

Summary

The 147th *NZ* issue contains two main themes, as well as additional pieces that deal with individual cases from the history of politics and culture.

The issue opens with Vladislav Inozemtsev's regular column *IMPERIAL CHRONICLES*, which introduces two following thematic blocks. His text, entitled "*A Post-Imperial Empire*", is devoted not to Russia's history and current state of affairs, but to the European Union, which many contemporary Russian politicians and propagandists tend to call – right along with the United States – "a main geopolitical opponent of the Russian Federation". The author proposes his own classification of the types of post-imperial formations that have emerged in Europe since the end of World War II. The first type is an empire that has not responded to the challenge of the end of the colonial era, an empire that holds (or tries to hold) its national provinces by force. According to Inozemtsev, the USSR was such an empire, and post-Soviet Russia has continued on the same course. A different type of empire is the new kind of voluntary, non-violent post-empire, such as the European Union. Ergo, Inozemtsev believes that the nature of the current confrontation between the Russian Federation and the EU is not only (and not so much) geopolitical, but rather ideological and conceptual.

The main conflict between Russia and the European Union is unfolding around Ukraine, whom Russia is trying to return, one way or another, to its sphere of influence. The first two collections of materials in this *NZ* issue are devoted to the domestic

and foreign policy aspects of this conflict, the aspects that have to do with Russia.

The first block is called "RUSSIA UNDER THE NEW/OLD REGIME"; it contains articles on the transformation that Vladimir Putin's regime (the "old" one, because it had already taken shape by 2022) has undergone during the first year of the military conflict (thus acquiring a "new" flavour). Sergey Ryzhenkov analyses the internal logic of the transformation of Putin's regime in the context of the history of dictatorial regimes in the 20th and early 21st centuries, from Europe to Latin America ("*Putin and Rationality. Some Considerations on the Metamorphoses of Russia's Regime*"). Alexey Makarkin writes about the Russian Orthodox Church, which by now is an almost state-run institution, and has played a significant role in this transformation. Lastly, Petr Alekseev continues his series of essays analysing the mechanisms of the rhetoric of the Russian side during the conflict in Ukraine ("*Partially Total Corrections*"). The theme of the metamorphoses that have taken place over the past year in domestic politics and public opinion in Russia concludes with a new installment of Alexei Levinson's regular column *SOCIOLOGICAL LYRICS* ("*So We Have Got off the Needle*"). At the same time, Levinson's column acts as a lead-in to the second block of materials, since it largely deals with the changes in Russia's international prospects resulting from the conflict with Ukraine, the EU and the United States – and with the alleged attitude of the Russian public towards those changes.

The following block is called "THE NEW/OLD REGIME AND THE WORLD". Andrey Me-



dushevsky discusses the consequences of the current situation for the legal foundations of international relations (*"The Crisis of International Law and the Ukraine Conflict"*). Developing this topic further, professor at the University of Ottawa, Paul Robinson, attempts to trace the shifts in the system of international relations that could determine the "world-wide agenda" in the following decade. Danila Krasnov's article has as its subject the recent history of the relationship between the different types of autocratic regimes and their practice of starting military conflicts with neighbors.

The second big theme of the 147th *NZ* issue has more to do with the field of social and cultural anthropology. This collection, entitled "A GLOSSARY OF INFRA-STRUCTURES", is an experiment: *NZ* has offered its pages to a collective project aiming to describe various infrastructures that make it possible for us and our society to function. Among such infrastructures the authors and the block's compiler Denis Sivkov count a wide variety of phenomena,

from paving stones covering city streets to cadasters of urban engineering structures, from latrines used on archaeological expeditions, to the Internet as a way of the network society arrangement. This collection contains 16 short essays (many of them illustrated), preceded by an introductory piece written by the compiler.

The POLITICS OF CULTURE section is taken up by Vadim Mikhailin and Galina Belyaeva's voluminous article *"The Symbolic Language of Pavel Kuznetsov: Materials for a Dictionary"*, which proposes an unexpected socio-cultural interpretation of the artist's work. He started out before the revolution as a symbolist, and later found a place for himself within the new socialist realist canon – without, according to the authors, really changing his artistic lexicon or his way of artistic thinking.

As usual, the 147th *NZ* issue concludes with the NEW BOOKS section, among which we can single out the response of the historian Nick Lucas to two books on the contemporary history of Wales and the current situation in the country.

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