**INTRODUCTION**

**Sixty years of the contemporary history magazine that has itself become a part of contemporary history**

*“...let us build, one stone at a time, the structure of the contemporary history of the main social forces and transformations...”*

The editorship prepared the first issue of the magazine in June 1969, soon after the establishment of the Institute for the History of the Workers’ Movement, the forerunner of the today’s Institute of Contemporary History. The editorship that consisted of seven members under the leadership of France Klopčič submitted 388 pages for printing (including the final *errata* page, which was customary at that time). A modest and tasteful cover was designed by Plečnik’s student Vlasto Kopač, who also designed the Liberation Front’s newsletters. Stereotypes were made by the stereotype casting room ČZP Ljudska pravica, while the Tone Tomšič printing house took care of the printing. The first issue of the Contributions to the History of the Workers’ Movement, a new scientific publication in Slovenia, finally hit the bookshelves in an astonishing print run of 3000 copies. In a short introduction, the members of the editorship wrote that the publication continued the tradition of the two issues of the yearbook, published, until then, by the Museum of National Liberation of the People’s Republic of Slovenia. They added that it would strive to “explore, in the Marxist tradition, the emergence, development, and social role of the working class in Slovenia as the proponent of socialist and communist ideas, the driving force of social transformations, and the leader and liberator of the working people from the old system of exploitation, oppression, and wars”.

Finally, the editorship ambitiously emphasised that Contributions hoped to become “a new, additional factor in the Slovenian historiography with no intentions to restrict or replace any existing historical institutions or their functions. On the contrary, the scope and depth of historiography will thus only expand and open new possibilities for Slovenian historians to create freely.”

Sixty years have passed since then and the publication that initially focused on the aforementioned issues of the most recent history, which were naturally relevant at that time, has transformed, redirected, and expanded the spatial, topical, and temporal foci of its interests in accordance with the development of contemporary historiography. One of the main scientific media of contemporary history researchers has eventually become a part of contemporary history itself. The only things that have not changed – if I may add somewhat mischievously – are the commitment to scientific methodology and the occasional short introductions.

In the opinion of Franc Rozman, one of the publication’s later editors, Contributions specifically reflected the Institute’s work, development, shortcomings, and successes during the first decade. “More than any other Slovenian historical magazine, it is closely connected to the development and concepts of its publishing institution, thus representing an overview of a considerable part of the Institute’s scientific, research, and archival activities.” Despite all the changes, this statement mostly still holds true today. All the junior researchers at the Institute begin by publishing in Contributions, and all the associates keep publishing there more or less regularly until or even after they retire. The publication is a wonderful reflection of the progress, achieved by the Institute’s explorers of the most recent past, but in no way exclusively by them – the door of the editorial office is wide open to everyone.

The initial concept of the programme lasted only for a decade, as the magazine, along with the Institute, swiftly outgrew its initial framework. The workers’ movement and World War II remained at the forefront for a while, yet they were certainly not the only subjects of discussion. The scope kept widening – from the Party to other political camps, from workers to broader socio-economic analyses, history of everyday life, environmental history, history of culture, etc. The temporal framework kept expanding as well: in the beginning, it was based on the period from 1941 to 1945 and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Until today, however, its scope has extended well into the 19th and the 21st century. Similarly, we can also follow methodological transformation and growth, as well as changes in the approaches to narration, structuring, and presentation of subjects.

Today, Contributions are thus a reflection of our times. We believe that the magazine still represents a decent mirror to historiography, committed to the contemporary trends in the publishing of scientific periodicals. The editorship insists on linguistic perfection and encourages publishing in the Slovenian language. Nevertheless, each article is also accompanied by a comprehensive summary in a foreign language. We also publish topical issues in the English language, thus increasing the visibility of the published research findings.

The main question that we face, has, however, remained the same throughout these sixty years: who do we write for, and why? Nowadays, scientific historiographical publications are no match for the competition, represented by television and other electronic as well as standard newspaper media. The print run is now six times smaller than sixty years ago. Eric Hobsbawm has already established that “modern media society has given the past unprecedented prominence and marketing potential”. However, this primarily means that it is profitable to “sell” the past in all kinds of ways – and, if need be, also to simplify, transfigure, and adapt it (not necessarily, though!). The modern trends foresee further “marginalisation” of the classic scientific magazine. The editorship is nonetheless convinced that scientific magazines should not and cannot search for ways to compete with the media that appeal to readers in a more efficient and seducing manner. Instead, scientific publications should endeavour (along with books) to keep forming the very foundations of the scientific historiography for the foreseeable future. This, however, does not mean that they should not strive to approach the readers who are not necessarily experts in specific fields. A modern scientific magazine should be as appealing and accessible as possible in all formats (printed, digital, etc.).

All these years, the magazine has been edited by editorships consisting mainly of the Institute members. The chief and (or) managing editors have always come from the ranks of the Institute. The first editor was France Klopčič, a critical explorer of the Slovenian contemporary historical development. He was succeeded by the World War II historians Franček Saje and France Škerl. After Škerl, the magazine was edited by Jože Šorn, a specialist in economic history; and later by Franc Rozman, an expert in the 19th century, who is even nowadays renowned for reading everything written by Slovenian historians with a particularly critical eye. Between two Rozman’s editorships, the publication was in the care of Stane Granda, an economic historian; after which it was, for a long time, in the hands of Zdenko Čepič, one of the first researchers of the period after World War II. He and Damijan Guštin ensured that the magazine survived the tumultuous times of the transition. Finally, the editorship was taken over by the author of this introduction.

Each editor and every editorship did their best to steer the magazine’s development. However, it was undoubtedly most profoundly influenced by the authors – writers with their foci, their manners of communicating the topics, and their understanding of contemporary history. They are the most deserving that the publication is celebrating such an important anniversary. Therefore, this issue should be dedicated precisely to them: the authors of contributions about contemporary Slovenian history. I wish many more outstanding texts to all of them!

*Jure Gašparič*