

## EDITORIAL

In the editorial, in the first issue of *Language Policy*, which appeared while the shock of September 11, 2001 was still vivid, we set as our goal the development of “stronger theories based on more rigorous empirical studies and generalizations based on analysis of complex underlying processes.” Such theories, we hopefully believed, would lead to better and more effective language management. Looking over the 77 papers we have published since then, and adding in the larger number of reviews that have accompanied them, making up about 2000 printed journal pages, it is fair to claim that we have contributed to the theory building.

That major gaps and short-comings in language management remain also cannot be denied. In spite of the weight of published evidence, huge numbers of children are still denied education in a language they can understand; very few nations have found an acceptable way to recognize the language-related rights of minorities and immigrants; the most common solution to multilingual problems has been territorial divisions resulting in the ignoring of the needs of new minorities; language testing has grown into an even more powerful weapon for underprivileging minorities and immigrants; nations continue to proclaim the need for protecting national languages; and more and more endangered languages are disappearing. One can start to sympathize with those of our colleagues who feel that activism is more important than scholarship, that we too must join the other scientists frustrated by their inability to curb the nuclear weapon race, or slow down the global warming uncorrected by national energy policies, or assure provision of adequate food and health services for so much of the world. I suppose that, threatened as we are with unchecked AIDS pandemics, or starving children, or children trapped in uncontrolled wars, or terrorist murders, or nuclear war, or the melting of the ice caps and consequent destruction or resettlement of huge populations, we may seem quaint and naïve in our assumption that wiser and better-informed language policies can contribute to the quality of human life.

But the papers in this issue continue that task: Sue Wright raises some basic questions about the nature of language rights with

illustrations from the fate of some minority languages in Italy, N. Anthony Brown looks at the evidence of language policy in the public signage of Belarus—the response of a new nation to independence from the former Soviet Union, Mohamed Benrabah analyses language education policy in Algeria—the Arabicization that followed the successful revolt against French colonial rule, and Christopher Stroud and Lionel Wee evaluate 50 years of radical language policy in Singapore. So language policy and not global warming or nuclear self-destruction is the field we have chosen, and as a new editorial team takes over, I am sure that we will continue to seek out and publish the best research in the field.

My deep thanks to all who have helped with the journal, my fellow editors and volunteer readers and writers, and the two Presses which have supported us over the past years. Finally, my best wishes to Kendall King and Elana Shohamy and those who will continue the task.

Bernard Spolsky, Editor