

The Perestroika of *Demokratizatsiya*

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The twentieth anniversary of Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power approaches and *Demokratizatsiya* prepares two issues that will reflect on this topic. Behind the scenes, *Demokratizatsiya* has decided to carry out a little perestroika of its own.

To better carry out its mission and serve its constituency of scholars and policymakers, *Demokratizatsiya* is enhancing its editorial structure and board, and also increasing its Internet presence to make it more interactive and accessible. The journal's merger with the *East European Constitutional Review* has further enhanced these changes.

These changes cannot be understood in isolation, which makes for a good opportunity to remind our readers of *Demokratizatsiya*'s unique editorial heritage.

Our Editorial Heritage

Demokratizatsiya was the first journal of its kind dedicated exclusively to the study of the sociopolitical transformation in the newly independent states (NIS) of the former Soviet Union. The journal is readily identified as distinct for many reasons and retains the aura of policy-relevant scholarship and of the fresh (and ultimately very successful) crowd of specialists—both Western and post-Soviet—that formed it. It was meant as a service to both the Sovietologists as well as to policymakers, both of whom lacked fora for discussing the issues underway in the new states. At that time, there was no Internet, the long-running journal *Problems of Communism* had ceased publication, and other journals were dedicated mostly to the study of the Soviet economy, ancient history, or literature.

Although famously (or perhaps infamously) founded not in the hallowed halls of academe but in the undergraduate dormitories of American University between 1990 and 1992, five groups shaped the editorial style of *Demokratizatsiya*: (1) emerging Western Sovietologists, (2) scholars from the NIS, (3) architects of reforms, (4) scholars from other fields coming in contact with the NIS, and (5) Western policymakers and analysts.

To avoid being identified with any one person or ideology, *Demokratizatsiya*'s editorial structure ensured diversity, balance, and excellence. The journal has tradi-

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tionally been led by three or four executive editors who agree only on their commitment to study the transitions in the NIS in depth. The original executive editors— Louise Shelley, Nikolai Zlobin, and J. Michael Waller—nonetheless left their indelible mark on the journal, which has proved to be fortuitous since these original editors and other scholars invited by the founding students to run the journal turned out to be such an unusually remarkable group.

Demokratizatsiya also aligns with the mission of Heldref Publications, the publishing arm of the nonprofit Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation, which became the journal's publisher in 1994. Founded in the 1970s under the leadership of Evron M. Kirkpatrick to assist respected publications achieve financial and organizational viability, Heldref and its forty-seven publications provide new ideas, information, and means of communication to scholars, teachers, students, and interested readers. Heldref achieves this with the cooperation of hundreds of scholars and teachers who contribute their time and expertise as editors and advisors. *Demokratizatsiya's* editorial restructuring, inviting new and leading experts, and its merger with another leading journal, further position it as a centrepiece in this turbulent yet key field.

Compared to its peers, *Demokratizatsiya* is unique in additional ways: mainly in the way that it took the independence of the new republics seriously from the beginning, engaged scholars from the region as a fundamental part of its mission, and fostered a genuine democracy inside the journal—which sometimes makes its management more challenging than in other journals. Additionally, *Demokratizatsiya* explored, from the beginning, controversial issues that others shunned, namely organized crime, corruption, and the lingering power of the KGB. It was the first to explore the *Yevraziistvo* phenomenon. These issues, in retrospect, turned out to be defining topics, and the transitions in the new republics cannot be understood without them.

The journal's anticommunist tint was not planned. Indeed, it went largely unnoticed by us until we invited the former USSR Supreme Soviet Chairman Anatoly Lukyanov to write on his reflections on the coup he helped organize, to which he replied "I will never have anything to do with your [expletives deleted] anti-Soviet publication!" Why experts that did not sympathize with Soviet power flocked to our pages and those apologists of the pre-Gorbachevian USSR decided to stay away is still a mystery.

Because the typical *Demokratizatsiya* editor is not only an academic but also strives to make a difference in the NIS, it is expected that the editorial structure change over the years as these highly visible and active personalities become engaged in other projects. This is the main reason why only five out of the original sixteen editors from thirteen years ago remain today. Far from weakening the journal, this "instability of cadres" has ensured a diversity of refreshing ideas and insights. Many editors become highly successful after they come in contact with the journal, either as authors or as editors for other publications. (As for the original rugrats that founded the journal, most are fast moving up in academia, government, foundations, business, and the media.) Although *Demokratizatsiya* has evolved and gradually changed its editorial outlook to fit with the times (for

example, purely informative articles that can be posted online are no longer published), the current editorial restructuring is the largest in the journal's history.

