

Bernard Stritih

TOWARDS THE AUTONOMY OF SOCIAL WORK AS A PROFESSION AND A SCIENCE

*Dr. Bernard Stritih is Senior Lecturer of social work at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work.*

The beginnings of social work differ in the USA and Europe: while American social work is marked with the optimism of the pioneers, the European one is marked with the unsolvable opposition between grand ideas and practical mind. Mary Richmond's social diagnosis does is nothing like psychiatric diagnosis; it stresses the uniqueness of each individual in his/her social context. The special function of social work and the basis of its autonomy is help to the people facing social expulsion. The autonomy of social work is indispensable for the continuous development of its relations with other autonomous social subsystems. The contemporary human is self-sufficient when he/she is winning, but it is very difficult for him/her to realise his/her vulnerability, and in crisis, he/she becomes even lonelier, so that human help in spontaneous social networks does not suffice. Here, there is the need for social work, that is, for the possibilities of new points of inclusion into relational networks. Social work is not a tool for social policy but develops into a generic profession that pays attention also to learning from unintentional mistakes and lapses.

Srečo Dragoš

FROM AETIOLOGY TO THE ECOLOGY OF MARGINS

*Dr. Srečo Dragoš is Senior Lecturer of general sociology at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work.*

Social work, as an activity, is by definition caught in the paradox of «borderline» sciences, centred upon what in others remains on the margin of their interest. As a profession, however, compared with those with longer traditions, it is in a marginal position regarding theoretical, structural and personnel areas. This relates to an important question of how social work will develop in the future. A rethinking the three areas in the way the author defines as ecology of margins suggests several possibilities for marginality to be benefiting. In particular, attention has to be paid to distinctions within the profession and to the relations outwards, i. e., to other systems. For this purpose, what may come handy is Parsons' scheme of four functions pointing out systemic conditions that have to be satisfied also by social work as a professional system. In the conclusion of the paper, an application of Parsons' scheme (AGIL) to social work is offered.

Danica Hrovatič

NON-PROFIT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS – A NEW SPACE FOR SOCIAL WORK

*Danica Hrovatič has graduated at University of Ljubljana Faculty of Social Sciences and School of Social Work on non-profit organisations. She works for Social Chamber of Slovenia in the field of social care.*

Social work as a profession and non-profit NGO's as an organisational space to carry out its activities are directly related. Non-profit NGO's emerge along profit and public sectors. For social workers who have hitherto worked in public institutions, organisations of this type represent new challenges as well as opportunities of employment. The paper presents the possibilities of organising and including social work related activities, based upon initiatives from civil society and responsible individuals, within non-governmental forms: help and self-help groups, associations, institutes or independent social programmes. Non-profit NGO's face problems arising from lack of structure. There are in particular three important elements in the formation of structure: establishing partner relation with the state and the profit sector, financing by use of various

resources, and an employment policy balancing volunteers and professionals. Non-profit NGO's need a structure to constitute the non-profit sector not merely as an »addition« but as an equivalent within the welfare system.

Vesna Leskošek

#### NEW RELATIONS BETWEEN THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

*Social worker Vesna Leskošek is Head of Youth Aid Centre in Ljubljana.*

In the few years since the introduction of the plural system of social care (in 1991) there has developed, along public services, a wide network of NGO programmes. They have begun to change classic social-care concepts and introduced new understanding of the relation between users and providers of services. Thus, they have influenced a change in understanding the role of professionals and of professionalism itself. Innovations in the field of social care have, as can be seen from public tenders, already become part of the system, being desirable and stimulated. Also because they are becoming the institutional norm for joining European Union. Now, however, the time has come for a new step, in particular regarding assurance of quality, good contractual relations, planning and establishing needs. Without the latter, activities will be directed mainly by organisations on the grounds of their ambitions and not by the people who need the services.

Srečo Dragoš

#### SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AUTONOMY OF USERS' GROUPS

Users' autonomy means autonomy on two levels, psychological and social. The paper concentrates mainly on the second level, relating to it four theses. Firstly, Slovenia does not significantly lag behind Europe in the social field — except in the development of users' groups. This means that the environment necessary for the affirmation of user groups' autonomy is underdeveloped, since it still rather holds in than stimulates users' self-organising. Secondly, systemic autonomy of users' groups means especially independence regarding both political and expert systems, though gaining political independence has advanced in recent years. Thirdly, in distinguishing users' from expert networks, we are still in the beginning. Fourthly, co-operation between users' groups and School of Social Work as an expert institution will still be needed in the future but in a more limited scope (narrowly profiled). Therefore, it will be advisable for the users' societies to establish more intensive connections with Social Chamber of Slovenia and the newly formed Association of Social Workers of Slovenia.

