a project launched by Stroop, Ana Siljak, and Alyssa DeBlasio with the international conference “The Varieties of Russian Modernity: Rethinking Religion, Secularism, and the Influence of Russian in the Modern World,” hosted by RANEPA (in collaboration with the Department of International Development) from June 7–9, 2013.

Like the first conference, Varieties II brought together an internationally diverse group of scholars in varying stages of their careers to consider a wide array of issues related to the study of religion and secularism in Russian contexts. Topics ranged from Tatar communities in Soviet Moscow (Marat Safarov) to religion and spirituality in contemporary Russian literature (Maria Hristova) to new religious movements in western Siberia (Elena Golovneva) to Homaranismo, the “religion of humankind” proposed in the late Russian Empire by the inventor of Esperanto, L. L. Zamenhof (Brian Bennett).

Headlining the conference was keynote speaker Paul W. Werth of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, a leading expert on minority con-

fessions in the Russian Empire. Werth gave his keynote address, “Religious Freedom as Marker of the Modern: Faith, Indifference, and Confessional Institutions in the Russian Empire” in Russian, and we reprint it here in Werth’s own English translation under the title “Religious Freedom as a Marker of Modernity: The Imperial Bequest.” Other participants included Kristina Stoeckl, Sergey Filatov, J. Eugene Clay, Regula Zwahlen (paper read in absentia), Martin Beisswenger, Francesca Romana Bastianello, Oyuna Dorzhigushaeva, James Meador, Sergei Shtyrkov, Gorkem Atsungur, Michał Wawrzonek, and Siljak, who joined Uzlaner, Stroop and Agadjanian in a roundtable about future possibilities for the “Varieties” research initiative.

In addition to the keynote address, in this issue of SRC we bring you three articles originally presented as conference papers that have subsequently undergone peer review and revision. They are thematically linked not only by the conference’s broad concerns, but also by the ways in which they demonstrate the relevance of Russia’s imperial past to issues concerning late Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. In her piece, Regula Zwahlen explores Russian conceptions of personality (*lichnost’*) across pre-revolutionary, Soviet, and post-Soviet Russian intellectual history, focusing on the significance of these conceptions’ lack of the element of Kantian moral autonomy, without thereby rejecting the value and meaning of Russian and Soviet attempts to theorize the individual. Although she finds the lack of a notion of moral autonomy to have been a source of problems and paradoxes for late Soviet thought, she concludes that in our attempts at “overcoming the dichotomy of individual and communal ends, more than a few Russian concepts of personality have a lot to offer.”

The contributions by J. Eugene Clay and Sergei Shtyrkov are more focused on the post-Soviet Russian Federation, but in both cases the role of history and memory is crucial. Clay provides us with a thorough summary of the controversial post-Soviet project aimed at integrating education about religion into Russia’s public schools, along with this project’s social resonances. Known as the *Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics*, the program is meant to allow parents to choose among a range of options that are appropriate for a multicultural, secular state. Implementation of the project, however, has been less than perfect. Clay’s article provides a wealth of detail, and its most original contribution lies in its examination of this current controversy within the broader context of Russian history.

Finally, Sergei Shtyrkov takes us to the post-Soviet Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, where, drawing on ethnographic observations

and local media, he explores competing attempts by advocates of the ancient Alanian faith and of Russian Orthodox Christianity to lay claim to Ossetian heritage – and thereby to represent the legitimate bearer of Ossetian identity today. In a context in which ethnic and religious identity is often elided, disputes rage around an array of issues, such as the Christian or pagan identity of Ossetian shrines (*dzuars*). Shtyrkov pays particular attention to the missionary strategies of the representatives of Orthodox Christianity in this context, drawing parallels to similar dynamics in other regions in which the imperial legacy causes many to associate Christianity with Russification.

As usual, in this issue of SRC we include several book reviews originally published in Russian, thereby providing a window into some of the major tendencies within religious studies in Russia. Finally, we would like to take the opportunity to remind our readers that submissions of original manuscripts to SRC may be sent to one of the following addresses: [cstroop@gmail.com](mailto:cstroop@gmail.com) or [religion@rane.ru](mailto:religion@rane.ru). We will also be happy to receive readers' comments or questions and will do our best to respond.

*With warm regards,  
The Editors*