

INTRODUCTION TO THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Twenty years and over five hundred scholarly articles later, *Demokratizatsiya* is enjoying a new beginning. At the start of 2012, George Washington University (GW)'s Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies (IERES) acquired the journal from the World Affairs Institute in time for its third decade. IERES makes an idyllic home for *Demokratizatsiya* since it is located in Washington, D.C., hosts a diverse cadre of scholars, fellows, and programs, and is nestled within GW's dynamic Elliott School of International Affairs.

The undergraduate students who founded the journal at American University (AU) in 1990 knew they wanted to study the most fascinating political phenomenon of the times: Gorbachev's perestroika and the surprising transformation of the USSR and its successor republics. These students, and the scholars they invited to run the journal editorially, could not have imagined what transpired later. Thanks to support from three visionary deans at AU, to the think tanks International Freedom Foundation and the American Foreign Policy Council, and to Heldref Publications—which carried the journal until 2011 when it evolved into the World Affairs Institute—*Demokratizatsiya* has been able to survive and, through its diverse and brilliant writers, interpret these phenomena to its community of scholars, students and policymakers.

Because the journal was conceived as policy-relevant scholarship, it is perhaps no coincidence that its stars routinely became the leading lights managing policy toward Russia and the other former Soviet republics. Perhaps because *Demokratizatsiya* has never been associated with one school of thought, discipline, ideology or individual, it gathered the “collective wisdom” from several intellectual walks of life, focusing on trends that other publications missed.

The next twenty years require even more from *Demokratizatsiya*.

How can our pages do justice to the *dramatis personae* we study and the tidal waves of history they unleashed?

One way we hope to start is through a new push to draw in and publish the most stimulating new scholarship, works that pioneer fresh and powerful ways of thinking about not only the post-Soviet region, but regime dynamics and democracy themselves. Indeed, the region we cover in this journal now has two full decades of post-Soviet history to work with, a history that is ripe with the potential to lend new insights relevant far beyond the former Soviet world itself.

This is the logic behind our choice of topic for the issue you have in front of you, which simultaneously marks the journal's new beginning based at GW and the twentieth anniversary of the journal itself. Some of the most interesting scholars from around the world reflected on what we have learned about their subject of expertise during the two decades since the Soviet Union's demise and produced a series of concise, provocative articles.¹ The outstanding pieces published here blaze new conceptual trails and will help frame scholarly and policy debates on democratization in Eurasia and beyond for the next two decades.

The current issue presents the first set of these articles, those focused on political economy, state-society relations, ethnic politics, and how to think about politics more generally. The next issue will contain the second set which will address issues of culture, history, and foreign policy.

We hope that this issue will set the stage for a whole series of exciting issues to come, bringing the best and most interesting new social science (selected through a careful process of blind peer review) to a broad readership. We plan to publish a mixture of articles by senior scholars, emerging scholars, and scholars from the region itself. We also hope to include a variety of perspectives from the policy-making community and those who do business in the region on a regular basis.

With its distinguished twenty-year history and new home at IERES, *Demokratizatsiya* is well placed to help explain the dynamic processes underway in the former Soviet Union and its neighborhood. We look forward to your continued readership and manuscript submissions.

- Henry E. Hale, Robert W. Orttung, and Fredo Arias-King

¹ The articles draw on papers presented at a GW conference co-sponsored by the Program on New Approaches to Research and Security in Eurasia (funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York), the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars' Kennan Institute, and several IERES funds, including the William and Helen Petrach Endowment for Ukrainian Exchanges and Programs, A. Michael Hoffman, and the Heyward Isham Fund for Russian and Eastern European Studies. None of the funders bear responsibility for the content of the articles.