

# Summary

**T**he 155th *NZ* issue contains three major thematic blocks and several standalone pieces outside of those.

The first selection, entitled “WORLD WAR II: PRACTICES OF NORMALIZATION, FORGETTING AND REINTERPRETATION”, is devoted to the transformation of public policy, public opinion and destinies of individual people that came as a consequence of the greatest war of the 20th century. This block opens with an in-depth historiographical study (the first of its kind) of the biography of a German counterinsurgency unit commander who fought against Soviet partisans in the occupied territories. Putting together what little they could find in archival documents and contemporaries’ accounts, Oleg Beida and Igor Petrov traced the life story of a Dr. Hans Beutelspacher. Both before and after the war, Beutelspacher pursued a career as a soil scientist (seeing more success in the later years), whereas during the war he zealously contributed to war crimes against Soviet civilians and POWs. After 1945, he escaped any punishment for his deeds, as did many other lower-level Nazi officials.

In a sense, Beutelspacher’s story is typical; what makes it stand out, however, is the fact that he was born on the territory of the then Russian Empire, in Odessa, and after World War II, while he was an employee at a research institute in Braunschweig in the 1950s, Beutelspacher actively collaborated with soil scientists from the USSR. Beyda and Petrov’s article is entitled “*Blood and Soil: The Two Lives of Dr. Beutelspacher*”.

Another biographical study – though covering a life much shorter and a fate far more tragic – is offered by Anatoly Voronin (“*Her Second Mission: The Life and Death of Vera Voloshina*”). The article reconstructs the life story of a young Soviet woman, who in the autumn of 1941 was tasked by the Soviet command with completing acts of sabotage behind enemy lines, but was captured and executed. Subsequently, Vera Voloshina entered the pantheon of Soviet war heroes.

Another text in this thematic block is devoted to public opinion in the countries that were part of the Allies in WWII, and to changes it has undergone over the recent decades. The focus here is public opinion and state-dictated “politics of memory” in Russia and the USA after 1991. Ivan Kurilla (“*Memories of a World War II Ally: Sketches of US-Russian Relations*”) examines how Russia’s attitude towards its American ally – and vice versa – has been changing, reflecting the changes in the domestic policies of these countries, and especially the radical shifts in bilateral relations that have occurred since.

The last text of the first section reads as a fitting addition to the preceding pieces, particularly the last one. The Australian historian, professor at the University of Melbourne Mark Edele offers *NZ* readers a brief overview of his personal biography as a scholar of Soviet history and the Great Patriotic War. Much of the text is devoted to looking back at his own book, “*Soviet Veterans of the Second World War: A Popular Movement in an Authoritarian Society, 1941–1991*”, that was first published 16 years ago.



In the newest instalment of his column SOCIOLOGICAL LYRICS, Alexei Levinson ponders the question of the attitude of the Russian public towards foreign powers in light of the isolationist course set by President Vladimir Putin, and the open confrontation between today's Russia and the West.

Thematically, the second and third selections of the 155th NZ issue can be classified under *cultural studies* (more precisely, *cultural anthropology*) and *contemporary philosophy*. The second block of articles, called "EARLY 20TH CENTURY CINEMA: MEDIA, PARANOIA, POLITICS", contains two texts written by NZ's regular contributors. Igor Smirnov pieces together some filmmaking conventions of the 1900s–1940s by analysing American cinema (silent and sound films) and Soviet, Stalinist one. Vadim Mikhailin in his article "*Diversification of Paranoia: Fritz Lang's «M» and Fridrikh Ermler's «The Great Citizen»*" also employs the comparative method, but chooses the classic German expressionist film "M" by Fritz Lang as representation of "non-Soviet" cinema.

Contemporary philosophy's shift toward so-called *animism* (or toward a *new natural philosophy*, even) is the theme of this issue's third thematic block. The first article here, Egor Dorozhkin's "*Geophilosophy of a World Plunged in Darkness: Earth, Subjectivity and Imagination*", tackles one facet of the problem, briefly summarising and assessing the kind of philosophical thinking which the author – following an already established tradition – dubs "geophilosophy".

The core perspective which this type of philosophical current stems from is called "animism": Dorozhkin discusses theoretical questions pertaining to the relationship between animals and human society (communities), drawing on the theories of Martin Heidegger, Georges Bataille, and Emmanuel Levinas. The selection ends with Bogdan Gromov's article "*The Injustice of Things: A Commentary on the Saying of Anaximander*", which offers a reading of the Greek philosopher's saying (once famously interpreted by Heidegger) done in the spirit of the "new natural philosophy".

The 155th NZ issue also includes the latest instalments of Tatiana Vorozheikina's regular column THE REVERSE OF THE METHOD (she talks about the short-lived period in post-war Argentine history, between 1962 and 1966, when a civilian, democratically elected government was in power) and CULTURE OF POLITICS, which offers a short treatise by the German scholar Otto Luchterhandt, focusing on the topic of legal nihilism in modern Russia.

The 155th issue wraps up with the RUSSIAN INTELLECTUAL JOURNALS REVIEW by Alexander Pisarev and the NEW BOOKS section, where one piece seems particularly noteworthy: Sofia Veretennikova's review of a collection of Russian translations of works (newly and frighteningly relevant today) written by the German philosopher Karl Jaspers, which tackle the topic of "collective guilt" and "collective responsibility" of entire nations (primarily the Germans) in the aftermath of the World War II.