Marjan Vončina

#### ASPECTS OF PROFESSIONALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK IN SLOVENIA

*Social worker and sociologist Marjan Vončina is Director of Social Work Centre Ljubljana Moste and chairs the psychiatric users' association »Altra«.*

The paper initially points out the changes within the system of social care and the new value orientations which demand a reconsideration and suitable actions on the part of social workers. The changes in the system of social care have an impact upon employment opportunities for social workers, considering that their own care for the improvement of the conditions of professional work is becoming a basic social demand from the profession of social work. Next, problems faced by social workers with regard to the sector in which they are employed are distinguished: the fundamental problem of those in the public sector are insufficient regulation and ill-defined aims of social care services introduced; the fundamental problem of those in the non-governmental sector is unstable financing of programmes; and the fundamental problem of those who work in companies is the undefined role of social work in the profit sector.

Vida Milošević-Arnold

#### SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL WORK IN SLOVENIA (WITH AN EMPHASIS ON PUBLIC SECTOR)

*Social worker and specialist in supervision Vida Milošević Arnold lectures on several courses at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work.*

The author analyses the recent development of social work and the degree of its present

professionalisation in Slovenia. In part, she makes use of the results of a research on professional social work in Slovenia from 1997. She points out the conception of the object of social work as practice, contemporary paradigmatic changes in social work and their application in Slovene social work. She discusses recent processes in the public sector and proposes changes that could provide social work with a better social status and thus users with better services.

Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič

SOCIAL WORK WITH THE FAMILY: A CONTRIBUTION OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

*Dr. Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič is Associate Professor of psychology of the family and social work with the family at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work.*

The author discusses a contribution of constructivism to the theory and practice of social work. Key terms in the profession – social work working relations, instrumental definition of the problem, participation in the problem and its solution, personal casework – gain a new meaning when related to the ethics of participation in creating a new story within the open space of dialogue. Social work is defined also as research and the co-creating of stories that provide life with a meaning; it is based on understanding, communication, agreement, respect of uniqueness. The conditions of the formation of social work projects by dialogue are analysed on the basis of Greene's, Anderson's and Goolishian's texts.

Anica Klemenc-Žvikart

THE MODELS OF TREATING FAMILIES AT SOCIAL WORK CENTRES AND PROFESSIONAL DILEMMAS BETWEEN THEORY, PRACTICE AND THE STATE

*Social worker Anica Klemenc-Žvikart works at Social Work Centre Dravograd.*

The paper describes the models of decision-making regarding the assignment of children, contacts and other vital issues for the lives of children after their parents' divorce or separation, as practised at social work centres, which have the authority to make such decisions when the parents cannot reach an agreement by themselves. The questions of setting the boundaries of the profession and of the organisation of work are pointed out, in order to attain better quality and efficacy. As an important element in reaching these goals, the introduction of the concept of »first social aid« into social work practice is argued for.

Tanja Lamovec

CONTRADICTIONS OF FAMILY CARE OF PSYCHIATRIC USERS

*Dr. Tanja Lamovec is Professor at the psychology department of University of Ljubljana Faculty of Arts and chairs the psychiatric users' association »Paradox«.*

The article discusses the contradictory nature of home care for people with long term mental distress. Contemporary nuclear family is ill suited for this task, yet tradition and the state expect families, that is, mothers, to provide continuous care. In developed countries, persons with such problems are provided with various programmes where they can spend part of their time. In Slovenia, however, such facilities are scarce and receive little support from the state. Further, some systematisation of sources of stress is attempted. To ensure survival, families develop a variety of strategies to cope with this extreme situation. Some are described and evaluated. The most important, yet seldom acknowledged, counter-action is to unburden the mother. Results of foreign research show that apart from informal contacts mothers maintain with their social network, self-help groups can relieve the cumulative effects of stress. Such groups seem to be the only opportunity for most mothers to express their needs and conflicts, to be listened to in their own right and not just as representatives of a role. The need for organised political action on the part of such families is pointed out.

