

Summary

The 163rd NZ issue takes communism as its central theme. More precisely, it covers various aspects of communism, from historical and political to theoretical and ideological, as well as administrative and practical; it also examines communism as an artistic project, an artistic utopia. The issue is entitled *“The End of Communism and «Communism» Without End”*. As the title suggests, it has two thematic poles. The first one is historical, dedicated to the 40th anniversary of the start of perestroika in the USSR, which ultimately led to the collapse of the country.

The opening section of the issue is titled *“THE PROCESS IS NOT UNDERWAY: ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF PERESTROIKA”*; it’s a reference to Mikhail Gorbachev’s famous phrase, *“The process is now underway”*. The block contains six extensive articles devoted to various aspects of perestroika seen specifically as a crisis and the end of communism.

The first article, *“Perestroika and the «Blind Spots» of Late Soviet Rationality”* by Dmitry Gorin, analyses the consciousness of Soviet society, questioning its rationality, which is usually attributed to it by default due to Soviet ideology officially being based on atheism, materialism, etc.

Sergei Gogin provides a brief outline of the history of perestroika-era journalism – the prime engine of the rapid changes happening in the USSR in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Australian historian Mark Edele traces the history of the Great Patriotic War

veterans from 1945 to the end of the USSR, demonstrating the transformation of this social group into a force that held influence in Soviet society and enjoyed – at least on paper – significant privileges. It all ended tragically for the veterans, who saw the collapse of the country that had supported and promoted them, and lost nearly all their privileges and influence with it.

Alexander Zamyatin’s article *“Towards the Origins of Strong Executive Power in Post-Soviet Russia: Re-reading Gavriil Popov’s «What Is to Be Done?»”* focuses on the political history of perestroika. The author explores the events of 1990 when a kind of diarchy was being established across Russia (then still a part of the USSR): alongside the federal administrative structure, there emerged a system of local (republican, regional, municipal) authorities. These supplemental administrative bodies often ended up under the control of anti-Gorbachev democratic (or self-proclaimed “democratic”) forces, which quickly began employing some methods characteristic of authoritarian regimes. It is through this lens that Zamyatin analyses the article by Gavriil Popov, who was one of the democratic leaders at the time and shortly afterwards became the first mayor of Moscow.

Alexey Makarkin’s piece (*“Perestroika’s Conservative Face: The Canonisation of Saints at the 1988 Local Council”*) depicts several episodes from the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in the late Soviet period, showing how conservative forces, which had been very influential in the Church before 1985, became dominant during – and especially after – perestroika.



Lastly, Sergei Ryzhenkov, in his article *"After Perestroika: The Transformation of the Russian Political Regime in 1991–2000"*, demonstrates the fallacy of viewing the period of Russian history between 1991 and the start of Vladimir Putin's first presidency as a triumph (or even any significant success) of democracy. The author views the 1990s as a decade of searching for and honing authoritarian methods, creating authoritarian institutions, and so on.

The first thematic block of issue 163 of *NZ* is complemented by several regular sections, which also have a thematic focus this time around. In *CULTURE OF POLITICS*, Ilya Vinitzky conducts a fascinating investigation into two historical and cultural narratives. The first one is about Friedrich Engels learning the Russian language and how Soviet propaganda managed to utilise this fact. The second one concerns the Soviet writer Galina Serebryakova, who, using the fact that one of the "founders of scientific communism" had studied Russian, in her writing mythologised Karl Marx's family and Friedrich Engels as role models for Soviet families and citizens (*"The Red Beauty and the Beast. Galina Serebryakova and the Soviet Russification of Marxism in the 1960s"*).

In the *CASE STUDY* section, Pavel Glushakov discusses one more possible origin and meaning of the pseudonym Stalin. *NZ ARCHIVE* features a translation of several excerpts from the memoirs of Muhammad Najati Sidqi, a Palestinian communist active in the 1920s–1930s, which recount the early years of the Palestinian socialist movement, and its relationship with the Jewish left and trade unions. An excerpt describing the memoirist's studies at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East is of particular value.

In the *THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MODERNITY* section, Slovenian historian of ideas Tanja Petrovič raises the question – which, given the intensity of current debates within the left-wing part of academia, is not purely theoretical – about the possibility of a socialist modernity beyond the constraints of colonial thinking and colonial politics. The latest instalment of Alexey Levinson's *SOCIOLOGICAL LYRICISM* is also devoted to perestroika – or more precisely, to its author, Mikhail Gorbachev.

