

EDITORIAL NOTE

CONTRA IMPERIUM SOVIETICUM

Once again *Nationalities Papers* is pleased to collaborate with the Nationality and Siberian Studies Program of Columbia University's W. Averell Harriman Institute for Advanced Study of the Soviet Union by publishing the proceedings of the Program's second annual conference on the Soviet nationality question. *Nationalities Papers* hopes that this special issue provides its readers with up-to-date information about and germane analyses of today's complex and momentous changes in the life of the Soviet Union's many restless nationalities.

By giving then Chairman Gorbachev only second billing, the title of last year's special issue, "The Soviet Nationalities and Gorbachev," suggested a radical shift in relations between Moscow and its formerly supine republics. This year's title, "The Soviet Nationalities Against Gorbachev," leaves little room for doubt about the direction in which their relationship has evolved. Gorbachev, now president, is confronting full-fledged demands for secession. High on the agendas of domestic politics, both at the center and at the periphery of the Soviet Union, stands the question of how to prevent or attain the goal of independence, how to manage the demands for exodus from the *Imperium Sovieticum*.

The most recent development since this year's conference has been the emergence of an increasingly anticentrist RSFSR led by its new president, Boris N. El'tsin. His demands for greater autonomy and promises of cooperation with the other union republics may set the tone for the coming year. The consequences of the emergence of a dynamic RSFSR on the pro- and anti-secession issue will, no doubt, be reflected in the title of next year's special issue of *Nationalities Papers*.

As was the case last year, this issue is co-edited by Professor Alexander J. Motyl, Director of the Nationality and Siberian Studies Program at Columbia University and chairman of the conference held this past May. This journal is grateful for his continued cooperation and extends its appreciation to all those at the Harriman Institute who assisted him.

H.R.H.