EDITORIAL

In periods of political transition – in other words, at all times – there is a need to identify key words or phrases that can be used as rallying points in creating alliances between different struggles and projects: in a sense, flags which a lot of people can salute; but hopefully not as bland as that sounds. To be useful for the purpose, a key term must also have a creative function, must act as a seed crystal that transforms the medium into which it is inserted, demonstrating new networks and channels of development that were not previously apparent. These key terms also often tend to be points of contestation, where different political forces struggle for the power to define how the term will be understood and used.

Strangely enough, one such key term at the present moment seems to be 'Democracy'. Strangely, because one might have thought the term to be fatally damaged, both by its historical role in communist rhetoric, and by its current emblematic function for the US neocon project. But in a sense, it is exactly because the term 'democracy' has been used in such distorted ways, emptied of all real meaning by communists and capitalists alike, that it is so important to reclaim it. After all, it is the tremendous power and force of democracy as an aspiration that has made it so attractive an object of capture, most recently to the neocons. The hollowed-out shell of democracy which George Bush uses to justify the imposition of globalization needs to be challenged by a filled-in, three-dimensional (multi-dimensional) version.

In their recent book *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (Hardt and Negri, 2005), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that it is time to separate the idea of *democracy* from the idea of *representation*. They show that representative democracy was an historic compromise, a retreat from the idea of 'the rule of *all'*; and argue that this retreat has been fatal to the establishment of democracy itself. Hardt and Negri suggest that the conditions of globalism create an opposing alliance founded on democracy understood as the celebration, not of sameness, but of *difference*.

Psychotherapists and counsellors know a lot about difference; and this knowledge is perhaps one of the ways in which we can help to support the practice of democracy in the world. Therapists have explored the motivations behind attacks on difference, and the mechanisms of splitting and projection through which we project aspects of ourselves onto the difference of the other, and then try to banish or annihilate it. In our everyday work we are struggling constantly with our own intolerance of the difference that our clients bring; and in our work with groups, we may be trying actively to support greater tolerance of the anxieties that difference creates.

Psychotherapy can also help to deepen our collective understanding of what democracy means. It goes a lot further than voting (or not) for someone to 'represent' us for the next four or five years, during which they are largely outside our control. Increasingly, democracy is being understood as an active

and continuous process where all points of view are taken into account – and where, so far as possible, everyone *represents themselves* rather than handing the decision-making power over to someone else.

This, of course, sounds a bit like a therapy group; and therapy groups can very often be places where people experience and struggle with owning real personal power within a group setting. Of course, they can also be venues for charismatic tyranny on the part of the facilitator; so much depends on the ability of the group to challenge facilitation, and of the facilitator to challenge their own relationship with power. The same thing goes in spades for the individual therapy setting, where the dyadic situation prompts an inevitable series of conflicts over the definition of reality, in which each party, 'designated therapist' and 'designated client', tries to propagate its own perception of the situation through a range of persuasive techniques ranging from bullying through manipulation and seduction to rational argument. What constitutes a truly democratic approach to psychotherapy?

A very helpful concept here is Arnold Mindell's 'Deep Democracy' (Mindell, 1989, 1992, 1995). Mindell sees conflict in any situation as a sign that unprocessed, dream-like material is present. He suggests that we respond to it by endeavouring to see that every viewpoint and process is given a voice. Depending on the context, this may be an internal or an interpersonal process, or one where each of these levels mirrors and supports the other; it may also involve giving voice to collective and to non-human processes. Ultimately, 'deep democracy is our sense that the world is here to help us become our entire selves, and that we are here to help the world become whole' (Mindell, 1992, 96).

Deep democracy gives a name and an articulation to experiences that are part of many or most therapists' work. It makes it very clear that *inner* democracy is essential in the creation of *outer* democracy: only insofar as we can tolerate and listen to the different parts of ourselves will we be able to tolerate and listen to different parts of the community. This, in a nutshell, is the reason why democratic revolutions have been so limited in their success, or, often, have institutionalized new and more effective tyrannies. And this is a message that psychotherapy and psychotherapists can perhaps take into the new democratic ferment developing in the world today.

Before we get too excited about this, however, we perhaps need to face the task of cleaning up our own act and reforming the deeply flawed and undemocratic nature of our own institutions and organisations. If therapists, who theoretically know a thing or two about group process, cannot create decent structures for our own occupation, then what chance is there for the wider society?

There are many different voices in play in this issue of *PPI*, including some that we ourselves have a degree of difficulty in tolerating, because they take viewpoints different from our own. As we said in the editorial of the journal's first issue, 'PPI will strive not to limit the political orientation of its contents. We expect this aspiration to cause us pain and difficulty' (Totton, 2003, iv). The expectation has proved correct! But there is also, we find, a considerable satisfaction in the self-stretching involved; and we hope that readers similarly feel stretched, and pleased to be stretched.

The issue begins with a tremendous paper by Renos Papadopulos on the archetypal resonances of 11 September 2001. Although it has appeared in other languages this is the paper's first English language publication, and its relevance and importance has, if anything, only increased over the last few years.

It is followed by a very different but thematically somewhat linked paper by George Halasz (which is also our first Australian contribution), which asks whether the new wave of world anti-Semitism is in fact new and takes the position that it is in fact a matter of '"old" processes merely being reactivated in new contexts'.

Janine Puget's dense and difficult but rewarding paper in fact relates to the theme of this editorial: she is exploring the possibilities of social formations different from and opposed to those of globalization. Puget focuses on the concept of 'solidarity', which of course has strong historical links with the view of democracy that we have been considering.

These three papers all concern therapeutic perspectives on political and social issues. Daniel Burston's contribution, by contrast, focuses on what one might call the political philosophy of therapeutic practice itself. His critical analysis of postmodern approaches to psychotherapy argues that they fail to address some crucial aspects of human experience, which he names as agency and authenticity, and our alienation from these experiences.

Helen Collins and Mick Wells are practitioners of Arnold Mindell's Process Work, where the concept of deep democracy originates. In this paper, and very much in line with that concept, they argue that 'psychological disturbances could be understood for their potential contribution towards growth and wholeness, as well as having value and possible tendencies towards self actualization', and that this is insufficiently taken into account by mental health agencies. The paper draws on qualitative research with those attending a Process-Work based group-therapy programme in a community mental health setting.

One of our most regular contributors, Alec McGuire, in an extended review of two books by and one about Niccolo Machiavelli, argues that his work has much to offer to 'the study both of politics and political psychology. He looked on both without flinching, and understood exactly what they meant.' This piece, together with another excellent review, completes a very varied and rich edition.

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