

Summary

The 162nd *NZ* issue consists of two thematic sections and some standalone publications that can be grouped around a few key themes.

The first selection of materials, titled “THE POLITICS OF THERAPY AND THE THERAPY OF POLITICS”, broadly explores the problem of normality and of deviation from it (i.e. “illness”) as a political, social, and cultural issue. It opens with an article by Sergei Finogin, which provides a brief overview of the history and current state of therapy, primarily as a psychological counseling practice. Therapy has long been popular in the West and is now gaining (or has perhaps already gained) a foothold in Russia. The trend has progressed so far that Finogin describes it as a “therapeutic turn”. He notes:

“Academic and counseling psychology, along with various versions of pop psychology, have been present in Russia for decades, but the therapeutic way of thinking – the «therapeutic emotional style» – has only recently become dominant”.

Another contributor to this thematic block, Dmitry Frolov, focuses on the social, cultural, and even, in a sense, political role of therapy in the West compared to Russia. Frolov analyses the “distinctly Russian approach” to therapy, and how it is reshaping society, its language, and more.

The selection concludes with an article by Evgenia Panova – a brief comparative study of the political views of two early 20th-century German biologists,

Jakob Johann von Uexküll (who could also technically be called a “Russian biologist”) and Hans Adolf Eduard Driesch. Both were representatives of a biologised version of *Lebensphilosophie* (“philosophy of life”), yet they held opposing views despite their mutual acquaintance and even long-lasting friendship. Von Uexküll was a far-right thinker with Nazi sympathies, while Driesch was an “organic democrat”.

The political dimensions of biology, chemistry, and other natural sciences – alongside the humanities – constitute one of the key themes in the CULTURE OF POLITICS section, which follows the first block of materials. This section features an excerpt from the Russian translation of the book “*Saga des intellectuels français*” by the French philosopher and intellectual historian François Dosse, focusing on the role of public intellectuals in the country’s socio-political life.

The published chapter recounts the activities of French communists in the immediate aftermath of World War II, when, under directives from Stalin’s Soviet leadership, they established total control not only over their own ranks but also over scientists, writers, and artists affiliated with the party. Dosse depicts sinister (and at times darkly comical) episodes, such as French communist scientists promoting the theories of Trofim Lysenko, or Pablo Picasso – commissioned by the French Communist Party – painting a portrait of Stalin in the style of socialist realism. The excerpt is accompanied by a foreword by the book’s translator, Yana Yanpolskaya.

The full text of François Dosse's "Saga des intellectuels français" is being prepared for publication by the "Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie" publishing house.

The theme of "totalitarianism and culture" is also explored in the latest installment of the CULTURE OF MODERNITY REVISITED section. In his article, "Alien Resource: Totalitarianism – The Occupational Novel of the 1930s – Imitation", Igor Smirnov examines the relationship between Soviet socialist realist "occupational novels" and reality. The author argues that this relationship was complex, evolving from mere imitation to replication – and even to transformation of certain elements of Stalinist life. Smirnov concludes that the imitation of reality became so hollow that it ultimately endangered reality itself.

Meanwhile, in the POLITICS OF CULTURE section, Maria Rakhmaninova's piece, "Demiurgy of Close Worlds: An Apologia for the Poetic as Political", reflects on the interplay between the poetic and the political. She contends that a certain kind of poetic language serves as "the most essential of all genuine guarantees for a truly alternative political existence".

The second thematic block of issue 162 of NZ examines the trajectories of federalism in Africa through three historical case studies: Nigeria, which gained independence amid the dissolution of the British Empire; South Africa, assembled from territories under British control; and Ethiopia, the only African state never colonised (barring a brief Italian occupation). Their divergent paths to achieving (or maintaining) independence and their subsequent development resulted in distinct

applications of federalist ideas and practices in each country.

Andrei Zakharov provides a detailed analysis of how federalism – one among many governance approaches under British rule – was first used to establish apartheid, then repurposed to dismantle it ("«Bad Blood», or the Surprising Genealogy of Federalism in South Africa"). Researchers from Lagos' Nigerian Institute of International Affairs – Nicholas Idris Erameh, Joshua Olusegun Bolarinwa, and Godwin Ichimi – examine whether federalist approaches could resolve farmer–herder conflicts in North-Central Nigeria, that stem from these competing communities being forced into shared territories as a result of arbitrary administrative borders drawn by British colonial authorities departing the region. The block concludes with a study by Addis Ababa's Policy Studies Institute researchers Mulugeta Getu Sisay and Markos Debebe Belay on Ethiopia's unique federalism; it is unlike the other cases discussed above, as modern Ethiopia inherits the legacy of a once powerful African empire that never experienced colonial interruption.

Issue 162 of NZ also features its regular sections: Alexey Levinson's SOCIOLOGICAL LYRICISM ("Putin-Stalin"), Tatyana Vorozheykina's THE REVERSE OF THE METHOD ("José «Pepe» Mujica: «I Dedicated Myself to Changing the World and I Didn't Change a Damn Thing, but I Had Fun»"), as well as Alexander Pisarev's RUSSIAN INTELLECTUAL JOURNALS REVIEW. The issue concludes with reviews in the NEW BOOKS section, including Nikolai Nakhshunov's detailed critique of "The Routledge Handbook of Political Phenomenology".



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