Summary

The 168th *NZ* issue opens with a block of materials devoted to certain pressing political problems of the contemporary world — "New/Old Dimensions of Politics in the (Post) Modern World". The first of these is the steady rise of populism, primarily right-wing populism, which has already resulted in serious upheavals around the world — from Brexit to Donald Trump's second presidency, marked by a sharp rise in international tensions and even war with Iran.

The reasons behind this populist wave are manifold, but one is arguably crucial when it comes to politics in the purest sense: political parties, movements, and ideologies. It is the erosion of support for traditional political parties and, more broadly, society's profound distrust of its own political elites. This is precisely what Igor Smirnov, a regular contributor to *NZ*, addresses in his article "*Hatred of the Elites*", which opens issue 168 of the journal. The author examines the historical roots of the current anti-elite revolution (as he terms it) and sees it as the completion of the present historical period.

Another crucial problem of today's world is the intrusion of technology into everyday political practice, a situation in which virtual political reality becomes more real than conventional political structures. One manifestation of this tendency has been the emergence and proliferation of so-called "virtual states". Andrei Medushevsky's article offers an overview of these "state" formations.

The theme of trust/distrust toward certain political or social groups is continued in the latest instalment of Alexei Levinson's column Sociological Lyricism. Here, the author, drawing on sociological data spanning several decades, traces the transformation of Russian society's attitude toward business.

A significant portion of issue 168 of *NZ* is occupied by the theme of the structure and functioning of Soviet state power — and its various forms. *NZ* contributors discuss this theme within the framework set out in Michel Foucault's later works, which introduced the concept of *la gouvernementalité*. *La gouvernementalité* in relation to Russian and Soviet history is the topic of a round-table discussion featuring Oleg Kharkhordin, Viktor Kaplun, Alexander Pisarev, Galina Orlova, Igor Stas, and Igor Kobylin. This is the second part of this round-table; the first part was published in issue 167. It should also be noted that these publications — as well as several upcoming ones — are dedicated to the centenary of Michel Foucault's birth. The theme of the history of development and periodisation of "Soviet governance" is continued by Konstantin Mitroshenkov in his lengthy review of Alexei Safronov's research "*The Great Soviet Economy*" in the New Books section.

The second collection of materials in this issue is devoted to a highly acute problem that over the past two decades has moved to the forefront both in public consciousness and in the private lives of many people. Heightened psychological vulnerability (the problem

in question) has become something of a hallmark of contemporary society — not only in the West, but also in Russia and the countries of Southeast Asia. This phenomenon, which has received the name "ego-sensitivity", is the subject of Sergei Finogin's article "*Ego-sensitivity and the Risk Society*".

The "politics of ego-sensitivity" is in many ways connected with the "politics of trauma". The American philosopher and cultural theorist Catherine Liu has leveled criticism at the fixation on trauma typical of liberal media and the culture industry in her newly published book "*Traumatized*", which is the subject of a review essay by Andrei Gelianov.

Ego-sensitivity and the fixation on trauma are often considered the result of the so-called "crisis of masculinity". This term emerged relatively recently, which by no means implies that representations of masculinity — and masculinity itself, in its cultural and social norms — had not previously been called into question. Masculinity in the Soviet cultural underground is the focus of the article by Klavdia Smola, titled "*Speaking Outlaw: Performing Masculinity in the Soviet Underground Culture*".

Among the other topics in issue 168 of *NZ* is the 30th anniversary of the Khasavyurt agreements, which put an end to the First Chechen War. An overview of the events that led to the conflict, the course of the war, the peace negotiations, and the terms of the agreements can be found in an article by Vadim Korolkov. In "*The Women of Iceland and the USSR: A Dialogue at a Distance*", Evgeny Pankov offers a brief outline of the history of contacts and attempts at cooperation between women's organisations and groups in the USSR and Iceland during the Cold War. Both texts are in the Case Study section.

Issue 168 of the journal also features the latest instalment of Tatyana Vorozheykina's column The Reverse of the Method ("*Venezuela: The Opposition and Trump*"), as well as the Modernity Revisited section, where, in his essay "*The Disintegration of the Classical, or the Forgotten Art of Circe*", Vladislav Degtyarev interprets the transformation of certain artistic forms from the Baroque to Art Déco within the framework of shifting cultural paradigms and modes of aesthetic thought.