

## Editor's note

When in 1943, a great famine struck Bengal and, according to some estimates, took more than 3 million lives, a special commission named the Famine Inquiry Commission, which inquired into the dramatic events, stated in its report that the main cause of the famine was a serious shortage in rice and wheat offered to the inhabitants of Bengal on the market that year (Sen, 1981:57). However, by carefully analysing these reports, but also some other sources, Indian economist and Nobel Laureate in economics in 1998 Amartya Sen discovered that the rice stock in the year of great famine was 13% **higher** than in 1941 when there was no famine. In addition, even the rice yield in the agricultural season 1942/1943 was **higher** than in the season 1940/1941 (when, again, there was no famine). After having combined wheat and wheat flour export as well as demographic data on population migration, Sen concluded that availability of the two most important crops, the basis of nutrition of Bengali population, in the year of famine was 9% higher than in 1941.

Sen's brilliant analysis of this dramatic famine indicates that it was not the lack of food which caused the famine, but the fact that the social class of the population affected by the famine (mostly rural inhabitants of Bengal) disenabled them to access sufficient quantities of food [that is the reason why Amartya Sen entitled his analysis as »Poverty and Famine: An essay on Entitlement and Deprivation«].

We are writing this Editor's Note in the year when the world is faced with the most difficult economic crisis in the history, and in the year in which the world has at its disposal by far the highest amount of money and goods than ever in the history. Every day, six families in Croatia are evicted from their homes due to the inability to pay off their loans and we have never had a higher number of empty apartments at the housing market. The statement of banking sector representative on how in Croatia there is no crisis

in loan pay-offs since it realizes high income (which is mostly transferred abroad, to the parent companies) is probably cynical and true at the same time.

The issue of such paradoxes is dramatically raised in the social work profession the mission of which is to protect the weak, those facing social or physical (which in their essence are again social) obstacles in accessing social resources. For that reason, we, as social workers and scientists in the field of social work, were not supposed to remain silent over the processes of dramatic impoverishment of the population around us. We cannot assent to celebrations of opening new public kitchens and, at the same time, quietly listen to the »experts« explaining on how the inhabitants of the apartments in subvention schemes spend more on their cell phone bills than on their housing costs. We have to stop being a part of a cognitive manipulation of a neoliberal social pool which in an orchestrated manner acts in all the areas of social life and in the field of social work as well. Namely, the social work is, above all, **work**, i.e. act (in the attempt to reject the treatment approach, a faithful companion to care). In that sense, it needs to find those social equivalents to its position that will enable a real intervention in the social life for the purpose of helping the most vulnerable members of the community.

This explains the motivation to dedicate this issue of our professional and scientific journal to the crisis and the social work in the time of crisis. In order to analyse the causes and effects of the crisis from the economic perspective, we have invited one of the most eminent economists from the territory of the former Yugoslavia Professor Jože Mencinger from Ljubljana to cooperate with us. Independent political analyst Primož Krašovec presents some political implications of typical neoliberal economic decisions and Srečo Dragoš elaborates on some elements of change in the Slovene social policy. Aleksandar Jugović and Miroslav Brkić from Belgrade join us in their analyses of changes in the theoretical approach of social work in Serbia during the economic crisis. Maja Gerovska Mitev and Sunčica Dimitrijoška have sent us their valuable contributions describing the situation in Macedonia and Sanela Bašić in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Croatian academic community from the field of social work contributed with three papers: Ana Miljenović presents some aspects of the crisis as

potential drivers of the social work profession transformation, Mladen Knežević claims that the transformation in question is inevitable and Olja Družić Ljubotina in a remarkable way shows the necessity of both social but also the **work aspect**, i.e. of the return to a postmodern perception of the role of this profession.

I thank all the authors of contributions for excellent cooperation during the preparation of this issue; they exhibited both a real professional and scientific interest and the readiness to work in sometimes difficult conditions related to time constraints. I thank all the reviewers who, with surprisingly rare misunderstandings and sometimes in a very short time, have read all the texts and reviewed them in an unbiased and fair manner. Congratulations! Some good news, at last.

**Mladen Knežević, Theme Issue Editor**

## *REFERENCES*

1. Sen, A. (1981). **Poverty an famine: An essay on entitlement and deprivation**. New York: Oxford University Press.

