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## UVODNIK: INŠTITUT ZA SLOVENSKO IZSELJENSTVO IN MIGRACIJE TO JESEN PRAZNUJE ŠTIRIDESETLETNICO PRIKLJUČITVE K ZRC SAZU

Janja Žitnik Serafin<sup>1</sup>

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Edini znanstveni inštitut v Sloveniji, ki se z raziskovalno dejavnostjo, pedagoškim delom in prenosom znanstvenih spoznanj v prakso od ustanovitve do danes v celoti posveča tematiki mednarodnih migracij, letos praznuje štiridesetletnico priključitve k Znanstvenoraziskovalnemu centru SAZU. Pod drugačnim imenom je pred tem, tako kot večina današnjih inštitutov ZRC SAZU, deloval neposredno pri Slovenski akademiji znanosti in umetnosti. Z ustanovitvijo ZRC SAZU leta 1981 in njegovim naglim razvojem v naslednjih letih pa so bili izpolnjeni pogoji, da se je leta 1986 kot zadnji inštitut SAZU priključil tej danes mednarodno prepoznavni znanstveni ustanovi še tedanji Inštitut za izseljenstvo SAZU, ustanovljen komaj štiri leta prej. A čeprav zgodovina današnjega Inštituta za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije (ISIM) sega še nekoliko dlje v preteklost, v šestdeseta leta 20. stoletja, prav leto 1986 predstavlja najpomembnejšo prelomnico v njegovem delovanju.

### PREDHODNIK: ŠTUDIJSKI CENTER ZA ZGODOVINO SLOVENSKEGA IZSELJENSTVA, 1963–1970

18. junija 1963 je SAZU v sodelovanju z zgodovinsko sekcijo Slovenske izseljenske matice ustanovila Študijski center za zgodovino slovenskega izseljenstva. Že naslednje leto je Sklad Borisa Kidriča začel financirati projekt »Zgodovina slovenskega izseljenstva«, ki ga je vodil omenjeni Študijski center. Prva štiri leta je ta deloval v okviru treh sekcij – arhivske, bibliografske in statistične – kot iniciativni odbor za zbiranje, objavo in znanstveno interpretacijo gradiva o slovenskem izseljenstvu. Delovnim skupinam so se pridružili še geografi, zgodovinarji, sociologi idr. iz različnih ustanov (NUK, Zavod za statistiko, Državni arhiv Slovenije ...), njegov Znanstveni svet pa je vodil akademik dr. Fran Zwitter. Center je na ta način sorazmerno učinkovito deloval brez lastnih prostorov in zaposlenih kadrov. Sledile so predstavitve rezultatov: razstava izseljenskega tiska in fotografij o pomoči izseljencev domovini v času druge svetovne vojne, odprte spominske sobe Louisa Adamiča v njegovi rojstni hiši, izdelava obsežnega, vsestransko uporabnega statističnega elaborata o izseljevanju

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iz slovenskega etničnega prostora od sredine 19. stoletja do prve svetovne vojne<sup>1</sup> ter objava bibliografij slovenske izseljenske periodike do leta 1945 avtorja Jožeta Bajca. Edino v letih 1968–1970 je Študijski center imel redno zaposlenega raziskovalca s področja zgodovinopisja, zatem je njegova dejavnost usahnila. Leta 1973 so še zadnjič, a tokrat neuspešno, poskusili znova zagnati njegovo delovanje (Čebulj - Sajko, 1990, str. 11–14).

## INŠTITUT ZA IZSELJENSTVO PRI SAZU (1982–1986)

Septembra 1981 je v Ljubljani potekal mednarodni simpozij ob tridesetletnici smrti Louisa Adamiča, priznanega ameriškega pisatelja slovenskega rodu. Prof. Ivo Fabinc, tedanji rektor ljubljanske univerze, je v uvodnem govoru poudaril, da je bil Adamič »prvi znanstveni preučevalec in vidni predstavnik« slovenskega izseljenstva (Fabinc, 1981, str. 5). Diskusija udeležencev je prinesla pobudo za ustanovitev znanstvenega inštituta za interdisciplinarno raziskovanje slovenskega izseljenstva, ki bi presegalo dotedanje zbiranje gradiva in bolj ali manj faktografske objave. Program inštituta naj bi vključeval tudi nadaljnjo znanstveno relevantno osvetlitev Adamičevega življenja, njegovega literarnega dela, družbene vloge in mednarodnega pomena (Žitnik Serafin, 2017, 22–23).

Pobuda je tokrat obrodila sadove. Inštitut za izseljenstvo pri SAZU je bil ustanovljen leta 1982, leto dni po pobudi udeležencev omenjenega simpozija, s ciljem oblikovanja in izvajanja večdisciplinarnega raziskovalnega programa za to tematsko področje. Vodil ga je predstojnik (takrat upravnik), akademik dr. Janez Stanonik, ki je bil tudi organizator simpozija o Louisu Adamiču. Vodstvo Znanstvenega sveta inštituta so, tako kot v primeru predhodnega Študijskega centra, zaupali akademiku dr. Franu Zwitteru. Inštitut, ki je prav v štirih letih svojega obstoja pred priključitvijo k ZRC SAZU pridobil večino svojih izseljenskih arhivskih in časopisnih zbirk, je že ob ustanovitvi dobil lastne prostore na Novem trgu 3 ter leta 1983 uradno postal osrednji dokumentacijski center v Sloveniji za zbiranje arhivskega gradiva o slovenskih izseljencih (Žitnik Serafin, 2002, str. 228). Njegovo tričlansko delovno skupino sva poleg honorarno zaposlene dokumentalistke Mile Šenk, nekdanje sodelavke Slovenske izseljenske matice, sestavljali še sociologinja dr. Silva Mežnarič (zaposlena 1984–1986) in avtorica tega prispevka kot mlada raziskovalka s primarno nalogo preučitve nastanka Adamičeve zadnje knjige *Orel in korenine*, dolgoročno pa za področje književnosti in kulturne dejavnosti slovenskih izseljencev.

