

EDITORIAL – CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

Nationalities Papers and the Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN) are celebrating their 40th anniversary this year. In the first issue, my predecessor, Stefan Horak, outlined the aim of *Nationalities Papers*: to publish papers on “topics of nationalities in the USSR and Eastern Europe.” Forty years on, the USSR is no longer, and the concept of “nationalities” is unfamiliar to many scholars not working with the Soviet past. Nevertheless, the journal has remained relevant over the decades. As Michael Rywkin, president emeritus of the ASN, outlines in the history of the association and the journal in this issue, both did not merely adapt to changed circumstances, such as the fall of the Berlin wall, the end of the Soviet Union, and the rise of nationalism and democracy in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe and Eurasia, but engaged with these changes head on. Although *Nationalities Papers* and the ASN are no longer dominated by émigré scholars, both have observed events and researched their regions of interest not through the lens of distant observers, but remaining engaged. Many scholars who are members of the ASN and/or contribute to the journal are from these regions, have spent many years researching in and on them, and are profoundly attached to the questions under discussion.

This is reflected in the content of the journal. *Nationalities Papers* values strong regional knowledge and a profound empirical foundation to its articles. It is, however, not “only” an area studies journal, but is *also* a journal on nationalism and ethnicity. The increased academic interest in nationalism from the 1980s onwards has given *Nationalities Papers* an interest beyond its core region, and today it publishes comparative and theoretical articles that extend further than the original remit of the journal. As a result, *Nationalities Papers* rests on two pillars: strong empirical multidisciplinary research on questions of nationalism and ethnicity from Eastern and Southeastern Europe and Eurasia, and studies which explore the phenomena of nationalism and ethnicity at the cutting edge of the different disciplines.

Nationalities Papers seeks to avoid creating the impression that Eastern Europe and nationalism are intrinsically linked or echoing the simplistic view that the ethnic violence of the 1990s and beyond is inherent to any part of the world. Instead, it seeks to displace stereotypes and myths with systematic and high-quality scholarship.

Stefan Horak, in his first editorial, published on typewritten paper, remained modest. While *Nationalities Papers*, in parallel with the Association, has experienced strong growth over the decades – now with six issues annually, and including analysis of current events, book symposia, and other special features – it is good to recall his words: “By not claiming much, and being aware of the virtues of modesty, we hope to continue our task expecting that the future shall offer us additional avenues for our activities.”

We will celebrate this anniversary by reflecting on the past, as Michael Rywkin does in this issue, and by thinking about the future, with leading scholars in the field sharing their

insights in the coming issues of *Nationalities Papers*. In conclusion, I hope you will continue to find *Nationalities Papers* a useful and insightful publication throughout this and the coming years.

Florian Bieber