Dear Readers

“How far is it to Bukhara?”

“Go!”

(From the story of Hodzha Nasreddin)

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What can we wish a newborn journal? Interesting papers and a large circulation. We all understand that the latter sometimes stems from the former. However, the important thing is for the journal to find its readers. Who are they? University students and their teachers professionally occupying themselves with Russia or global problems; embassy personnel and Western businessmen working in Russia; professional spies; and admirers of Russia. And the most important readers are the heads of libraries who check out our journal (and possibly not just one copy). They are all united by natural or compulsory interest in the regional research of one-seventh of the Earth's lands.

Having obtained the possibility to freely study their own country, Russian regionalists have weakened their links with Western colleagues. Now there is the ongoing torturous process of returning Russia to world science. Publications in English are the main channel for this. We hope that our journal will facilitate this process.

Russian is not the simplest language to learn. Some of our Western colleagues can at least read it. Neither are all of their Russian colleagues native speakers of English, and the services of translators are burdensome even for wealthier Western colleagues. Our journal will make it possible for Russian scientists to be known in the West.

A large number of people, all of whom absolutely disinterested, have helped us. They have spent a tremendous amount of time understanding our problems. We will not list their names, since this information would take up half the journal.

We cannot but recall that 15 years ago, the idea of creating a new journal (quite similar to this one) was proposed by geographers. However, the acknowledgment of fruition came only in 2010.

Now as then, we remember the journal *Soviet Geography* and its founder, the irreplaceable editor-in-chief of many years, Teodor Shabad. It was he who acquainted the developed world with Soviet public geography. Be it our destiny to grow rich, our journal will found an award in his name.

It is especially necessary to speak of the role of the most well-known Russian regional economist in cre-

ating the journal, Academician Aleksandr Grigor'evich Granberg, who unfortunately did not live to see the publication of its first issue, but who took an active part in developing its idea and content. Among the papers included in this issue is a collective publication coauthored by Academician Granberg. This paper gives the first result of the complex program of studying Russia's expanse, which he initiated and headed.

Among the authors of this first issue, to our regret, there is another scientist who did not live to see it. This is the specialist on transport geography, Vladimir Nikolaevich Bugromenko, who died tragically. The paper published here is his final work.

In choosing materials for the first issue, the editorial board has attempted to demonstrate the entire variety of topics and territories studied by Russian regionalists. The array of paper topics is very wide in time and space—from the czarist decrees of the 17th century to the programs on modernizing the Russian economy in the 21st century, from the European North to the Far East. Our success is this is for the readers to decide.

Our future depends on the number of subscribers. Below, there is no plea to readers to rush out and subscribe. However, our sincere thanks to those who draw into this “venture” their relatives, friends, and employers.

We have applied all efforts to make the journal professional, interesting, and useful to readers in their work. Every physical or legal person subscribing to the journal may request free consultation from any Russian member of the editorial board of our journal or any author appearing in it.

The editorial board very much looks forward to the assistance of international communities of regionalists and geographers. Obviously, the journal is not a competitor to any current periodicals of similar subject matter. Moreover, it successfully supplements them both in geography and in the framework of problems of territorial development.

Editorial Board