Dokumentalistka je urejala in z novimi pridobitvami nenehno dopolnjevala arhivske fonde inštituta ter zbirko slovenske izseljenske periodike. Na dveh posvetih, ki ju je inštitut leta 1985 organiziral z raziskovalci slovenskega izseljenstva iz

1 Gre za tipkopis iz leta 1965 z naslovom »Statistični podatki o izseljevanju s slovenskega ozemlja: doba od srede 19. stoletja do prve svetovne vojne«. Avtor elaborata, ki ga hrani ISIM ZRC SAZU, je Živko Šifrer, vodja statistične sekcije tedanjega Študijskega centra.

drugih ustanov, so udeleženci organizatorju zaupali vlogo koordinatorja raziskav na tem področju. Široka mednarodna mreža sodelavcev ustanovitelja in predstojnika inštituta, akademika Stanonika, je t. i. »Nonijevemu inštitutu«, kot so ga pogovorno poimenovali domači in tuji Stanonikovi kolegi, prinesla nove zunanje povezave. Ob obilici zbranega gradiva (kot tudi evidentiranih fondov in zbirk zunaj inštituta) ter ob izraziti razpršenosti zainteresiranih preučevalcev izseljenskega gradiva se je na novem inštitutu pojavila potreba po nadaljnjih zaposlitvah raziskovalcev s področij različnih humanističnih in družboslovnih znanosti, kar pa je bilo v okviru SAZU ob tedanjem načinu financiranja neizvedljivo (Čebulj - Sajko, 1990, str. 14–17; Žitnik Serafin, 1996, str. 265–266).

## INŠTITUT ZA SLOVENSKO IZSELJENSTVO ZRC SAZU (1986–2009)

3. novembra 1986 se je Inštitut za izseljenstvo pri SAZU priključil Znanstvenoraziskovalnemu centru SAZU, saj so se mu s tem odpirale mnogo boljše možnosti za načrtovani večdisciplinarni kadrovski razvoj. Preimenoval se je v Inštitut za slovensko izseljenstvo ZRC SAZU (ISI). Akademik Stanonik, ki je prehod raziskovalne enote izvedel skupaj z vodstvom ZRC, se je moral ob tedanjih pogojih za zaposlitev predstojnikov inštitutov ZRC SAZU odpovedati nadaljnjemu neposrednemu vodenju svojega inštituta, a je do svoje smrti kot član Znanstvenega sveta inštituta prispeval k usmerjanju njegovega dela (Žitnik Serafin, 2017, str. 23–24). Po letu 1986 so ISI vodili predstojnik in predstojnice Andrej Vovko (1987–1991), Janja Žitnik Serafin (1992–1994), Irena Gantar Godina (1994–1999) in Marina Lukšič Hacin (od leta 1999).

Po odhodu dokumentalistke in sociologinje leta 1986 sem na ISI ostala samo avtorica tega prispevka, a je kmalu po priključitvi k ZRC SAZU sledilo obdobje nagle kadrovske razširitve. Do leta 1990, ko je inštitut začel izdajati revijo *Dve domovini: razprave o izseljenstvu* / *Two Homelands: Migration Studies*, osrednjo slovensko znanstveno revijo za področje mednarodnih migracij, so na njem dobili redno zaposlitev dva zgodovinarja, dve mladi raziskovalki (etnologinja leta 1987 ter sociologinja leta 1989) ter strokovna delavka. Ambicioznost tega izdajateljskega projekta kaže na izjemen ustvarjalni zagon tedanje petčlanske raziskovalne skupine, ki pa je bila še vedno skromna in neizkušena, brez formiranih raziskovalcev (prva mlada raziskovalka in prvi zgodovinar sva doktorirala leta 1992, drugi zgodovinar leto dni pozneje, novi mladi raziskovalki pa v letih 1995 oziroma 1998). Do konca devetdesetih let 20. stoletja so sledile zaposlitve še ene zgodovinarke ter dveh mlajših raziskovalcev, prvega s področja novinarstva in političnih ved, drugega pa za področji geografije in kulturne antropologije. V naslednjem desetletju se je kadrovska sestava ISI nekajkrat spremenila – dva raziskovalca sta zapustila ZRC SAZU, z novimi zaposlitvami pa je inštitut svoj nabor znanstvenih disciplin razširil še na umetnostno zgodovino, socialno delo in druga področja. Leta 2001 je ISI začel poleg tedaj že sorazmerno dobro sprejete znanstvene revije izdajati še knjižno zbirko *Migracije*, ki ji je leta

2009 dodal še podzbirko *Migrantke*. Leta 2006 je svoje arhivske zbirke predal Arhivu Republike Slovenije.

V desetletju 1992–2002 je še vedno sorazmerno majhna raziskovalna skupina (6–8 raziskovalcev) ob nepogrešljivi pomoči strokovne sodelavke Špele Marinšek organizirala šest večdnevni mednarodnih konferenc na temo izseljenstva, sezonstva in kulturno-umetniških dejavnosti v diasporah.<sup>2</sup> Leta 1999 je ISI v skladu z obsegom svojih dotedanjih temeljnih raziskovalnih projektov, potekajočih v obdobju 1993–1998, pridobil financiranje raziskovalnega programa »Narodna in kulturna identiteta slovenskega izseljenstva«, ki neprekinjeno poteka že 28 let (od leta 2013 z vsebinsko dopolnjenim naslovom).

Leta 2002, v času zadnjega klasičnega popisa prebivalstva v Sloveniji in ponovnega porasta ksenofobnega vzdušja znotraj slovenske nacionalne večine, je ISI v svoj raziskovalni interes postopoma začel vključevati tudi vprašanja položaja priseljencev iz jugoslovanskega prostora v Sloveniji in njihovih potomcev.<sup>3</sup> Vrhunec odpora Slovencev do priseljencev iz nekdanjih bratskih republik se je prepričljivo odrazil že leta 1999 v reakcijah na odločbo Ustavnega sodišča RS o nezakonitosti izbrisa državljanov drugih republik iz registra stalnih prebivalcev Slovenije, še bolj pa leta 2004 v izidu referenduma o »tehničnem zakonu« za ureditev pravic izbrisanih. Zakon je bil ob 31-odstotni volilni udeležbi zavrnjen s skoraj 95-odstotno večino glasov.