There was a time (before the Internet) when if someone wanted information on the transitions in the former USSR, the only sources would have been newspapers, a couple of journals, and, significantly, *Demokratizatsiya*. This explains the editors' initial successes in entering into policy matters, getting published repeatedly in the *Congressional Record* (including by a, then, little-known staffer named George Tenet), receiving invitations to give seminars or organize conferences, and many other adventures. For an academic journal, we had a real cult following, both in the United States as well as in Russia.

Editorial Leadership

After a highly distinguished six years each of providing leadership as executive editors, Sally Stoecker and Vladimir Brovkin stepped down last year because of other commitments. Heldref Publications then invited Fiona Hill to become the new executive editor of *Demokratizatsiya*, alongside Nikolai Zlobin and Michael McFaul. In addition, Christopher Marsh will be the chairman of the editorial board of the journal.

Fiona Hill has been involved with this journal for a decade, when, as associate director of the Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project at Harvard, she guest-edited two special issues dedicated to the 1995 Duma and 1996 presidential elections in Russia. She joined the editorial board shortly thereafter. A native of northern England with a PhD in history from Harvard (her thesis was on Russian *derzhavnost'*), Dr. Hill also served as director of the annual U.S.-Russian Investment Symposium, dubbed the "Davos at the Charles." She then went on to the Eurasia Foundation and is now at the Brookings Institution. She is a renowned specialist on the northern Caucasus, ethnic conflict, Eurasian energy policy, Russian foreign policy, Putinomics, and Central Asia.

Christopher Marsh, a post-Sovietologist and Sinologist, has served on *Demokratizatsiya's* editorial board since 2002. An associate professor of political science and church-state studies and the director of Asian studies at Baylor University, Dr. Marsh specializes in civil society, comparative democratization and development, and Russian regional politics and is currently exploring the intersection of ethnic, religious, and state identity in communist and postcommunist societies.

Merger with the *East European Constitutional Review*

The *East European Constitutional Review* (EECR), a lively and informative quarterly journal founded around the same time as *Demokratizatsiya* and edited out of the New York University Law School and Central European University, ceased publication at the end of 2003.

The EECR editors went above and beyond the expectations of the field and of their readers. The greatness of this publication is discernible by reviewing its back issues, all neatly gathered at <http://www.law.nyu.edu/eecr/>.

The EECR's mission was quite similar to that of *Demokratizatsiya*—witnessed by many of our common authors—although its unique format, broader regional

scope, and principal focus on legal issues differentiated it from *Demokratizatsiya* and other journals in the field.

We found it imperative not to let the mission and legacy of this gentle giant go to waste, with all the goodwill, networks, scholarly excellence, and tradition it provided. That is why *Demokratizatsiya* approached the intellectual father and editor of EECR, Stephen Holmes, and its managing editor, Alison Rose, with the aim of bringing their relevant editors to this journal and therefore cement our common heritage of, as their mission statement reads, “the challenges and obstacles of postsocialist law and politics . . . to give an in-the-trenches understanding of the dilemmas of postsocialist legal reform and to serve as a vital and lively forum for discussion and debate about pressing issues of the rule of law.”

Demokratizatsiya inherits three magnificent scholars from the EECR, who just happen to have also cooperated with our journal for many years in this small world of post-Soviet specialists: Peter Solomon, Andrei Kortunov, and Richard Rose.

Peter H. Solomon, Jr., is a professor of political science, criminology, and law at the University of Toronto, where he is also director of the Centre for Russian and East European Studies. We are grateful to him for hosting the November 2003 roundtable “Ten Years of *Demokratizatsiya*.”

Andrei Kortunov is a familiar specialist to anyone that followed perestroika day-by-day—the unraveling of the USSR and the birth of Russia. An academic, frequent commentator in the mass media, and author of one hundred twenty articles and four books, Kortunov served in the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Open Society Institute and currently heads the Eurasia Foundation in Moscow.

