

Summary

The 152nd *NZ* issue marks the end of 2023, a year that will go down in history as one of the most turbulent and tragic years in recent decades. Bloody wars are raging in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, irresponsible populists are strengthening their positions in a number of the most influential countries in the world, and the environmental crisis is getting worse despite constant calls to take joint measures to combat climate change – which, for the most part, fail to result in concrete actions.

All of this is happening against the backdrop of accelerating technological progress, where we see the wildest dreams of a 19th century citizen becoming a reality. Nationalism and even racism, left- and right-wing radicalism, the latest edition of authoritarianism, the populist wave built upon traditionalist rhetoric, aggressive religious fundamentalism, culture wars – all these phenomena, too, in one way or another, trace their origins back to the 19th century, to early and the beginning of high modernity.

The key event here seems to be the European revolutions of 1848–1849, which, having absorbed the ideological, political and cultural experience of the French Revolution and the revolutionary movements of the 1820s and 1830s, laid the foundations for further developments and, most importantly, prospective visions of the future. Or, to be more precise, of *futures*, plural. In a sense, these futures have arrived now, in the first quarter of the 21st century, albeit in such a shape and form that those people

who dreamed about them (and fought to bring them closer) would probably not recognize them as “their” futures. “*The Futures That Have Arrived*” is the theme of the 152nd *NZ* issue.

It opens with a thematic selection entitled “REVOLUTIONS, HISTORICITY, AND THE FUTURES OF MODERNITY THAT HAVE ARRIVED”. The first piece, which sets the themes for both the first selection and the entire issue, is a transcript of an extensive discussion wherein the participants – *NZ* editor Kirill Kobrin, the philosopher Igor Kobylin, the historian Mikhail Velizhev, the philosopher Andrei Oleynikov, and the political theorist Ilya Budraitskis – discuss various aspects of the problem of “the futures that have arrived”, from historical to purely philosophical. The topic of European revolutions that helped to form the visions of modernity’s futures is continued by Oleg Larionov in his detailed review of the seminal work by the Australian and British historian Christopher Clark entitled “*Revolutionary Spring: Fighting for a New World, 1848–1849*”, which was published in the summer of 2023 (“*The Space of the Revolutionary Experience, and the Modern Horizon of Expectations: 1848–1849*”). The selection wraps up with a brief overview of the regimes of historicity that exist in contemporary humanities theory: Maria Kasai raises the question of whether there is room for a “future” in each of these regimes.

The problem of the future (and of an immediate one at that) is discussed in more practical, historically specific terms by Alexei Levinson in his regular column *SOCIOLOGICAL LYRICS*. This instalment



is devoted to the upcoming presidential election in Russia (2024) and to the hopes that voters are pinning on the clear favorite of the campaign, the current head of state Vladimir Putin, this year, in 2023 – as compared to the election of 2014.

The concept of the future in modernity is especially closely related to what is usually called a “utopia”. A considerable part of the 152nd issue is devoted to this. Theoretical as well as historical and cultural aspects of this problem are discussed in the second thematic block, “THE (IM)POSSIBILITY OF UTOPIAS IN MODERNITIES”, which consists of three articles. Lolita Agamalova offers the readers a philosophical treatise entitled *“From Kant to the Frankfurt School and Vice Versa: How Is a (Pure) Utopia Possible after the Gulag?”* In his own piece (*“Cosmotechnics and the Space Opera ‘Mass Effect’: Future, Death and the Escape from Capitalism”*), Samson Liberman examines visions of the future (i.e. their possibility or impossibility) in today’s philosophy and computer games. Igor Smirnov in his article entitled *“Nikolai Zabolotsky and Dziga Vertov: A Poet’s Depiction of the Archetype of Everyday Life and the Ecological Revolution”* brings a historical dimension back into the discussion of utopia and its cultural manifestations.

Several other texts of this issue are devoted either to specific evidence of futures that have arrived (i.e. realised utopias), or to the analysis of cultural products of a society where the future is being built and created – at least according to the official rhetoric. NZ ARCHIVE offers an excerpt from the book of travel essays by the Polish-Jewish writer and publicist Hersh Dovid Nomberg entitled *“My Journey to Russia”*. Nomberg arrived in the land of the victorious future of the socialist revolution in 1926. Unlike other, more eminent literary travelers

to the USSR, he had the opportunity to experience the early Soviet life firsthand, to see the everyday reality of it. 45 years later, the Hungarian poet György Petri visited the USSR, which by then was already a completely different country. The readers of NZ are given the opportunity to compare these two realised “Soviet futures” – one from the 1920s and one from the late Soviet period. Petri spoke about his trip many years later, in 1989, in a long interview with a Hungarian magazine. We are publishing an excerpt from said interview under the title *“An Illuminative and Terrible Trip”*.

Two examples of realised (or at least realisable) utopias became the focal points of the CASE STUDY and CULTURE OF POLITICS SECTIONS. Elizaveta Pronyagina gives a brief outline of ideological and cultural notions about the Arctic (the Far North) in the public consciousness and in the political rhetoric of Moscovia, the Russian Empire, the USSR, and the modern-day Russian Federation (*“The Arctic Dreams of Russia: The Arctic and the North in Academic and Socio-Political Discourse”*). Vadim Mikhailin and Galina Belyaeva offer the readers their analysis and interpretation of the process of rethinking childhood in post-war European cinema, where children become central characters in utopian speculations about a “bright future” that is “already coming” or is “just about to arrive” (*“Stop the Thief: The Journey of One Film Plot from West to East and the Neo-Romantic Rethinking of Childhood in Post-War Europe”*).

The 152nd NZ issue also contains a new instalment of Tatiana Vorozheikina’s regular column THE REVERSE OF THE METHOD, devoted to the results of the recent presidential election in Argentina (*“Long Live Freedom, Goddammit!”*), as well as the NEW BOOKS section.

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