Sodelavci ISI so se vključili v senzibilizacijo večinskega prebivalstva v Sloveniji za prepoznavanje vsakršnih kršitev človekovih pravic ter drugih oblik diskriminacije največjih etničnih skupin priseljencev v to državo. V svoje razprave smo začeli vpeljevati zrcalne primerjave položaja nekdanjih slovenskih beguncev oziroma izseljencev iz Slovenije na eni strani ter priseljencev v Slovenijo, starih in novih, na drugi. S tem smo poskušali čim bolj nazorno problematizirati dvojna merila, ki človeka pogosto zavedejo v prepričanje, da je vse, kar je »naše«, neprimerljivo z vsem drugim. S predstavitvijo poročila *Lively visions, ossified realities: co-cultures in Slovenia* na letni konferenci Združenja evropskih institucij za migracije (AEMI) na Odprti univerzi v Lizboni septembra 2003 ter z vabljenim zastopanjem Slovenije na konferenci *A Common European Migration Policy: A Common Policy for Different Problems* (Leuven, Belgija) novembra istega leta je ISI v očeh mednarodne strokovne javnosti napravil še en korak v smeri preseganja svoje vloge osrednjega inštituta za preučevanje slovenskega izseljenstva ter znova opozoril nase kot na suverena udeleženca mednarodnih diskusij o izzivih sodobnih migracij.

V obdobju 2004–2007 je na ISI potekalo izvajanje prvega temeljnega raziskovalnega projekta o položaju priseljencev v Sloveniji ter o njihovem literarnem ustvarjanju in kulturnem delovanju. Leto dni po zaključku tega projekta je geograf, etnolog in kulturni antropolog, zaposlen na ISI, uspešno zagovarjal doktorsko

2 Konferenca so potekale v Ljubljani leta 1992, v Portorožu v letih 1995, 1998 in 1999, v Gozd Martuljku leta 2001 ter v Radencih leta 2002.

3 S to tematiko se je tedaj ukvarjalo predvsem nekaj raziskovalcev na ljubljanskih Inštitutu za narodnostna vprašanja in Mirovnem inštitutu.

disertacijo na temo, ki je vključevala določene vidike omenjene tematike. Vse od odhoda dr. Silve Mežnarič z inštituta leta 1986 do začetka tega stoletja so bila na ISI pereča vprašanja problematičnega odnosa slovenske nacionalne večine do določenih priseljenjskih narodov, njihovih jezikovnih pravic, verskih tradicij in kulturnih vrednot odrinjena na rob. Inštitut je začel razmišljati o vsebinski dopolnitvi svojega raziskovalnega programa, s tem pa tudi o dopolnitvi svojega imena.

## INŠTITUT ZA SLOVENSKO IZSELJENSTVO IN MIGRACIJE ZRC SAZU (OD 2009)

Predlog o dopolnitvi imena inštituta je bil uradno potrjen leta 2009, do vsebinske dopolnitve raziskovalnega programa ISIM pa je postopoma prihajalo že prej. Od začetka projektnega financiranja raziskovalnega dela v Sloveniji leta 1993 do leta 2009, tj. v šestnajstih letih, je raziskovalna skupina, ki je v tem obdobju združevala 4–12 raziskovalcev, uspešno zaključila 31 raziskovalnih, ciljnih in aplikativnih nacionalnih in mednarodnih projektov, v veliki večini na temo slovenskega izseljenstva, vse bolj pa so projekti vključevali tudi teme, povezane z migracijami drugih narodov. Od tedaj do danes, tj. v naslednjih 17 letih, je skoraj trideset raziskovalcev ISIM (današnja raziskovalna skupina skupaj z deseterico nekdanjih sodelavcev, začasno zaposlenih v tem vmesnem obdobju),<sup>4</sup> zaključila še 70 različnih nacionalnih, čezmejnih, bilateralnih, medregijskih ter širših mednarodnih raziskovalnih in aplikativnih projektov.

Vsebinska teh že zaključenih raziskav se razteza od tematik s področja nekdanjih in današnjih slovenskih migracij (kot so npr. nadzor nad slovenskimi izseljenci med svetovnima vojnama, slovenske skupnosti v ZDA, »beg možganov«, potomci slovenskih izseljencev v BiH, slovenske in hrvaške skupnosti v diaspori, nekdanje in današnje migracije med Slovenijo in Avstrijo, sodobne strategije slovenskih izseljencev za ohranjanje etnične identitete ...) do migracij, mobilnosti in integracije v najširšem pomenu (npr. napotovanje delavcev znotraj EU ter iz tretjih držav, opolnomočenje migrantov in prevajanje kulturnega jezika za njihovo vključevanje, izobraževanje za odrasle begunce, vključevanje beguncev na trg dela itd.). Vendar so po obsegu in neposrednem družbenem vplivu v tem obdobju izstopali predvsem izobraževalni projekti. Člani raziskovalne skupine so skupaj z domačimi in tujimi partnerji razvijali inovativne izobraževalne strategije, »da bi se okrepila politična participacija in aktivno državljanstvo priseljencev in etničnih manjšin in promoviralo aktivno državljanstvo« (Inštitut za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije ZRC SAZU, b. d.). Promovirali so medkulturne vrednote kot temelje oblikovanja in razvijanja odnosov v večetnični in večjezični družbi. Ustvarili so didaktično in informativno

4 Zaradi obilice začasnih zaposlitev (t. i. projektnega zaposlovanja) je za to obdobje značilna izrazitejša kadrovska fluktuacija na ISIM.

gradivo, priročnike, publikacije, igre itd. za vzgajanje k različnosti in medkulturnosti v šolskem in univerzitetnem okolju ter jih posredovali mladim in učnemu kadru na vseh stopnjah izobraževanja (Spletna stran ISIM, O inštitutu: Medkulturni odnosi, Step in!, Eduka). V okviru projekta »Le z drugimi smo« (2016–2021), usmerjenega h krepitvi socialnih in državljskih kompetenc strokovnih delavcev, ki ga je ISIM izvedel s Pedagoškim inštitutom in sodelujočimi organizacijami, je na petih 16-urnih seminarjih sodelovalo več kot 10.200 strokovnih in vodstvenih pedagoških delavcev v slovenskih vrtcih, osnovnih in srednjih šolah ter ljudskih univerzah (Vižintin, 2022; Le z drugimi smo, 2021, str. 2).

