

Lena Dominelli

Anti-racist perspectives in European social work

Lena Dominelli, Ph. D., holds the Chair in Social Administration at Scheffeld University. Besides doing research and teaching at university, she has worked as a community worker, social worker and probation officer.

The alarming increase in racist attacks and the growth of the Far Right in Europe has been aired in the European press. However, public interest in examining the way in which citizenship is being redefined by both the move to the right in European politics and the impact of globalisation has been less evident. This paper analyses these dynamics and reveals that a group of disenfranchised citizens is being created who will not have normal access to welfare — a traditional symbol of citizenship. Arguing that anti-racist social work has a role to play in identifying these forms of exclusion and addressing them in day-to-day practice, it considers how social workers can take the issue on board in their work with people of non-white European origin. Their doing so would require acknowledgement that social work is not a neutral profession, but a political one. Caring professionals will have to take the realisation of citizenship rights seriously if their work is not to feed into the disenfranchisement of significant numbers of non-European nationals residing and working legally in Europe.

Vesna Leskošek

Social work is not political (or is it?)

Social worker and pedagogue Vesna Leskošek is manager of Youth Help Centre of Ljubljana Moste-Polje Social Work Centre.

In the past few years we have witnessed more and more critiques of the classical welfare state concept that accompany the unification of Western European states. With the breakdown of our social system and the emergence of new concepts of help for the distressed persons, this country, too, joins the efforts of finding more suitable solutions; however, in many ways they are incomparable to the developments outside our borders. Instead of proper implementation of the people's social rights, our social policy seeks more appropriate help for the people in distress. The two concepts are opposing one another, if the former is understood as respecting an individual's rights, and the latter as the right of the state to intervene when it deems appropriate. It assesses the people's problems itself, often without the consent of clients. Here we may touch upon the dependency of social work on actual social policy. If the concept of the latter depends on the decisions of the ruling political parties and if social work also depends on social policy, then social work is political at least in two senses: as being dependent on politics and as being in a position to be able and obliged to influence it.

Franc Hribernik

Some aspects of socio-demographic status of Slovenian peasant families

Sociologist Franc Hribernik, Ph. D., is an assistant lecturer of rural sociology at University of Ljubljana Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Agronomy.

The article deals with some questions of the socio-demographic status of Slovenian peasant families in the early 90's. The research was planned on the statistical data of the population census in the Republic of Slovenia in 1991 and on the empirical sociological approach. It was mainly concerned with the following questions: what is the ability of social reproduction of the agricultural population, what are the views of the vital agricultural population on family as the basic social group, and what are their main reasons to form a family. The results indicate that family remains the central social milieu with many indispensable socio-economic functions for the largest number of the interviewees included in the survey. In spite of the fact that the number of children in peasant families has also decreased, the agricultural population still has a higher average number of offspring in comparison with the Slovenian population as a whole. The expressed desired number of children in peasant families proves that this population has partly preserved some traditional values.

ABSTRACTS

Milko Poštrak New perspectives of sociology of culture

Sociologist Milko Poštrak, M. A., is a junior researcher at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work.

One of the most commendable tendencies in contemporary sociology is certainly its increasing tendency to inter-disciplinarity. The author initially reviews its reflections in the field of sociology of culture. Next, he places sociology of culture within the context of its mother discipline, i. e., sociology, and finds that its status there is marginalized. However, in the recent years the status of sociology of culture within the discipline has changed, parallelly with the gradual reorientation of sociologists from the questions of social structures to the questions of culture. With the aid of last year's compendium on the developing perspectives of sociology of culture, the author briefly reviews some recent tendencies within sociology of culture, cites their sources and outlines their perspectives.

Andreja Grom A case of supportive psychotherapy of the aged

Andreja Grom is an occupational therapist in the Home of the retired in Vrhnika.

Because of a certain degree of social isolation, many aged persons are lonely even in a home, amongst a crowd. This fact and the assumption that people feel better if they can talk (also about their loneliness) have enticed the beginning of the group presented in the article. The author quotes some references on psychotherapy of the aged, and in particular on the attitudes of an aged person towards him/herself, illness, old age and the institution of "home for the elderly". She outlines some forms of group work in the home that include the small conversational group. She gives the basic data on the group and an account of two sessions. She presents the preparations and the forming of the group, the commonest themes, co-therapy and supervision. The group is in its fourth year of existence.

Boža Napret Independent life

Sociologist Boža Napret is Chairman of the Commission for social work of the Slovenian Association of Muscularly Ill.

The author describes her experiences of stigmatisation on the basis of her progressive muscular illness. Her findings may be condensed into the conclusion that ecological self-realisation cannot succeed either independently from the others or within self-integration but only in co-operation within wider interpersonal processes and in setting boundaries to oneself. This, however, brings forth a paradox: the more we realise ourselves, the less we may be autonomous and free, for it is the other people who give us the space for our self-realisation and participate in the development of our potentials.