The second selection of materials in issue 163 has to do with another kind of "communism" – that of a social and artistic utopia. Chronologically, however, it pertains to the same period: perestroika, when the USSR was deep in crisis (ideologically, among other things), eventually leading to the collapse of the state. This process had a crucial cultural dimension; Soviet people not only gained access to almost everything previously banned by the Soviet authorities, from Nabokov's novels to sex education manuals, they also gained the opportunity to engage in writing or any other form of creativity without seeking permission from the authorities. Many movements that had formed a DIY culture alongside the official culture now emerged from the underground.

One of the most powerful of these was the rock music movement, which revealed itself to Soviet society almost fully operational: it had numerous bands playing a wide variety of genres, it had underground recording studios, a functioning non-official system for organising concerts and distributing records, it had samizdat periodicals, and, of course, it already had an audience. One of the regional "schools" of the late Soviet rock movement that had emerged from the underground was the so-called Siberian

punk, which differed significantly from the rock scenes of Moscow, Leningrad, and Sverdlovsk. One of the key figures of the Siberian punk scene was Yegor Letov, the founder and leader of the band Grazhdanskaya Oborona. Around this band, there formed a very distinctive, radical regional subculture, which, in turn, brought forth new bands and new recordings.

Grazhdanskaya Oborona spawned a number of side-projects, one of which became the focus of the second thematic selection of this *NZ* issue. The project is called *Kommunizm*; it existed in various forms for quite a long time and released several albums. In their articles, the Italian researcher Sara Manzi (*"The Harmony of Decay: Kommunizm's Early Recordings*

in an Interdisciplinary Perspective"), Denis Karpov (*"Side-Projects of Siberian Punk as Anti-Aesthetic Statements: Tsyganyata I Ya S Ilyicha"*), Kirill Korchagin (*"Kommunizm vs Collective Actions: Conceptualism as Liberation"*), and Anatoly Korchinsky (*"The Ghosts of Kommunizm: The «Compression» of Time and the «State of History»"*), all explore various aspects of the poetics and politics of *Kommunizm's* releases.

The issue concludes with the **NEW BOOKS** section, where we can single out Andrei Gelianov's extensive – and quite critical – review of the recently published, much-discussed book by Christoph Schuringa, *"A Social History of Analytic Philosophy: How Politics Has Shaped an Apolitical Philosophy"*.

www.eurozine.com

The most important articles on European culture and politics

Eurozine is a netmagazine publishing essays, articles, and interviews on the most pressing issues of our time.

Europe's cultural magazines at your fingertips

Eurozine is the network of Europe's leading cultural journals. It links up and promotes over 100 partner journals, and associated magazines and institutions from all over Europe.

A new transnational public space

By presenting the best articles from the partner magazines in many different languages, Eurozine opens up a new public space for transnational communication and debate.

The best articles from all over Europe at www.eurozine.com **eurozine**

Оформить подписку на журнал можно в следующих агентствах:

«Подписные издания»: подписной индекс П3832 (только по России) <https://podpiska.pochta.ru>

«МК-Периодика»: подписной индекс 45683 (по России и за рубежом) www.periodicals.ru

«Экстра-М»: подписной индекс 42756 (по России и СНГ) www.em-print.ru

«Ивис»: подписной индекс 45683 (по России и за рубежом) www.ivis.ru

«Информ-система»: подписной индекс 45683 (по России и за рубежом) www.informsystema.ru

«Информнаука»: подписной индекс 45683 (по России и за рубежом) www.informnauka.ru

«Прессинформ»: подписной индекс 45683 (по России и СНГ) <http://pinform.spb.ru>

«Урал-Пресс»: подписной индекс: 45683 (по России и за рубежом) www.ural-press.ru

Приобрести журнал вы можете в следующих магазинах:

В Москве:
«Московский Дом Книги» ул. Новый Арбат, 8 +7 495 789-35-91

«Фаланстер» М. Гнездиновский пер., 12/27 +7 495 749-57-21

«Фаланстер» (на Винзаводе) 4-й Сыромятнический пер., 1-6 (территория ЦСИ Винзавод) +7 495 926-30-42

«Циолковский» Пятницкий пер., 8 +7 495 951-19-02

В Санкт-Петербурге:
На складе издательства Лиговский пр., 27/7 +7 812 579-50-04 +7 952 278-70-54

В Воронеже:
«Петровский» ул. 20-летия ВЛКСМ, 54а (ТЦ «Петровский пассаж») +7 473 233-19-28

В Екатеринбурге:
«Пиотровский» ул. Б. Ельцина, 3 («Ельцин-центр») +7 343 312-43-43

В Нижнем Новгороде:
«Дирижабль» ул. Б. Покровская, 46 +7 831 434-03-05

В Перми:
«Пиотровский» ул. Ленина, 54 +7 342 243-03-51