Peter Stefanoski

FAMILY, DRUGS AND SOCIAL WORK

*Social worker Peter Stefanoski works with people whose distress is based on the use of alcohol and illegal drugs at Social Work Centre Ljubljana Šiška. He is a therapist in a club of alcoholics*

*in treatment. He lectures to parents and teachers, under the title »Who's afraid of drugs«, at elementary and secondary schools in Slovenia, as well as conducts a 24-hour workshop for teachers under the same title.*

The author discusses professional social work points of departure for practice with drug users and their families at social work centres, offering several directions. The goals and methods of treatment are not sought for in »specific characteristics« of drug users but in social work discourse and in social work methods and principles.

Vida Kramžar

#### DRUGS AND (SUB)CULTURE: THE DIONYSIAN ASPECT OF SOCIALITY

*Sociologist Vida Kramžar, M. A., teaches social science courses at Secondary School Zagorje.*

Analyses have often explained the problem of illegal drug use as a matter of social pathology. There is an equation between that use and socially harmful behaviour. Such moral generalisation hides that even the users realise an element of community, therefore sociality. From the standpoint of values, that sociality is disputed. However, what is at stake is a Dionysian aspect of sociality that is misunderstood from the standpoint of extreme individualism. Its pathologisation may well be an effect of that misunderstanding. The problem of illegal drug use and addiction needs to be viewed from the cultural angle; then the problem opens to a global perspective and presents itself as squeezed amongst certain models of institutional cultures. Hence, the solution means also opening up those cultures.

Vito Flaker

#### DESCRIPTION OF GROUP HOMES IN SLOVENIA AND ANALYSIS OF THEIR MODELS OF LIVING

*Dr. Vito Flaker is Senior Lecturer on social pathology at School of Social Work.*

Group homes are usually defined as intermediary structures between institutional and civil life in the community. They differ as to the way they are established, their residents, the number and gender of the latter, etc. They are usually of transitory character and are meant as a step towards independence. Usually, they are in ordinary urban neighbourhoods. Some have more rules than others, but the tendency is that the style of living is created by the residents. Housework is one of the most important issues. Staff usually tries to imitate family and home life. Institutional roles and cliques seldom exist. Staff and residents understand and regulate their actions according to different models: the asylum model, the kindred therapeutic model, the handicap model, the family model, the model of housework Sisyphus, the everyday life model, the leisure model, and the self-help or self-organisation model.

Vida Slemenšek-Kovačević

#### CATEGORISATION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH DIFFICULTIES

##### IN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

##### DILEMMAS

*Social worker Vida Slemenšek-Kovačević, M. A., is counsellor to Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.*

The paper deals with the field of special care for children and adolescents with difficulties in physical and mental development and argues for the conception of global developmental strategy of care of the disabled and for a holistic approach to such children and adolescents. Interdisciplinary approach is particularly stressed as needed in the present and the future network of professional services, including a procedure of categorisation on the basis of exhaustive diagnostic examination and of proposing appropriate training and further treatment on the basis of the subject's particular problems and needs. She argues that the dilemmas in the field are caused by the proposals of developmental processual categorisation by way of individual and individualised programmes, in accordance with the child's development and learning abilities and with the legislative definition of the capacity of school administration to issue provisions in the proceedings of directing children with special needs.

## ABSTRACTS

Majda Knehtl

### SOCIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF INTEGRAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

*Social worker Majda Knehtl works at the Institute of the Deaf and Partially Deaf in Ljubljana.*

The paper contains a concise description of professional networks, services and participants in the process of treating and educating children with special needs, of various professional activities, and of multiple entwinement of professional relations and activities in different professional services. This area, hitherto characterised by a high level of treatment, organisation, follow-up and guidance, will be fundamentally reorganised, with respect to both contents and competencies, by the imminent educational reform. Topical dilemmas regarding practical execution of so demanding a field are outlined from the points of view of contents, organisation and financing. Two questions arise: Does integration itself requests such radical changes in the system? What is the new place of social work which, after all, has so far been very efficient in its key role.

Mirjana Majhenič

### CARE OF THE AGED

#### FROM THE WELFARE STATE TO SELF-HELP

*Sociologist Mirjana Majhenič works at Social Work Centre Maribor as Deputy Director.*

The welfare state has everywhere proved unable to confront and combat the growing health and social problems of the people, after the systems of traditional mutual help and solidarity fell apart. In the process of deinstitutionalisation of public services, the basic problem turned out to be power relations between users and professionals. The author analyses three coexisting models of helping the aged in Slovenia, reflecting different degrees of institutionalisation and thus of influence, initiative and dependence of the users: homes for the aged, help at home and self-help groups. The variety of self-help groups, organisations and movements are a challenge to the professionals as well as an extremely important complementary form of containing people's distress.

