

# In Memoriam

There recently passed away the esteemed fellow scientist and teacher Dr Jožef Ovsenik. We have lost a distinguished professor, a tireless researcher of organization and management, well known and respected at home and abroad. We knew him as a man who, despite more than forty years of disability, was full of creative spirit.

Dr Jožef Ovsenik was born 85 years ago in the village Predoslje near Kranj in Slovenia. After high school in Kranj, he enrolled at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana, where he graduated and obtained his master's degree under the mentorship of Prof Filip Lipovec, and received his PhD from the Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Maribor, under the mentorship of Prof Zdravko Kaltnekar. After graduation, he took a job at the Productivity Institute in Ljubljana at the invitation of its then-director. Later, at the invitation of its management, he got a job at the College of Work Organization as a senior lecturer. He participated in the process of transforming the College into the Faculty of Organizational Sciences at the University of Maribor.

In 1980, he suffered a stroke, leaving him 100 percent disabled. The stroke, however, did not paralyze him. He actively continued his in-depth pioneering research of the philosophy and theory of organization. Regardless of his disability, his bibliography, mostly scientific articles and monographs, comprises over a hundred published works. His final monograph entitled *Planetary Awakening*, where he actualizes the issue of organizational thought and suggests the challenges of further evolution of life is about to be published. All his work reflects the belief that organization is a complex system—something he understood at the highest level, while analytically unravelling the importance of small details.

Dr. Jožef Ovsenik was a philosopher of organizational theory. He studied human work and organisation, phenomena that, he believed, form an interwoven, coherent whole. He analysed relationships and interpreted the meaning of a relationship-based organisation. He stressed that the Cartesian paradigm has economically and socially disastrous consequences for human life in the ecosystem. He was challenged by the scientific insight into the algorithm of how humans reflect on their action. He defined the concept of human work through seven theses and interpreted it in terms of how humans reflect on their behaviour in the process of action. His philosophical interpretation of the dimension of human action led him to the question of the concept of self-organisation. He further reflected on the promotion of creativity by using the sinusoidal model of human action. Thus, he was oriented towards the study of new horizons of human and organisational sciences in the context of a new holistic paradigm, or a new human science.

His research affirmed a new understanding of organization in the direction of a tri-valent recognition of awareness with triple points of convergence. These require the modernization of an organization by way of a developing awareness of how it operates as well as a creative and ongoing exploration of this phenomenon, with the aim of preventing the crises brought on by modern times. He pointed out that organizational theory of the second half of the 20th century narrows our understanding of organizations and focuses primarily on the organization as a group of people established to achieve common goals and on the internal organizational structure of positions of power. In the current crisis, which is leading the world to zero economic growth, he drew attention to the problem of awareness, a factor still permeated by 17th-century Cartesian thought. The exploration of mentally active human awareness in relation to the principle of the all-embracing organization present throughout the living world suggests possible growth towards perfecting the organization as a creative subject, supported by Aurobind's Alternative Hypothesis with Involution.

Dr. Ovsenik was constantly engaged by human relationships as exemplifying the basis of an organization that brings holistic success - not only at the level of profit, but also at the level of personal and professional growth. He saw the nature of human work in a whole new way; namely, he claimed that the focus of human activity is obviously far more intense in areas that are intellectual, spiritual and non-material than in those involving the mere physical processing of objects of work.

Undoubtedly, Dr Jožef Ovsenik was an in-depth scientist and Slovenia's first philosopher of organizational theory.

The Faculty of Organizational Sciences has more than 60 years of tradition in research in the field of organizational sciences. Outstanding researchers and personalities contributed to the rich development and study, where Dr Jožef Ovsenik occupies a unique and lasting place of honor.

Few researchers on the field of organization and management at the University of Maribor had the honour of knowing Dr. Jožef Ovsenik and of personally experiencing his greatness. As for me, I will never forget our personal discussions during breaks at the Conferences of Organizational Sciences in Portorož: he steered me to think about forms of work and the role of man in situations that at the time sounded unimaginable, visionary. Many of these "visionary" solutions have since been verified and are nowadays taken as common coin. But when Dr Ovsenik first presented his reflections, such thinking concerning crises and uncertainties was unprecedented. Now he has bequeathed his thoughts and ideas to other researchers who are working to develop them for the progress and wellbeing of future generations.

Prof Dr Iztok Podbregar, Dean