

# Summary

The 145th *NZ* issue is, in the broadest sense, thematic. Most of its contents have to do, in one way or another, with the idea of “ruination” as a process, as well as with various aspects of the existence of “ruins”. Of course, what is meant here is not only and not so much physical ruins, the remains of architectural objects, but rather the destruction of established social structures and communities, political concepts and practices, the ruination and ruins of certain varieties of cultural consciousness. At the same time, some of the texts in this issue speak of politics and culture born from this kind of ruins. So the overall theme of the 145th *NZ* issue can be defined as follows: “The Ruins of Politics and Culture / Politics and Culture of the Ruins”.

The 145th issue opens with the Vladislav Inozemtsev’s essay “*The Collapse of «All Russia»*” in his regular column IMPERIAL CHRONICLES. It examines the current stage in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church, which, because of its ultimate transformation into an almost state-run institution, has ruined its own status as the “universal” church uniting the Orthodox Christians of the whole world, especially those from the so-called “Slavic countries”. The unconditional support of the Russian Orthodox Church for the Russian invasion of Ukraine has played a fatal role in this, alienating Orthodox churches outside the Russian Federation from it.

Alexey Levinson in his regular column SOCIOLOGICAL LYRICS publishes “*Ruin-22*”, talking about social ruination, about the consistent destruction of classes and social groups first in the USSR, and then in post-Soviet Russia – from the peasantry to the intelligentsia, from the nobility to the new “middle class”.

The first of the two texts in the POLITICS OF CULTURE section is Vladislav Degtyarev’s essay “*Cultural Ruin and Natural Ruin*”, where the reader is offered a brief outline of how the European cultural consciousness categorised architectural ruins – the “real” ones (that is, resulting from decline and destruction that occurred in the reality of history) and the “fake” ones (that is, objects *built as ruins to begin with*, ones that were never “whole”). The author’s reasoning focuses on the problem of historicisation of the destructive dialectics of “human activity” and “work of nature”. The second text is the article by *NZ* editor Igor Kobylin “*«Déjà Vu and the End of History»: Possibilities and Reality*”, where he continues the train of thought, started in the previous issue of the journal. Kobylin devotes his article to a discussion of the book “*Déjà Vu and the End of History*” by the Italian philosopher Paolo Virno, published in 2015. Kobylin focuses, in particular, on the eschatological perspective of capitalism, which claims to own all historical time in its totality, regardless of the destruction that history brings, as well as on capitalism’s claims to the role of its own “gravedigger” – the role which capitalism, according to the author, “historicises”.



Urban ruins, the remnants of industrial cities and of everyday urban life of the Soviet and post-Soviet period that are transformed by street art into socially significant contemporary art – these are the problems discussed in the first thematic selection of 145th *NZ* issue “STREET ART BETWEEN “GARAGE” AND THE UTILITY OFFICE”. This block opens with the article by Maria Udovydchenko, in which the author gives a brief outline of the history of Russian graffiti publications that are intended mainly for artists working in that genre. Anton *Make* Polsky talks about the so-called “housing and utilities” public art (or, from Russian, “ZHEK-art”) – a kind of folk, “everyday” version of street art and conceptualism. Natalia Kash gives a case of the “10.203” art-space activities.

The second thematic block “AFRICAN RUINS OF THE FUTURE” is devoted to neo- and post-colonial ruins – namely, the situation in Africa, which has developed after several stages of decolonisation and attempts of democratic reforms. In many countries of the continent the political, economic and social situation is close to desperate, and in some places there is a semi-hidden and sometimes even full-scale civil war going on. The first three texts are set in West and Northwest Africa. Alisa Shishkina and Egor Fine explore the phenomenon of the so-called “coup-volution”. It is a new term in political science, which denotes a dynamic change in the patterns of domestic and foreign policy of a state that happens not because of a *revolution*, but of a *coup*. This became relevant in some African countries during the time of the “Arab Spring”. Leonid Isaev and Daria Bobarykina tell the story of the Tuareg, who called “the African Kurds”: like the Kurds, the Tuareg did not manage to create their own nation state – either in the aftermath of

the collapse of colonial empires in Africa, or in the subsequent decades of conflict development in the regions, where they historically live. Ethnic and political crises in the sub-Saharan region that call into question the viability of states such as Burkina Faso are the subject of Natalia Zherlitsyna’s article. The piece by *NZ* editor Andrey Zakharov transports the reader to the south of Africa; the author tells the story of how the British authorities, preparing to leave the region in the late 1940s – 1950s, tried to create a sort of strange federation there, consisting of completely disparate regions and territories. This attempt, which went down in the history of federalism, predictably ended in failure.

Two reviews from the *NEW BOOKS* section connected to the topic of “post-colonial ruins of the future”. These are Andrey Zakharov’s review of the Russian translation of the book “*Away from Chaos. The Middle East and the Challenge to the West*” by the French orientalist Gilles Kepel, and Margarita Medvedeva’s reviews Maria Kicha’s work “*Afghanistan. The True History of the Legendary Country*”.

Tatiana Vorozheikina in her column *THE REVERSE OF THE METHOD* analyses the ruination of democratic procedures and centrist politics on the material of another continent – Latin America. This time the focus is on Brazil, where a presidential election of critical importance for the country is taking place. Two former presidents are vying for office, the far-left politician Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the right-wing populist Jair Bolsonaro, who is currently in power.

The 145th *NZ* issue features an excerpt from the book “*It Gets Me Home, This Curving Track*” by the British music critic and journalist Ian Penman. It is an essay on the great funk artist James Brown, where his biography is recounted

against the backdrop of black Americans' struggle for their rights and the political history of the United States in the 1950s–1970s. The Russian translation of Penman's book is scheduled for release by the New Literary Review publishing house at the end of 2022.

This *NZ* issue also includes the very first voluminous study/investigation by the historian Boris Sokolov, who traces the fates of Soviet writers, classic authors of socialist realism, during the Russian

Civil War. In his article "*Socialist Realist in the Camp of the White Warriors*", Sokolov provides substantial evidence that in 1919 the Soviet poet and literary functionary Nikolai Tikhonov served not in the Red Army, but rather in the anti-bolshevik army of General Nikolai Yudenich.

The 145th *NZ* issue concludes with the *RUSSIAN INTELLECTUAL JOURNALS' REVIEW* by Alexander Pisarev and the *NEW BOOKS* section.



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