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Svalbard Studies III: An Article Collection to Mark the 100th Anniversary of the Svalbard Treaty's Commencement

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The open-ended series of collected articles, entitled Svalbard Studies, was launched with a special issue of the journal *Nordlit* (no. 45, 2020). The series found its current home in *Poljarnyj vestnik* (vol. 25, 2022) with the second collection of articles. Now, this third collection is partly based on papers presented at a Threat Defuser workshop held on June 3–5, 2025, in Isfjord Radio and Longyearbyen, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Svalbard Treaty entering into force.

As we discussed in our introduction to the series (Chekin & Rogatchevski 2020), which was also published in Russian as an introduction to *shpitsbergenovedenie* (Rogatchevski & Chekin 2021), our goal has been to help scholars bring together research about Svalbard from various humanities disciplines. The first collection represented Svalbard within the broader context of Arctic history, politics, and geography. It also included more detailed studies of various media genres focusing on specific landscapes and communities.

Three of the articles were subsequently reprinted in Russian in *Istoricheskaia geografiia* (vol. 6, 2022), a journal devoted to historical geography. Together with these articles, we published a review of geographical and spatial approaches to Svalbard Studies, in which we discussed how geographers, historians, artists, writers, and politicians interpret the history of Svalbard's discovery, its place names, and its cultural landscape. These interpretations reinforce certain national narratives, while simultaneously shaping and reshaping historical memory (Rogatchevski & Chekin 2022).

The second Svalbard Studies collection was based on the idea that, "for the past century or so, coal mining has in many ways been synonymous with Svalbard" (Steinholt & Rogatchevski 2022, 1). By bringing together the research tools of discourse analysis, international relations, economic and social history, medical humanities, comparative literature, locality studies, hermeneutics, art critique and art psychology, the second Svalbard Studies collection demonstrated how coal mining on Svalbard has influenced culture and politics in Norway and beyond.

The present collection, arranged in chronological order, both develops the already established themes of Svalbard Studies and introduces new approaches. It starts with the article by Thor Bjørn Arlov on Store Norske (Norwegian coal company in Svalbard) and its special relationship with the Norwegian state in 1916–1976. Although a private company, Store Norske had a privileged position on Svalbard and functioned as a local proxy for the state. To some extent, Norwegian settlements on Svalbard could be described within the "company town" model, but Store Norske also played a unique role in securing Norwegian sovereignty in the archipelago.

In the next article in this collection, Richard D. Davies and Andrei Rogatchevski bring to light various (partly unpublished) newspaper reports, archival photographs and diary entries by the Soviet, Russian emigré, and Norwegian journalists to shed additional light on the community life in Soviet and Norwegian settlements on Svalbard in the second half of the 1930s.

The visual media approach is further developed in Daniel Dumas's discussion of the colour photographs taken by the German geographer Ernst Herrmann on Svalbard in 1937 and 1938, as well as Herrmann's 12-minute silent documentary *Svalbard* (1937). Herrmann's film predates the popular nature documentaries that promoted ecological awareness decades later. His colour photographs, including those taken from an airplane, are valuable both artistically and as sources for studying climate change. Herrmann screened this documentary during his lecture tours to German soldiers on the front lines of World War II and to audiences in postwar Germany, even though some of these venues may not seem most obvious to address environmental concerns.

In his article, Haakon Unhammer Kvaale focuses on the 1978 crisis in Soviet-Norwegian relations, when a Soviet military aircraft crashed on Hopen, a remote island in the southeastern part of Svalbard. Kvaale views this event as the Norwegians' first major and partially successful attempt to limit the de facto Soviet autonomy that had existed on Svalbard since the 1930s. In addition to providing a detailed analysis of the event within its domestic and international political context, Kvaale offers a historical overview of Soviet challenges to Norwegian sovereignty on Svalbard from the 1930s until the end of the Cold War.

Leonid S. Chekin explores communication between the Norwegian and the Soviet authorities during the same period from the point of view of translation and interpreting studies. In addition to published memoirs, newspaper articles, and personal interviews, he also analyses photographs of diplomatic interpreters at work in Longyearbyen and Barentsburg.

The visual media approach is manifest again in Henrik Gustafsson's analysis of Susan Schuppli's short *Not Planet Earth* (2021), filmed during her 2020 trip to Svalbard to capture Arctic warming on screen. Providing an overview of theories by the early theoreticians of the photographic image, Gustaffson finds antecedents of Schuppli's novel technique as far back as the 1859 description of stereovision devices by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

For her part, Anna Obukhova investigates how the official Russian public discourse constructs Svalbard's image. Her study reflects on a selection of articles from mainstream Russian federal media (2010–2025) in the methodological context of critical discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, and corpus linguistics—while applying the so-called market basket analysis as a primary tool to examine the data.

Needless to say, humanistic and social research of Svalbard has not been limited to the Svalbard Studies special issues (see, for example, the thematic cluster "Changing Svalbard" in vols 58 and 59 of the *Polar Record* journal (2022–23), Portsel´ 2022, Suprun 2023, Albert et al. 2023, Rogatchevski and Szymala 2023, Sokoličková 2023, Bożek et al 2024 and Amundsen 2024, as well as Obukhova 2026, Totland 2026 and Rogatchevski

2026). Scholars' interest in Svalbard does not seem to be diminishing. There is every reason to believe that this Svalbard Studies collection is not going to be the last.

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