Trenutno je na ISIM 19 redno zaposlenih sodelavcev; prevladujejo formirani raziskovalci, ki v izvajanje svojih projektov in programa tesno vpenjajo mlade raziskovalce, asistente in strokovne delavke. Uspešno nadaljujejo z izdajanjem znanstvene revije *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*, priložnost za pridobivanje uredniških znanj in veščin pa lahko na ISIM dobi vsak raziskovalec. Prvi glavni uredniki znanstvene revije so bili Andrej Vovko (1990–1992), Marjan Drnovšek (1993–1995), Janja Žitnik Serafin (1996–2000) in spet Marjan Drnovšek (2001–2007), nato pa so se v funkciji glavnega urednika izmenjavali souredniki Jure Gombač, Jernej Mlekuž in Kristina Toplak (2008–2015). Sledile so Mirjam Milharčič Hladnik (2015–2023) ter sourednici Kristina Toplak in Marijanca Ajša Vižintin (od 2024). Revija je bila konec leta 1999 vključena v prve štiri mednarodne baze podatkov za citiranje in indeksiranje, do danes pa se je uveljavila kot vplivna in sorazmerno pogosto citirana znanstvena revija, v kateri zadnja leta že prevladujejo tuji avtorji.

ISIM še naprej izdaja prav tako odmevno monografsko zbirko *Migracije* s podzbirko *Migrantke*, ki ob zavzetem delu njenih nekdanih in novejših urednikov – Janje Žitnik Serafin (2001–2008), Jerneja Mlekuža (2008–2014), Alekseja Kalca (2014–2019) in od tedaj naprej znova Jerneja Mlekuža – že četrto stoletja uresničuje napovedane cilje. V zbirki je doslej izšlo 33 znanstvenih monografij, vendar se je tempo njihovega izhajanja sčasoma precej spremenil. Frekvenca izdaj iz obdobja prvih osmih let (povprečno dva zvezka letno, skupno 16 zvezkov do leta 2008) se je namreč v nadaljnjih 18 letih (povprečno en zvezek letno, skupno 17 monografij) prepolovila. Vzrok za to so verjetno spremembe v notranjih razmerjih kombiniranega sistema domačega in evropskega sofinanciranja raziskovalnega dela, ki v določenih obdobjih v praksi bolj podpira temeljne raziskave in znanstvene objave, v drugih obdobjih pa odpira več možnosti za aplikativne projekte in strokovne objave.

Večina sedanjih raziskovalcev je vključenih v raziskovalni program »Narodna in kulturna identiteta slovenskega izseljenstva v kontekstu raziskovanja migracij«, ki – kot že omenjeno – neprekinjeno poteka od leta 1999, medtem ko dve raziskovalki sodelujeta v raziskovalnem programu »Dediščina na obrobjih: novi pogledi na dediščino in identiteto znotraj in onkraj nacionalnega«. ISIM poleg tega izvaja še devet (nacionalnih, bilateralnih in evropskih) raziskovalnih in aplikativnih projektov, med katerimi je kar tretjina zgodovinopisnih. Ti obsegajo preučevanje zgodovine migracij v jugovzhodni in srednji Evropi, zgodovino izseljenskih politik v Sloveniji in

na Hrvaškem ter države in diaspore v prvi in drugi Jugoslaviji. Preostalih šest poteka-jočih projektov se posveča mobilnim praksam delavcev, ki delujejo med Slovenijo in drugimi državami EU, reševanju sodobnih izzivov zaposlovanja migrantov in njihovega družbenega umeščanja, zlasti v njihovem delovnem okolju, iskanju optimalnih ukrepov na področju urejanja stanovanjskih razmer migrantov v Evropi ter drugim aktualnim vidikom družbenega vključevanja migrantov (poklicno usposabljanje, podpora pri ustanavljanju podjetij ...).

Raziskovalci ISIM še naprej širijo mrežo znanstvenega in pedagoškega sodelovanja z domačimi in tujimi univerzami in raziskovalnimi inštituti, mednarodnimi znanstvenimi združenji, pogosto tudi z osnovnimi in srednjimi šolami, nevladnimi organizacijami, azilnimi centri, različnimi lokalnimi in državnimi upravnimi telesi, izseljenskimi in priseljenskimi kulturnimi organizacijami, društvi in ustanovami itd. Tako kot v preteklosti tudi danes redno organizirajo mednarodne znanstvene konference in strokovne posvete, k izmenjavi znanstvenih rezultatov pa prispevajo tudi z redno udeležbo na pomembnih znanstvenih srečanjih v tujini. Kjer je to mogoče, v pripravo in izvajanje svojih projektov, dogodkov, razstav, izobraževanj ipd. enakovredno vključujejo tako slovenske izseljence in njihove potomce kot tudi priseljence in begunce v Sloveniji. Sodelujejo pri pripravi zakonskih predlogov, učnih programov in programov sofinanciranja kulturnih in drugih dejavnosti slovenskih izseljencev in priseljencev v Slovenijo. Svoje raziskovalne rezultate predstavljajo strokovni javnosti v monografijah in člankih, objavljenih pri vodilnih evropskih in tujih založbah, v uglednih mednarodnih revijah s področja migracij in integracijskih strategij (*Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, *European Journal of Inclusive Education*, *Journal of Migration History*, *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* idr.) ter v osrednjih periodičnih publikacijah svojih primarnih znanstvenih disciplin. Strokovno in najširšo javnost seznanjajo s svojimi rezultati v priročnikih, poljudnoznanstvenih predstavitev v različnih javnih medijih, kot gostje radijskih in televizijskih oddaj itd.