Pavla Rapoša Tajnšek

### PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL WORK AT WORKPLACE

*Pavla Rapoša Tajnšek, M. A., lectures on several courses at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work.*

First, the author discusses the critical conditions of social work at workplace in the period of economical and social transition; she presents the reasons that have led to the crisis, as well as the possibilities for (re)integration of social work into workplace on the new grounds of the strategic principles of evolutionary management. Next, she discusses the role of social work in training executives for the treatment of personal and family problems of the employees. A model is presented that distinguishes the function of control, which is part of managing, from that of help. Finally, essential contents of that training are laid out.

Dušan Zapušek

### MODELS OF SOCIAL WORK AT VELENJE MINES

*Social worker Dušan Zapušek works at Velenje Mines in the field of social work with the disabled.*

The most developed model of social work at workplace at Velenje Mines is help to employers or to the company itself. The paper presents the role of social worker as a counsellor to the management in decisions related to the strategic control over disability and to projects that include the measures of protection at work. The project called »Control of Disability« consists in five areas: presentation of disability control and supplementation of the subsystem of the use of pertinent legislation, prevention of disability, employment programmes, professional rehabilitation and the inclusion of the system of disability control into working environment.



Simona Žnidarec, Polona Erlah

# ASSERTIVITY TRAINING

*Social worker Simona Žnidarec is Assistant Lecturer of community social work at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work. Social worker Polona Erlah works on the project Assertivity Training.*

The contribution is the summary of a graduation thesis that took three years of independent work and experience to complete. The authors present theoretical concepts and models on which they base assertivity training, and continue by presenting the structure of the training. They conclude with recommendations for its use.

Darja Zaviršek

# EVICIONS BETWEEN EPISTEMOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF SOCIAL WORK

*Dr. Darja Zaviršek is Senior Lecturer of social anthropology, gender studies and theories of disability at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work; since 1997, she is Visiting Professor at Central European University, Budapest. She is a member of the Executive Council of European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW).*

The paper deals with sociological and social analysis of evictions in Slovenia. The author finds among them clear cases of social injustice and disrespect for international documents, signed by Slovenia, regarding the right for abode. Based on a case of eviction of a mother, single-parenting two children, processes of social exclusion are analysed. That eviction was no coincidence; it is related to accumulated social devaluations, such as ethnic origin, low economical status, weak social network. What state agencies in such cases do is not to provide support for the family but to displace them, to put them into separate institutions. The author shows the actual role of social work in such cases and indicates what it ought to be, were it autonomous.

Anka Zdovc

# PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT AT SOCIAL WORK CENTRES

## RESEARCH SUMMARY

*Social worker Anka Zdovc is a counsellor on first social aid at Social Work Centre Domžale.*

The paper first presents various authors' models of burnout, the impact of various factors on the process of burnout, and methods of prevention and unburdening. Next, a research is presented that included social workers who have worked at social work centres for more than fifteen years. Its aim was to find out what is the most stressful for them, what kind of clients' distress affect them most, whether they have support, what is their degree of burnout, what are the signs of burnout. The results show that professionals at social work centres often face the problem and that its degree is high.

Nino Rode

# A SPLITTING OF THEORY AND PRACTICE?

## ANALYSIS OF PAPERS IN THE JOURNAL SOCIALNO DELO, 1995

*Nino Rode is Assistant Lecturer on methodology at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work.*

At present, opportunities for the development of social work are increasing, at the same time as opportunities for the inclusion of new knowledge into practice are decreasing. This is reflected in the relation between practitioners and theorists in social work. By way of text analysis, the author studied the differences in the contributions to the journal Socialno delo, year 1996, between lecturers at School of Social Work and foreign authors on the one side (»theorists«), and the authors employed in social institutions (»practitioners«). Attention was paid above all to terms from the speech on social work in general, on systematic regulation in social work and on particular areas of social work, then to definitions of clients and of work with them, and finally to the use of general concepts. Groups of authors were compared with respect to the frequency of use of selected terms. To this end, correspondence analysis was employed, whose aim is to transform a table of numeric information into a graphic form that facilitates interpretation. The analy-

