

# EDITORIAL – THEORETICALLY INFORMED HISTORY WRITING AND PRESENT-MINDED QUESTIONS

The journal *Dějiny – Teorie – Kritika / History – Theory – Criticism* has long been committed to historicising current pressing matters of broader social interest. In the present issue we continue in this line, paying attention to themes that are currently resonant not only in history but also in the broader social sciences and in civic society. The volume opens with an article by William O'Reilly (University of Cambridge) on interdisciplinary approaches to decision making, risk and network theory in the study of migration. O'Reilly finely interconnects the actor- and model- oriented approaches while sharing his expert insights into early modern human trafficking and smuggling.

The past is also viewed through present-minded questions in Veronika Čap-ská's interview with Peter Burke (University of Cambridge), which was conducted in Cambridge on June 11<sup>th</sup> 2019. Čapská and Burke discuss recent changes and trends in the study of history, such as the growing interest in the transnational/transcultural (micro)histories, new material culture history, the possible integration of (semi)peripheral regions in global histories as well as the elusive and constructed nature of the periphery concept itself. Peter Burke's contact with scholars from East-Central Europe are also discussed, together with the sore and traumatic issues of the region's distant and more recent past. We are sure that the almost contagious joy of history writing that can be felt in Peter Burke's words will get under our readers' skin and inspire our early career colleagues in particular.

The concept of memory plays a particularly useful part in interconnecting the past, present and future. Intensive recent discussions and heated polemics on the roles of monuments and non-monumental landmarks in shaping memory in the

public space inspired the editorial board to invite Milena Bartlová (Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design, Prague) to address and contextualise the current Czech politics of memory. In her contribution she comments critically on the municipal authorities' problematic exploitation of the first wave of the Covid-19 crisis in spring 2020, i.e. the period when it was nearly impossible to stage any demonstrations, for the purpose of transforming Prague's public space and memoryscape by removing and erecting two public monuments, without providing much space for art historical expert opinions or indeed broader public debate.

Speaking of the "public" dimension of historiography, we present a study by Radmila Švaříčková Slabáková, who argues that during the last decade oral history went through a period of intensive development globally, which sadly went largely unnoticed within the Czech oral history milieu. Švaříčková Slabáková's central research question is whether the Czech oral history circles have been insufficiently receptive of the concepts of reflexivity and shared authority, and she considers the community's problematic approach to the cultural turn. Could the ongoing Covid pandemic serve as a badly-needed impetus to accelerate the debates and accept the challenges of what many Anglo-Saxon authors have termed the "digital turn" in oral history? Švaříčková Slabáková insists that in many aspects of theory, Czech oral historians need to go back to the drawing board.

Two further Czech studies also deal with conceptual history. Lenka Hanovská explores personalist philosophy as the main source of inspiration behind the "modernization" of Czech philosophy during the 1920s and 1930s. She studies the efforts of the new generation of philosophers who desired to liberate philosophy from the political baggage left behind by the victorious Czech national movement. The individualist concept of the person began to surface in many texts in the new journal *Ruch filosofický*, published between 1921 and 1942.

The final study in this issue, by Jan Potoček, deals with a theme already well established in Czech historical anthropology, namely the process of gradual de-criminalisation of suicide in early modern Europe. He contributes to this line of research with a thorough analysis of *The Anatomy of Melancholy* by Robert Burton. Burton was one of the first thinkers who understood *melancholy* as a dangerous disease and argued in favour of therapy and medicalization. He can be seen as a precursor to the later decriminalisation efforts typical in the period of Enlightenment.

As many of our readers know, the editorial board strives to ensure that *Dějiny – Teorie – Kritika / History – Theory – Criticism* is more than an academic journal and that it serves as an open scholarly discussion platform in the theory of history and provides space for emerging research trends and experimental contributions. We encourage reactions to contributions in our discussion section

and organize guest lectures. In the past we have employed early career scholars as junior editors and our editorial board members have organized conference panels on interdisciplinarity and on the publication strategies of academic journals.

In January 2018 the journal collaborated with the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences to host Ewa Domańska (University Poznan/Stanford University) who spoke on Posthumanist History. In November 2018, once again in collaboration with the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences, the journal organized a guest lecture by Andrea Griesebner (University of Vienna) on Marriage Litigations in Austria (16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries). In January 2020 we teamed up with the German Historical Institute Warsaw (branch office Prague) to host Hanno Balz (University of Cambridge), who delivered a lecture entitled 'Hostile Take Over: A Political History of the Colour Red'.

After an involuntary break induced by the Covid 19 pandemic we will continue the History – Theory – Criticism journal's series of guest speaker lectures. We are currently planning a guest lecture by Benno Gammerl (European University Institute, Florence), which will take place in January 2022. This lecture is organized in collaboration with the Prague branch of the German Historical Institute, Warsaw. Benno Gammerl will deliver a lecture 'Feeling Differently. The Emotional Lives of Same-Sex Loving Men and Women in the Federal Republic of Germany'.

The pace and intensity of the editorial work requires substantial dedication and personal sacrifice. Having transformed DTK into a bilingual journal and achieved SCOPUS status for it, Veronika Čapská has decided to step down as Editor-in-Chief in order to dedicate more time to other tasks, in particular her co-leadership of the COST Action Women on the Move. Technical editor Martin Nodl is also taking a step back so as to focus on his new research grant. Both will continue to serve with their expertise on the journal editorial board. In coordination with the editorial board and the Faculty of Humanities, Petr Wohlmuth, as an experienced researcher in the fields of historical anthropology and oral history, has taken on their editorial tasks. In a display of the journal's dedication to interdisciplinarity and to the principle of collective supervision, our senior historical sociologist, Miloš Havelka, has kindly offered to coordinate the editorial board. We believe that a change in editor(s) always brings the added value of new individual scholarly networks and new expertise that can be put to the service of the journal.

*Veronika Čapská*, Editor-In-Chief till September 1, 2021  
*Petr Wohlmuth*, Editor-In-Chief since September 1, 2021