V srednjeročni Strategiji ISIM, načrtovani za obdobje 2021–2026, so nazorno povzeti osrednji dolgoročni cilji inštituta:

Iz ozkega fokusa na slovensko izseljenstvo v preteklosti se je danes raziskovanje razširilo še na področja priseljevanja, integracije, multikulturalizma in drugih s selitvami povezanih pojavov. [...] Inštitut je bil vse od začetka zasnovan večdisciplinarno in še danes deluje na tem temelju, ki ga nadgrajujemo z meddisciplinarnimi preučevanji selitvenih fenomenov. [...] V svojem delu smo vedno sledili konceptualnim in metodološkim spremembam in novim pristopom v migracijskih študijah v mednarodnem prostoru. Raziskovalni pristopi temeljijo že desetletja na razumevanju selitev kot enem od konstitutivnih družbenih pojavov, ki zaznamuje družbena, socialna, kulturna, gospodarska idr. dogajanja na lokalni, regionalni, nacionalni in globalni ravni. Za prenos našega znanja na različne zainteresirane javnosti je pomembno, da je več naših raziskovalk in raziskovalcev že desetletja vpetih v pedagoški proces

v formalnih in neformalnih izobraževalnih okoljih, v katerih si prizadevamo, da bi dosegli boljše razumevanje današnjih selitvenih fenomenov in prispevali k senzibilizaciji družbenega okolja. [...] S celovitim pristopom bomo tudi v prihodnje delovali kot znanstveni in družbeni subjekt, ki je s specifičnimi kompetencami odgovorno vpet v dogajanje vse bolj mobilnega in globalno povezanega sveta. (Inštitut za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije ZRC SAZU, 2021, str. 4)

Do nedavnega smo v celotnem znanstvenem opusu raziskovalne skupine ISIM pogrešali predvsem čim bolj integralne pregledne študije in najširše sinteze znanstvenih spoznanj o slovenskem izseljenstvu. Ta dolg je bil v zadnjih nekaj letih že skoraj poravnán z izdajo dveh preglednih monografij, ki poskušata z različnih vidikov čim bolj celovito zaobjeti gospodarsko, socialno in kulturno zgodovino slovenskega izseljenstva od srede 19. stoletja do nastanka slovenske države leta 1991. To sta *Doba velikih migracij na Slovenskem* (Kalc et al., 2020) in *Slovenske selitve v socializmu* (Lukšič Hacin, 2024). Prva, ki je bila pred dvema letoma ponatisnjena, sočasno pa je pri mednarodni založbi Peter Lang izšel njen angleški prevod *Daring Dreams of the Future: Slovenian Mass Migrations 1870–1945* (Kalc et al., 2024), zajema omenjeno obdobje do konca druge svetovne vojne, druga pa povzema rezultate raziskav o prostovoljnih in prisilnih migracijah v slovenskem prostoru ter o organiziranosti slovenske diaspore po svetu v obdobju 1945–1991.

Kot sem zaključila svoj zapis že ob neki drugi priložnosti, je »brez razumevanja preteklih izkušenj slovenskih izseljencev in beguncev za domačo javnost verjetno težko dojeti položaj ljudi, udeleženih v današnjih migrantskih premikih proti Evropi in vanjo« (Žitnik Serafin, 2017, str. 32). Del dolga, ki za zdaj ostaja, je tretji del načrtovane trilogije – pregledna interdisciplinarna predstavitev slovenskih migracij še v aktualnem obdobju samostojne Slovenije. S tem bo v celoti uresničen osnovni predpogoj za relevantne primerjalne raziskave, predvsem pa za še učinkovitejše posredovanje preteklih izkušenj in spoznanj o slovenskem izseljenstvu sedanjim rodovom, ki se vedno znova soočajo s situacijami, primerljivimi z nekdanjimi (Žitnik Serafin, 2017, str. 32). Objava celovitega pregleda slovenskega izseljenstva je namreč vse od priključitve k ZRC SAZU dalje predstavljala eno glavnih poslanstev ISIM.

Danes je Inštitut za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije ZRC SAZU v domači splošni in mednarodni strokovni javnosti prepoznan kot znanstveno relevanten in operativno učinkovit družbeni subjekt, ki ob temeljitem poznavanju in razumevanju preteklosti in sedanjosti ter ob upoštevanju najnovejših konceptualnih in metodoloških tokov neodvisne mednarodne humanistike in družboslovja z odločnimi posegi v aktualne razmere vpliva na sedanjost in posredno na prihodnost. S tem ostaja pomemben dejavnik pri družbenem ozaveščanju. Današnji čas je prepoln umetno ustvarjenega strahu, sovraštva in brezbrčnosti. Zgodovina nas uči, da se iz zgodovine naučijo karkoli koristnega za človeštvo predvsem tisti, ki imajo premalo vpliva tu in zdaj. A to nas ne sme odvrniti od nenehnega prepoznavanja, izpostavljanja in upoštevanja bistvenih družbenih zakonitosti, ki se v stoletjih vedno znova

potrjujejo. Brez tega bi ugasnil še zadnji šibki žarek, ki v realnejši luči osvetljuje našo razburkano sedanost.

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## **INTRODUCTION: THE SLOVENIAN MIGRATION INSTITUTE CELEBRATES 40 YEARS AS PART OF THE RESEARCH CENTRE OF THE SLOVENIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS IN AUTUMN 2026**

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The only research institute in Slovenia that—from its founding to the present—has been entirely devoted to the themes of international migration through its research activities, teaching, and practical application of scholarly knowledge is celebrating its fortieth anniversary as part of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). The institute had previously operated—under another name—within the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU), as did most of the institutes that comprise the academy's Research Centre today. With the Research Centre's founding in 1981 and its rapid development in the following years, the conditions were in place for the then Institute for Emigration Studies at SAZU, established just four years earlier, to be the last of SAZU's institutes to join what is now an internationally renowned research organization. Although the history of today's Slovenian Migration Institute (SMI) extends somewhat farther back—to the 1960s—the year 1986 represents the most important turning point in its development.

### **THE PREDECESSOR: THE STUDY CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF SLOVENIAN EMIGRATION, 1963–1970**

On June 18, 1963, in cooperation with the history section of the Slovene Emigrant Association, SAZU founded the Study Center for the History of Slovenian Emigration. The very next year, the Boris Kidrič Fund began financing a project called the *Zgodovina slovenskega izseljenstva* (History of Slovenian Emigration), led by the Study Center. For the first four years, the center operated through three sections—archival, bibliographic, and statistical—while functioning as an initiating committee for the collection, publication, and scholarly interpretation of materials related to Slovenian emigration. Geographers, historians, sociologists, and scholars from other fields at various institutions—the National and University Library (NUK), the Institute of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia for Statistics, the state archives, and

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so on—joined the working groups; Fran Zwitter, a member of SAZU, chaired the center's Scientific Council. The center operated relatively effectively this way without premises or staff of its own. Subsequent presentations of the results included an exhibition of emigrant press and photographs documenting aid provided by emigrants to their homeland during World War II; the opening of the Louis Adamič memorial room in the house where he was born; the preparation of a comprehensive, widely applicable statistical report on emigration from the Slovenian ethnic territory from the mid-nineteenth century to World War I;<sup>1</sup> and the publication of Jože Bajc's bibliographies of Slovenian emigrant periodicals published through 1945. Only from 1968 to 1970 did the Study Center employ a staff researcher in history; after which its activity waned. A final unsuccessful attempt to revive its work took place in 1973 (Čebulj-Sajko, 1990, pp. 11–14).

