

# Summary

The 144th *NZ* issue contains materials on a wide variety of topics; however, most of them are united by one main subject, which today has become particularly relevant: “extraordinary” forms of the political, and their transformations in society, culture, and so on. The word “extraordinary” here applies to, first and foremost, emergency situations of dictatorship and war. The issue’s structure tries to present this agenda as a gradually unfolding discussion of various aspects, as well as specific instances, of a common theme.

The issue opens with Alexey Levinson’s regular column: in his essay “*On the Friendship between the Fridge and the TV*”, the author questions the well-established opinion that “real” economic difficulties can undermine the trust a significant part of the Russian society puts in state propaganda broadcast by official media, primarily television. Propaganda stirs up the public consciousness, makes it accept the *extraordinary* situation of dictatorship and war as something *normal*, even routine.

*NZ* editor Igor Kobylin analyses theoretical problems of such “historical states of emergency” in his essay “*«Overthrow»: History in a State of Emergency*” (in *POLITICS OF CULTURE*). Kobylin begins with a quotation from “*On Dictatorship*” (1921) by Carl Schmitt, where the author lists “«possible ways of understanding it (dictatorship)» based on various definitions of *the norm* – for in order to understand the nature of the extraordinary, it is

necessary to take into account the ordinary state of things that it is opposed to”. The article gives an outline of the indirect discussion around this topic that happened between Schmitt and Walter Benjamin, as well as modern interpretations and approaches to this extremely topical issue.

“Emergency politics” of a dictatorship (in this case, a Nazi dictatorship) and language are the themes of the first block “*THE POLITICS OF TERMINOLOGY: NAZI – SOZI – SPEZI*”. The block’s compiler Dmitry Kolchigin offers the reader a case from the history of the 20th century linguistics – an analysis of the origin and use in the “third reich” of the political term *Nazi* (short for *nationalists*), in the context of a concurrent use of the terms *Sozi* (*socialists*) and *Spezi* (*specialists* – associates working for the Nazi regime). The block consists of translations of articles by German philologists of the 20th century Leo Spitzer and Franz Mautner, who discuss the linguistic, historical and current political aspects of these terms. The collection of articles opens with a brief introduction by the compiler, and ends with his detailed commentary on the texts he translated.

The theme of political language during a “historical state of emergency” is continued by Konstantin Tarasov’s article, which analyzes the use of the term “dual power” (that later became canonical) in the year of 1917 – in the period between the February Revolution and the “Kornilov affair”. Finally, the perception of a “historical state of emergency” as



something normal – through the denial of Hegel's well-known thesis, according to which "that force and tyranny may be an element in law is accidental to law and has nothing to do with its nature" – is the topic of Anatoly Ryasov's article "*Back to Bakunin! Notes on Anarchism, Theology and Law*". As in Kobylin's text, Carl Schmitt and Walter Benjamin are important participants in this discussion, but Ryasov offers a different intellectual and ideological perspective, constructed within the framework of anarchist thought. The thought process in his article is built around the book by Oleg Goryainov, published four years ago, titled "*To Have the Right. On a Criticism of Political Theology*", which, according to Anatoly Ryasov, went almost completely unnoticed.

Violence, dictatorship and war as a political, socio-cultural and ideological norm – in the regional aspect – are the topic of the second thematic block of this NZ issue "THE MIDDLE EAST PACIFIED AND AT WAR". NZ editor Andrey Zakharov, together with Leonid Isaev, offer the reader an outline of the political history of Jordan, an Arab country that arose as a result of the emergency conditions of the World War I literally "out of nowhere" and became – despite the endless political and military crises in the neighbouring Arab states – a symbol of a certain kind of stability. "Normalized violence" and "pacifying dictatorship" of the Jordanian monarchy is very different from the situations in Syria, Egypt, Libya and Iraq, although this country is also subject to the upheavals characteristic of the Middle East.

Modern states have a way of inflicting violence that is guaranteed by their legal and institutional status – through war. Nevertheless, over the last decades, and especially in recent years, we have seen

governments increasingly delegate and outsource this function to private companies and individuals. The activities of the so-called "private military and security companies" in the "big" Middle East are the subject of the article by Polina Maksimova. In a sense, one of the aspects of such activities is the attitude towards them of both the population of the countries where they take place and that of the neighbouring states. The Russian intervention in Syria did not harm the positive image of Russia among the population of modern Egypt, even strengthened it to a certain degree – that is one of the conclusions of the article by Yakov Liokumovich and Ivan Geraschenko titled "*On Some Particular Aspects of the Attitude towards Russia in Modern Egypt and beyond*". The section closes with a brief sketch by the German orientalist, writer and translator Stefan Weidner, dedicated to the outstanding German scholar of Sufism (and Islamic culture as a whole) Annemarie Schimmel (1922–2003).

NZ ARCHIVE is adjoining this section, featuring an excerpt from the memoirs by the Syrian journalist Nazir Fansa "*The Days of Husni Al-Za'im, 137 Days that Shook Syria*", translated and commented by Maksim Zhabko. It refers to a specific case of "historical state of emergency" – the 1949 military coup in a newly independent Syria, in which Fansa himself was directly involved.

The discussion of "historical states of emergency" inevitably leads to the topic of historical, cultural and personal memory of them. One of the most fascinating examples of this is the memory of the siege of Leningrad in modern Russia, especially in the context of a new "state of emergency" currently brewing up. This is discussed in the article by Daniil Kotsyubinsky "*The Sorrowful and Heroic Components of the Memory of the*

*War and the Siege in the Activities of the Anna Akhmatova Museum in the Fountain House in 2010–2021*" (POLITICS OF CULTURE).

As usual, the 144th *NZ* issue ends with the NEW BOOKS section, among which we can highlight Oleg Larionov's response to a collection of interviews with a sociologist, translator and cultural historian Boris Dubin, along with two reviews by

Margarita Medvedeva of the books on Middle Eastern politics, as well as Andrey Zakharov's reflection on an in-depth essay on the history of Chinese thought written by the British-Flemish sinologist Roel Sterckx, one of the main themes of which is the relationship between "eternal order" and "extraordinary turns" in the Chinese philosophical and political-ideological tradition.

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