

Summary

The 148th *NZ* issue contains materials that are devoted to several major themes related to the ideological, political and cultural history of the 20th century – and to the transformation of this agenda (which is, in its essence, modern) during the first quarter of the 21st century.

The first big theme is the history of development and implementation of Marxism-Leninism as a theory, of the corresponding Marxist-Leninist ideology dominant in the Soviet era, and of the attempts to revise, modernise, and creatively develop this theory. And, of course, we will be talking about the fate of the leftist, socialist movement today.

Issue 148 opens with a block called “CONCRETE HISTORICISM AND MATERIALIST DIALECTICS”. Anton Syutkin outlines the intellectual biography of the unorthodox Soviet philosopher and art theorist Mikhail Lifshitz, who tried to develop Marxism in its Leninist version in parallel with the official ideology. Moving on from philosophy to philosophy of history and historiography, Alexander Dmitriev offers a brief overview of the attempts made by Soviet theorists of Marxist historiography to develop both the theory of history that was official in the USSR and the method of historical writing after World War II. Timur Atnashev further develops this topic. His article focuses on two noteworthy figures in the field of the official Soviet theorising of history, Mikhail Gefter and Pavel Volobuev, who in the 1960s and early 1970s tried to

modernise the official Marxist-Leninist historical discourse, but were defeated by administrative sanctions and found themselves cast to the margins of the academic sphere. However, their work turned out to be very useful at the next stage of Soviet history – during perestroika. Atnashev engages in polemics with the book by Alexei Yurchak “*Everything was Forever, Until it was No More*”, contributing his own views on the nature of the late Soviet society’s (particularly the humanitarian intelligentsia’s) attitude toward the official state ideology and the methods of its production and representation after the death of Stalin. The first thematic block concludes with an article by *NZ* editor Igor Kobylin, in which Soviet political economy is discussed in terms of early Christian (Byzantine) theology – as a phenomenon originating long before 1917.

The topic of leftist, socialist theory, but viewed in relation to today’s political practice, is explored in our CULTURE OF POLITICS section. It consists of the article by a patriarch of the British left movement, the political writer and campaigner Anthony Barnett, entitled “*The Year of the Definite Left: How Progressives Can Defeat the Right in 2023*”, and a discussion about this article that unfolded between the author himself and *NZ* editor-in-chief Kirill Kobrin. The practice of today’s left-wing politics is the topic of the new instalment of Tatiana Vorozheikina’s column THE REVERSE OF THE METHOD; this time, the focus is on the situation in Brazil, where a very stressful presidential election has

resulted in a recent return of the leftist politician Lula (Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva) to office. Vorozheikina analyses the extremely difficult situation in which the president has found himself, representing as he does about half of all the Brazilian voters, in a society that is currently torn between the radical left and the radical right. Lastly, the utmost triumph of communist ideas, in their North Korean variation, pushed to the point of political, economic and existential absurdity, is the topic of Yulia Krutitskaya's review of the Russian translation of Anna Fifield's book *"The Great Successor: The Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un"*, published in the NEW BOOKS section.

The second thematic block revolves around not one but two of the NZ regular topics at once. These are the history and current state of political structures in post-colonial Africa, and the fate of post-war federalism. The block opens with an article by Andrey Korotaev and Alina Khokhlova, which gives a rundown of the last ten years of the political history of Mali. NZ editor Andrey Zakharov analyses the history of (pseudo-)federalism in post-colonial Cameroon. Leonid Isaev and Daria Bobarykina offer the reader a detailed description of the hardest state recovery process in Somalia, tracing its political, economic and social roots. Adjacent to this block CASE STUDY section examines the topic of federalism and separatism on the material of a European – namely Basque – context in the Yulia Frolova's piece.

NZ ARCHIVE section presents a memoir, originally published in the 1920s, written by the Tsar's army general Sergei Dobrorolsky about the summer of 1914 troop mobilisation in the Russian Empire. This text, which had rather a strange fate, especially in Soviet and post-Soviet Russian historiography, once again raises the question of which one of the "great powers" participating in World War I was, if not the "culprit", then the active actor in the rapid process of unleashing the global catastrophe that led to the collapse of the world order that had existed prior to 1914. The present publication of Dobrorolsky's memoir was prepared by Alexander Kustarev and Konstantin Tarasov, who also accompanied it with their own brief articles.

The POLITICS OF CULTURE section features a translation of the chapter entitled *"Humanism as an Initiative"* from the book *"The German Spirit in Danger"* by the eminent German philologist Ernst Robert Curtius. Dmitry Kolchigin translated Curtius's text – that first came out in 1932, just before Hitler's rise to power and is, incidentally, extremely relevant today – thoroughly annotated it and accompanied it with a substantial article that introduces the reader to the historical, cultural and biographical context of the piece.

This NZ issue ends with the RUSSIAN INTELLECTUAL JOURNALS REVIEW by Alexander Pisarev, and the NEW BOOKS section.

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