## THE INSTITUTE FOR EMIGRATION STUDIES AT SAZU (1982–1986)

In September 1981, an international symposium took place in Ljubljana to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the death of the renowned American writer of Slovenian origin Louis Adamič. Ivo Fabinc, then rector of the University of Edvard Kardelj in Ljubljana (today's University of Ljubljana), emphasized in his opening address that Adamič was "the first scholar to study the history of Slovenian emigration and himself a prominent representative of it" (Fabinc, 1981, p. 5). The discussion among the participants brought forth an initiative to establish an institute whose interdisciplinary research on Slovenian emigration would go beyond the earlier collection of materials and the publication of more or less factual accounts. The institute's program was also to include the further scholarly examination of Adamič's life, his literary work, social role, and international significance (Žitnik Serafin, 2017, pp. 22–23).

This time, the initiative bore fruit. The Institute for Emigration Studies at the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts was founded in 1982, a year after the symposium participants proposed it, with the aim of designing and implementing a multidisciplinary research program in this field. The institute was headed by Janez Stanonik, a member of SAZU, who at the time held the title of director and had also organized the symposium on Louis Adamič. As in the case of the preceding Study Center, Fran Zwitter was entrusted with chairing the institute's Scientific Council. The institute acquired most of its emigrant-related archival and newspaper collections during the four years before it joined ZRC SAZU. Upon its establishment, the institute was given its own premises at Novi trg 3. In 1983, it officially became the central documentation center in Slovenia for the collection of archival material on Slovenian emigrants

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1 It was a typed manuscript from 1965 with the title "Statistical Data on Emigration from the Slovenian Territory Between the Mid-Nineteenth Century to World War I." The author of the report was Živko Šifrer, the head of the statistical section of the then Study Center. The report is held by the Slovenian Migration Institute, ZRC SAZU.

(Žitnik Serafin, 2002, p. 228). In addition to the documentation specialist employed on a contract-basis, Mila Šenk, a former associate of the Slovene Emigrant Association, the institute's three-member working group consisted of sociologist Silva Mežnarič (employed from 1984 to 1986) and me, then a junior researcher, with the primary task of studying the genesis of Adamič's final book *The Eagle and the Roots*, with a longer-term responsibility for research on the literary and cultural activities of Slovenian emigrants.

The documentation specialist organized the institute's archival holdings and its collection of Slovenian emigrant periodicals, continually adding new acquisitions to both. At two scholarly meetings that the institute organized in 1985 with researchers studying Slovenian emigration at other institutions, the participants entrusted the institute with coordinating research in the field. The broad international network of the institute's founder and head, Janez Stanonik, brought new external connections to the "Noni Institute," as Stanonik's colleagues in Slovenia and abroad informally called it. Given the wealth of material already collected, the holdings and collections identified outside the institute, and the wide dispersal of researchers interested in emigration materials, the new institute needed to hire additional researchers from various humanities and social-science disciplines. Under SAZU's funding system at the time, however, such hiring was not feasible (Čebulj-Sajko, 1990, pp. 14–17; Žitnik Serafin, 1996, pp. 265–266).

## THE INSTITUTE FOR SLOVENIAN EMIGRATION STUDIES, ZRC SAZU (1986–2009)

On November 3, 1986, the Institute for Emigration Studies at SAZU became part of ZRC SAZU, thereby gaining much better opportunities for the planned expansion of its multidisciplinary staff. It was renamed the Institute for Slovenian Emigration Studies, ZRC SAZU. Stanonik, who carried out the transition of the research unit together with the ZRC SAZU leadership, could not continue to head the institute directly due to the employment requirements then applicable to ZRC SAZU institute heads. However, until his death, he remained a member of the institute's Scientific Council and continued to contribute to the direction of its work (Žitnik Serafin, 2017, pp. 23–24). After 1986, the institute was led by Andrej Vovko (1987–1991), Janja Žitnik Serafin (1992–1994), Irena Gantar Godina (1994–1999), and Marina Lukšič Hacin (since 1999).

After the departure of the documentation specialist and the sociologist in 1986, I was the institute's only remaining staff member. Soon after it joined ZRC SAZU, the institute entered a period of rapid staff expansion. By 1990, when the institute began publishing the journal *Dve domovini: razprave o izseljenstvu* / *Two Homelands: Migration Studies*, the principal Slovenian scholarly journal in the field of international migration, it had hired four additional researchers—two historians and two junior

researchers (an ethnologist in 1987 and a sociologist in 1989)—and a professional staff member. This ambitious publishing project attests to the exceptional creative drive of our five-member research team at the time, which was still small and inexperienced and had no established researchers: the first historian and I, the institute's first junior researcher, received our PhDs in 1992; the second historian followed in 1993, and the two later junior researchers received theirs in 1995 and 1998, respectively. By the end of the 1990s, the institute had also hired another historian and two junior researchers, one specializing in journalism and political science and the other in geography and cultural anthropology. Over the following decade, the institute's staff composition changed several times—two researchers left ZRC SAZU, while new hires expanded the institute's range of academic disciplines to include art history, social work, and other areas. In 2001, alongside its by-then relatively well-established scholarly journal, the institute began to publish the monograph series *Migracije (Migrations)*, to which it added the subseries *Migrantke (Migrant Women)* in 2009. In 2006, the institute handed over its archival collections to the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia.

In the decade 1992–2002, with the indispensable help of professional associate Špela Marinšek, the still relatively small research group (6–8 researchers) organized six multi-day international conferences on the topics of emigration, seasonal labor migration, and cultural and artistic activities in the diasporas.<sup>2</sup> In 1999, given the scale of its earlier basic research projects carried out from 1993 to 1998, the institute acquired funding for the research program National and Cultural Identity of Slovenian Emigration, which has now run continuously for 28 years (under an expanded title since 2013).

