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## PREFACE

Despite the increasing flow of publications on globalization, our ideas and knowledge about this phenomenon still leave much to be desired. Especially this refers to the global processes in general, since globalization is their constituent part. The problem of an adequate development of the system of scientific views both on global processes and on various consequences which they generate is especially urgent. In short, against the background of expanding globalization the acute shortage of knowledge in the field is perceived rather well.

The transformations of this rapidly changing world are too fast for our perceptions to keep up with them and our institutions also lag behind. The numerous changes sometimes indicate considerable global progress. One of the major changes, that have recently become evident due to the 2008 crisis, is the shifting balance of the world forces. Today many analysts anticipate in the coming decades the diminishing influence of the United States and of the West, in general. Meanwhile, the recent events related to the Ukrainian crisis and confrontation with Russia show that the USA still possesses huge opportunities and are unwilling to yield their leading position to anybody else; moreover, they are eager to fight to preserve it by all means. So the global stability is endangered. At the same time we witness a growing economic power of a number of developing countries. Thus, first, some rearrangements are inevitable in the world ranking of countries; and second, there are signs of major changes in developing countries. The consequences of these changes will be extremely significant. For a better understanding of these changes we need to constantly exchange ideas and insights, observe the process of globalization in different regions and countries.

That is why the existence of special periodicals, like *Vek globalizatsii* [Age of Globalization] and *Journal of Globalization Studies* and others,<sup>1</sup> is an urgent need of modern society. Of great importance are also the books which accumulate the last achievements in scientific thought in the field of Global Studies.

The present collected volume belongs just to the books of this kind. It comprises some of the best articles that have been published in the interdisciplinary journal *Vek globalizatsii* [Age of Globalization] published in Russian since 2008 and in its English-language digest entitled *Age of Globalization*. By the moment, twelve issues of the journal have come out, containing about 260 articles devoted to academic research and analysis of various aspects of globalization.

The journal *Vek globalizatsii* is a specialized interdisciplinary periodical in Global Studies that seeks to integrate innovative academic insights on important issues of development and globalization from across different fields. The journal has become in-

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the journal *Vek globalizatsii*, please, visit its homepage at <http://www.socionauki.ru>. As for the *Journal of Globalization Studies*, its homepage can be found at <http://www.sociostudies.org>. Both these sites also provide abundant information in Russian and in English about theoretical and applied research, ideas and approaches driving from scholars from economics, political science, psychology, sociology and anthropology, global studies.

creasingly popular not only with experts in the field of Global Studies, philosophy, anthropology, history, and other spheres of knowledge dealing with the issues of globalization, but also with a wide audience interested in globalization theory, processes, and patterns. The urgency and relevance of the subjects of the journal are beyond any doubt. More and more well-known scientists as well as political and public figures are engaged in cooperation. The journal *Vek globalizatsii* publishes articles in a number of sections, presenting theoretical and empirical studies as well as alternative perspectives on various aspects of globalization and Global Studies, global problems, causes and consequences of the World crisis, and Russia's position in the global world.

Some of the articles presented in this collected volume were published in the recently launched *Journal of Globalization Studies* which has been coming out only for six years, but has already earned good reputation in the world, and not only due to posing topical issues in the field of global researches, but also due to the content of the published materials, and a variety of approaches to the proposed solutions of analyzed problems.

The title of the collected volume – *This Globalizing World* – reflects not only its relation with the journal, but also a general concern for our future, and it presents a number of forecasts for the nearest future and more distant periods of the world development as well. In the present volume one can find the perceptions of globalization by a number of scholars from different countries (including, of course, Russia) whose articles have been published in the journals *Vek globalizatsii* and *Journal of Globalization Studies*. For the readers' convenience we provide detailed information about previous publications and translations of the articles included in the present collected volume in a separate section in the end of the book.

A great number of interesting and debatable articles have been published in the journals during the whole time of their existence. Among the contributors to the journals there are the foremost scientists. We decided that there is no need to update their articles, as for us the way the creative thought developed on the pages of the journal is of special interest. It also shows that in our publications the creative approach is appreciated which prevents an absolutization or restrictions of this or that point of view and from time to time reveals opportunities to approach former problems in a different way. Besides, sometimes it is very instructive to go back a few years and to watch how the problems have been perceived before, in what issues we have become wiser, and what we do not still understand. Such time travel with respect to the still ongoing crisis is especially useful.

We have written no editorial introduction as we think there is no sense to reproduce ideas which a reader will find in the articles. Instead we offer two short articles – passionate and at the same time profound essays where the world intellectual elite's alarm for the future of our planet and civilizations is reflected. These are the articles of a prominent humanist and a bright public figure Princess Irène of the Netherlands and of an outstanding philosopher of the present Ervin László; they in many respects introduce the key-notes for contributions presented in this volume.

The current situation in the world is extremely complicated: during the whole years of its existence the humankind promoted the emergence and increase of global problems due to the huge scales of its activity. The aspiration to a better and wealthier live,

uncontrollable growth of human needs cause new problems of a global scale. As shown in theoretical researches including those published in our journals, the specified processes will inevitably proceed in foreseeable future. Thus, it becomes obvious that it is necessary to unite efforts to overcome global threats which can affect the whole humanity and thus, the destiny of both the global community and of separate peoples depends on their solution.

The characteristic feature of global threats is their close interrelation. Hence, the aggravation of one of them involves also the exasperation of all others. The inability to anticipate and prevent negative consequences of these threats is fraught with accidents of planetary scale. The solution of global problems is a very challenging issue. Here it is necessary to consider a number of interrelations of different nature: social and economic, political, and ecological, *etc.* For this reason one should solve the global problems in a complex manner, combining the efforts of all countries, and not only of countries, but of families and individuals since their fragmentary or partial solution can bring about some dangerous consequences. The role of science and the humanities in the solution of global problems consists not only in understanding the causes of their emergence, but also in the development of peculiar measures for their overcoming, minimization as well as eliminating their negative consequences.

The contributions to the present volume are multi-faceted. Some of them present theoretical ideas and points of view in whose terms global problems and globalization are considered in a complex manner; other articles analyze the fundamental factors and processes in the contemporary world and in its certain regions. Still other contributions to this collected volume are topical, showing the achievements and difficulties of our time in various perspectives.

*Editors*