

CURRENT HISTORY

October 2020

Vol. 119, No. 819

CONTENTS

- 251 **Can Russia's Health and Welfare Systems Handle the Pandemic?** *Linda J. Cook and Judy Twigg*
The Soviet legacy of universal social protection endures, but rural populations, informal workers, and migrants may fall through the gaps in health coverage and economic aid measures.
- 258 **Precarious Times for Central Asian Migrants in Russia.** *Sherzod Eraliev and Rustamjon Urinboyev*
Tougher immigration laws have driven foreign workers farther into the shadows, where they are more vulnerable to discrimination and economic hardships deepened by the pandemic.
- 264 **The Belt and Road Initiative's Central Asian Contradictions.** *Catherine Owen*
The region needs the Chinese infrastructure network's investments and transportation links, but a lack of responsible oversight is abetting elite corruption and fueling popular resentment.
- 270 **Could Russia Embrace an Energy Transition?** *Veli-Pekka Tynkkynen*
The Kremlin's dependency on fossil fuels and denial of climate change have left Russia trailing in the development of renewable energy. But it still has an opportunity to become a green power.
- 275 **Russia's Recolonization of Crimea** *Austin Charron*
Despite promises of benefits for locals, the annexation of the peninsula has revived a centuries-old legacy of repressive imperial policies, including forced population transfers.
- PERSPECTIVE**
- 282 **Catastrophe and Denial in Belarus.** *David R. Marples*
The regime's inclination to manipulate history and ignore disasters like Chernobyl reappeared in a similar nonresponse to the pandemic. The neglect sparked a rare upsurge of political resistance.
- BOOKS**
- 285 **On the Edge of Empires.** *Pamela Kyle Crossley*
A new history of a border zone between Russia and China shows how local trading relations developed under the constraints of competition among empires and rival communist giants.