In 2002, when Slovenia conducted its last traditional census, and the country witnessed a renewed rise in xenophobic sentiment among Slovenia's national majority, the institute gradually began to expand its research interests to include issues related to the position of immigrants from other parts of the former Yugoslavia and their descendants in Slovenia.<sup>3</sup> The peak of Slovenians' resistance to immigrants from the former fraternal republics was clearly evident in reactions to the Constitutional Court's 1999 ruling that the deletion of citizens of the other republics from Slovenia's register of permanent residents had been unlawful, and even more so in 2004 as a result of the referendum on a "technical law" for the regulation of the rights of the Erased. With a voter turnout of 31 percent, nearly 95 percent of those voting rejected the law.

The institute's researchers became involved in raising awareness among Slovenia's majority population about all forms of human-rights violations and discrimination against the largest ethnic groups of immigrants to this country. In

2 The conferences took place in Ljubljana (1992), Portorož (1995, 1998, and 1999), Gozd Martuljek (2001), and Radenci (2002).

3 At the time, the topic was addressed mainly by a few researchers at Ljubljana's Institute for Ethnic Studies and Peace Institute – Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies.

our discussions, we began to introduce mirror comparisons between the situation of former Slovenian refugees and emigrants, on the one hand, and that of earlier and more recent immigrants to Slovenia, on the other. In doing so, we sought to highlight as vividly as possible the double standards that often mislead people into believing that everything that is “ours” is incomparable to everything else. With the presentation of the report “Lively Visions, Ossified Realities: Co-Cultures in Slovenia” at the annual conference of the Association of European Migration Institutions (AEMI) at Universidade Aberta, Portugal’s Open University, in Lisbon in September 2003 and at the invitation of the organizer’s to represent Slovenia at the conference *A Common European Migration Policy: A Common Policy for Different Problems* (Leuven, Belgium) in November 2003. The institute once again drew international attention and took another step toward going beyond its role as the central institute for the study of Slovenian emigration by positioning itself as an authoritative and independent participant in international discussions on the challenges of contemporary migration.

In the period 2004–2007, the institute carried out the first basic research project on the situation of immigrants in Slovenia and on their literary production and cultural activities. A year after the completion of this project, a geographer, ethnologist, and cultural anthropologist employed at the institute successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on a topic that included certain aspects of these issues. From Silva Mežnarič’s departure in 1986 until the beginning of this century, pressing questions concerning the problematic attitude of the Slovenian national majority toward certain immigrant communities, their linguistic rights, religious traditions, and cultural values remained marginalized within the institute’s research. The institute began considering a broader scope of its research program and, consequently, a corresponding broadening of its name.

## THE SLOVENIAN MIGRATION INSTITUTE, ZRC SAZU (2009–PRESENT)

The proposal to amend the name of the institute was officially approved in 2009; the scope of the research program had already been gradually broadened before then. From the beginning of project-based funding for research work in Slovenia in 1993 to 2009, over those sixteen years, the research group, which during this period brought together 4–12 researchers, completed 31 national and international research projects, including targeted and applied projects. Most concerned Slovenian emigration, although they increasingly addressed the migrations of other populations as well. Over the following 17 years, nearly 30 SMI researchers—the current research group together with 10 former staff members employed temporarily during this period<sup>4</sup>—

4 Because of the large number of temporary appointments (project-based employment), this period was marked by higher staff turnover at the institute.

have completed 70 different national, cross-border, bilateral, interregional, and broader international research and applied projects.

The content of these already completed studies ranges from topics in the field of historical and contemporary Slovenian migrations (such as the surveillance of Slovenian emigrants between the two world wars, Slovenian communities in the United States, “brain drain,” descendants of Slovenian emigrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenian and Croatian communities in the diaspora, past and present migrations between Slovenia and Austria, contemporary strategies of Slovenian emigrants for the preservation of ethnic identity...) to migration, mobility, and integration in the broadest sense (for example, the posting of workers within the EU and from third countries, the empowerment of migrants and the translation of cultural language to facilitate migrants’ integration, adult education for refugees, the integration of refugees into the labor market, etc.). Educational projects, however, have stood out in terms of scale and direct social impact. Members of the research group, together with Slovenian and international partners, have developed innovative educational strategies “to strengthen the political participation and active citizenship of immigrants and ethnic minorities and to promote active citizenship” (Inštitut za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije ZRC SAZU, n.d.). They have promoted intercultural values as the foundations for forming and developing relationships in a multiethnic and multilingual society. They have created didactic and informative materials, manuals, publications, games, and so on, to promote diversity and intercultural understanding in school and university settings. They have also distributed these materials to young people and teaching staff at all education levels, as demonstrated in the projects Intercultural Relations, Step in!, and EDUKA – Educating for Diversity (Inštitut za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije ZRC SAZU, n.d.-a; n.d.-b; Medkulturni odnosi, 2011). As part of the project Only (with) Others Are We (2016–2021), aimed at strengthening the social and civic competencies of professionals, which the Slovenian Migration Institute carried out with the Educational Research Institute and participating organizations, more than 10,200 educational professionals and administrators in Slovenian kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, and adult education centers participated in five 16-hour seminars (Vižintin, 2022; Le z drugimi smo, 2021, p. 2).

Currently, the institute has 19 full-time employees. Most are established researchers, who closely involve junior researchers, research assistants, and professional staff members in implementing their projects and programs. The institute successfully continues to publish the bilingual scholarly journal *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*, and every researcher has an opportunity to acquire editorial knowledge and skills. The journal’s first editors-in-chief were Andrej Vovko (1990–1992), Marjan Drnovšek (1993–1995), Janja Žitnik Serafin (1996–2000) and again Marjan Drnovšek (2001–2007). The editorship then alternated among co-editors Jure Gombač, Jernej Mlekuž, and Kristina Toplak (2008–2015). They were followed by Mirjam Milharčič Hladnik (2015–2023) and co-editors Kristina Toplak and Marijanca Ajša Vižintin (since 2024).

At the end of 1999, the journal was included in the first four international databases for citation and indexing. To this day, it has established itself as an influential and relatively frequently cited scholarly journal. In recent years, contributions by foreign authors have been predominant.