Richard Rose, director of the Centre for the Study of Public Policy at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland, is founder of New European Barometer surveys, which, since 1991, have monitored mass response to transformation in postcommunist countries that are now members of the European Union as well as those that are in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Expansion of the Editorial Board

The existing board, which historically has been approximately twenty individuals, was becoming strained with the proliferation of increasingly complex issues, research tools, disciplines, and divergent transitions that *Demokratizatsiya* covers. For a long time the executive editors had suggested that the board itself must be redefined, expanded, and restructured to closer approach the scope that the journal covers. The core idea was to strengthen all five of the founding groups of *Demokratizatsiya*.

Certainly the most beloved one of those groups is the architects of reforms. Our editorial board has the presence of Aleksandr N. Yakovlev and, until their untimely passing, Galina Starovoitova and Yuri Schekochikhin.

This tradition will continue with the invitation of two more towering historical figures to join the editorial board: Stanislau Shushkevich and Mart Laar. Shushkevich, a nuclear physicist by training, was head of state of Belarus

(1991–94). He set the basis for the formal and peaceful dissolution of the USSR with the Belavezhsy Forest Agreement in December 1991, Belarusian statehood, and denuclearization (see his interview in *Demokratizatsiya*, winter 2004, plus his article in winter 2003). He currently heads the Hramada party and is active in unifying the democratic forces to liberate Belarus for the second time.

Mart Laar, a historian, was twice the prime minister of Estonia (1992–94 and 1999–2002). Laar is considered the most thorough and successful architect of all the postcommunist transitions and a trendsetter for many countries in the region that look up to Estonia as a model of tax reform, trade liberalization, de facto lustration, integration with the West, unique privatization, and good government, among other achievements (see his interview in the special *Demokratizatsiya* issue on Estonia, fall 2003).

Another one of the five pillars of *Demokratizatsiya* is the emerging Western Sovietologists (well, they indeed were emerging at the time of *Demokratizatsiya*'s founding, although it is hard to believe

that they are now fully emerged). This group is comprised of Louise Shelley, Michael McFaul, Andrew Bennett, Andrew Kuchins, and Fiona Hill. Indeed, the students that founded *Demokratizatsiya* had a very good eye for talent. This group is being strengthened with the addition of Leon Aron, Peter Rutland, and Stephen Hanson.

Leon Aron is the director of Russian studies at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, DC. He is the author of the first full-scale biography of Boris Yeltsin, *Yeltsin: A Revolutionary Life*. He has contributed numerous articles on Russian affairs to newspapers and magazines and is a frequent guest of television and radio talk shows. He is currently working on a book about the ideas that inspired the latest Russian revolution and shaped post-Soviet Russia.

Peter Rutland is a professor at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, where he teaches courses in political science and researches post-Soviet political economy. He worked for two years at the Open Media Research Institute in Prague, which evolved into *Transitions Online*. He has served as an editor and now contributor of the Jamestown Foundation's *Eurasia Daily Monitor*. His current research focuses on Putinomics, the energy sector, and Russian foreign policy.

Stephen Hanson is the director of the Ellison Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies at the Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington. He is also the academic director of the Program on New Approaches to Russian Security (PONARS), and author or editor of numerous books and academic articles.

The perestroika is ongoing. *Demokratizatsiya* also plans to strengthen that other pillar without which the journal's edifice could not be sustained—scholars

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from the post-Soviet space. Nikolai Zlobin, the now well-known scholar, policy wonk, journalist, and Washington insider, is the embodiment of this group, which will soon be expanded even more. Olexiy Haran', our resident Ukrainianist, was invited last year from the Kyiv Mohyla Academy but has since moved on, in typical *Demokratizatsiya* fashion, to an area combining scholarship and policy. He now heads the Eurasia Foundation in Kyiv. Vladimir Brovkin, who was executive editor of the journal for six years, also hails from this group, especially as he is now back in Russia and teaches at the Urals State University. Yakovlev, Shushkevich, and Laar also double in this group, as they are renowned idea factories in their own right.

One of the new editors wrote in his acceptance e-mail, "It was a turbulent decade for Russia-watchers, with the rise and fall of many institutions and outlets, and *Demokratizatsiya's* persistence is testimony to its energy and talents." How true.