Editorial

The 2018 issue of the Journal of Belarusian studies marks an important transition. Since 1965 enthusiastic scholars of Belarus have independently published the Journal. From this issue onwards the Journal will be published by BRILL, one of the world's most reputable academic publishers.

This transition is a tribute to many years of hard work by the Journal's authors and editors, as well as growing interest in Belarusian studies internationally. Although this means that much of the Journal's content will now only be available to those with a subscription, it also means that the Journal acquires a life of its own, not necessarily linked to the enthusiasm and resourcefulness of its editors. In the past, the editorial team was responsible for all aspects of its life – from fundraising and finding authors, to typesetting and distribution.

This issue co-edited with Dr Alena Marková and Dr Paul Hansbury demonstrates that the quality of the Journal keeps rising. It publishes articles from authors based in Europe and North America, from PhD researchers to tenured professors.

Professor Randall Newnham from Pennsylvania State University opens the issue with his article on economic linkages between Belarus and Russia, which he views as a patron-client relationship. Russia has devoted considerable resources to Belarus, showering the country with a variety of economic inducements, including access to the Russian market, subsidised oil and gas, and outright grants and loans. In return, Belarus has tightened its political, economic, and military ties to Moscow. Newnham shows that despite Belarus's economic and political dependence upon Russia, it can stand up to its patron in certain circumstances using its bargaining power.

Dr Anaïs Marin's article is based on the Annual London Lecture on Belarusian Studies, which she delivered in 2018. She analyses the process of soft Belarusianisation, as well as internal and external factors which drive and inhibit it. She observes that, although the authorities are aware of the process's rally-around-the-flag potential, it is perceived as anti-Russian by the Kremlin and therefore creates a challenging situation for Belarus's leaders whereby they endeavour not to overstep Russia's putative red lines.

Dr Alena Marková from Charles University in Prague looks at how historical memory and history developed in Post-Soviet Belarus. She shows the transformation from the early 1990s' radical rejection of the interpretational

and methodological patterns of the Soviet period and the creation of a new concept of Belarusian national history through to a return to Soviet-era approaches to historiography, albeit in a modified form. This process came along with the re-interpretation of several elements, including national symbols, the 1920s nationality policy of Belarusization, and Belarus's experience during World War II.

Continuing on the theme of nation-building and national identity, Aliaksandr Bystryk from the Central European University examines the ideology of conservative West-Russianism during World War I. He analyses the movement's most prominent newspaper at the time and focuses on its perspectives on Belarusian nation-building and Russian nationalism in the borderlands. Aliaksandr presented an earlier draft of his paper at the Annual Conference on Belarusian Studies organised by the Ostrogorski Centre and the School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies of the University College London.

The issue also includes reviews of several recent books, covering national identity and state-building in Belarus, bilateral relations with Poland, the nature of the political regime in Belarus and contemporary literature of Belarus. The issue closes with the Anglo-Belarusian Society's annual report.

The Journal of Belarusian Studies continues to accept submissions on a rolling basis and welcomes contributions from both younger and established academics on all aspects of Belarusian studies. From 2019 new submissions to the Journal will be accepted through the BRILL's online submission system.

Yarik Kryvoi
Editor-in-Chief