SMI continues to publish the equally prominent monograph series *Migracije* and its *Migrantke* subseries, which, thanks to the dedicated work of its earlier and later editors—Janja Žitnik Serafin (2001–2008), Jernej Mlekuž (2008–2014), Aleksej Kalc (2014–2019), and since then Jernej Mlekuž—has fulfilled its stated goals for a quarter of a century. So far, 33 scholarly monographs have been published in the series. The pace of their publication has changed significantly over time: the publication rate from the first eight years (an average of two volumes per year, a total of 16 volumes through 2008) halved in the following 18 years (an average of one volume per year, a total of 17 monographs). This is probably due to shifts in the balance of the combined national and European research co-funding system, which at certain times provides greater support for basic research and scholarly publications and at others creates more opportunities for applied projects and professional publications.

Most of the current researchers are involved in the research program National and Cultural Identity of Slovenian Emigration in the Context of Migration Studies, which—as already mentioned—has been running continuously since 1999. Two researchers are participating in the research program Heritage on the Margins: New Perspectives on Heritage and Identity within and beyond the National. In addition, the institute implements nine (national, bilateral, and European) research and applied projects, of which up to a third are historical research projects. These include the study of the history of migration in Southeastern and Central Europe, the history of emigration policies in Slovenia and Croatia, and the state and diaspora in the first and second Yugoslavia. The remaining six ongoing projects address the cross-border mobility practices of workers between Slovenia and other EU countries, contemporary challenges related to migrant employment and social inclusion—particularly in the workplace—measures to improve migrants' housing conditions in Europe and other current aspects of migrant social inclusion, including vocational training and support in starting businesses.

SMI researchers continue to expand their network of research and teaching collaborations with Slovenian and international universities and research institutes, international scholarly associations, often also with primary and secondary schools, non-governmental organizations, asylum centers, various local and state administrative bodies, and emigrant and immigrant cultural organizations, associations, and institutions, etc. As in the past, they regularly organize international academic conferences and professional meetings and contribute to the exchange of research findings by regularly attending important scholarly meetings abroad. Where possible, in the preparation and implementation of their projects, events, exhibitions, trainings, and so on, they involve Slovenian emigrants and their descendants, as well as immigrants and refugees in Slovenia as equal participants. They

participate in the preparation of legislative proposals, educational programs, and co-funding programs for cultural and other activities of Slovenian emigrants and immigrants to Slovenia. They present their research findings to the professional public in monographs and articles published by leading European and other international publishers, in renowned international journals in the field of migration and integration strategies (*Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, *European Journal of Inclusive Education*, *Journal of Migration History*, *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*, etc.) and in the main periodicals of their core academic disciplines. They communicate their findings to professional and general audiences through manuals, popular-science presentations in public media, and appearances on radio and television programs.

The medium-term SMI Strategic Plan for 2021–2026 clearly summarizes the institute's main long-term goals:

From a narrow focus on Slovenian emigration in the past, the research has now expanded to include immigration, integration, multiculturalism, and other migration-related phenomena. [...] From the very beginning, the institute was conceived as multidisciplinary and continues to operate on this basis, which we further develop through interdisciplinary studies of migratory phenomena. [...] In our work, we have always kept pace with conceptual and methodological changes and new approaches in migration studies in the international arena. For decades, research approaches have been based on the understanding of migration as one of the constitutive social phenomena that characterize societal, social, cultural, economic, and other developments at local, regional, national, and global levels. To transfer our knowledge to various stakeholder groups, several of our researchers have been involved in the educational process for decades in formal and informal educational environments, in which we strive to achieve a better understanding of today's migration phenomena and contribute to raising awareness in the wider social environment. [...] Through our comprehensive approach, we will continue to act as a scholarly and social institution whose specific expertise enables us to engage responsibly with the developments shaping an increasingly mobile and globally interconnected world. (Inštitut za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije ZRC SAZU, 2021, p. 4)

Until recently, the SMI research group's body of research lacked comprehensive overview studies and broad syntheses of research on Slovenian emigration. In the last few years, this debt has been nearly settled with the publication of two survey monographs that seek, from different perspectives, to provide as comprehensive an account as possible of the economic, social, and cultural history of Slovenian emigration from the mid-nineteenth century to the establishment of the Slovenian state in 1991. These are *Doba velikih migracij na Slovenskem* (Kalc et al., 2020) and *Slovenske selitve v socializmu* (Lukšič Hacin, 2024). The former was reprinted two years ago when its English translation *Daring Dreams of the Future: Slovenian Mass Migrations*

1870–1945 (Kalc et al., 2024) was simultaneously published by Peter Lang; it covers the period up to the end of World War II, while the latter summarizes the results of research on voluntary and forced migration in Slovenia and on the organizational structures of the Slovenian diaspora around the world in the period 1945–1991.

As I concluded on another occasion, “without an understanding of the past experiences of Slovenian emigrants and refugees, the Slovenian public probably finds it difficult to comprehend the position of people involved in today’s migratory movements toward and into Europe” (Žitnik Serafin, 2017, p. 32). The remaining debt is the planned trilogy’s third volume—an interdisciplinary overview of Slovenian migration in the period since Slovenia gained independence. This will fully meet the fundamental prerequisite for relevant comparative research and, above all, for an even more effective transmission of past experiences and knowledge about Slovenian emigration to present generations, who are repeatedly confronted with situations comparable to those of the past (Žitnik Serafin, 2017, p. 32). Publishing a comprehensive overview of Slovenian emigration has been one of the main missions of the institute since joining ZRC SAZU.

Today, the Slovenian Migration Institute, ZRC SAZU, is recognized by the Slovenian general public and the international scholarly community as a respected research institution and an operationally effective social actor. Drawing on its thorough knowledge and understanding of the past and present, and informed by the latest conceptual and methodological developments in the international humanities and social sciences, it actively engages with current issues and thereby influences both the present and, indirectly, the future. Thus, it remains an important contributor to public awareness. Our time is filled with manufactured fear, hatred, and indifference. History teaches us that those who learn anything useful for humanity from it are generally those who have too little influence in the here and now. However, this must not deter us from constantly recognizing, highlighting, and taking account of fundamental social patterns that have recurred over the centuries. Without this continuing effort, the last faint ray that illuminates our turbulent present in a more realistic light would be extinguished.

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