

## Editorial

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In August 2012, the Second International Conference on Marxism and Psychology was held in Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico, organised by the Psychology Faculty of the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, with the support of a number of other organisations, and entities, including *Psychotherapy and Politics International*. Last year a report on the Conference appeared in this journal, written by Ian Parker. Reading Ian's report and hearing about the number of papers and presentations given at the Conference made me (Keith) think about asking those who had specifically presented about psychotherapy to contribute to what has become this special, themed issue on Marxism and Psychotherapy. I approached David as one of the organisers of the Conference to co-edit this issue. I was delighted that he accepted; and I have very much appreciated and enjoyed this collaboration.

Given Ian's original report (Parker, 2013) and his enthusiasm for the Conference, as well as his impressive canon of work on the subject of politics in and of psychotherapy, it is appropriate that his is the first article of this issue. In it he uses Marxism and feminism to discuss the place of psychotherapy under capitalism in its current form, which he describes as being characterised by the feminisation of work. Parker, a co-founder with Erica Burman of the Discourse Unit (<http://www.discourseunit.com/>), analyses how the feminised basis of the capitalist system underlies the importance of psychotherapeutic practices in the production, circulation and management of value and subjectivity in present society. He also considers how the same feminisation might justify his Marxist feminist critique of mainstream psychotherapy in capitalism. This critique is illustrated in this article with reference to three concerns: firstly, paying for psychotherapy in advance (as it sustains labour power as a commodity); secondly, including psychotherapy in the state health apparatus (for the balance of dissatisfaction as the precondition for consumption and production); and, thirdly, accepting the state regulation of psychotherapy (as it encloses emotional labour in the person).

The second article moves us from the critical standpoint to the practical–critical proposal of a social therapy aimed at the transformation of the world and human beings. This proposal goes beyond deconstruction and puts forward a deconstructive–reconstructive process that

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aims to create something new out of existing psychotherapy theory and practice. The author, Lois Holzman, co-founder with Fred Newman (1935–2011) of the East Side Institute for Group and Short Term Psychotherapy (<http://eastsideinstitute.org/>), draws on Karl Marx and Lev Vygotsky to develop the idea of a psychotherapeutic *practice of method*; that is to say, a creation of new forms of life, a revolutionary activity that generates both tool *and* result at the same time instead of being an application of a method or a tool *for* a result.

Like Holzman, Hans Skott-Myhre, who is a cultural theorist and professor at Brock University, St Catharines, Canada, in his article proposes not only a critical approach to psychotherapy but a revolutionary psychotherapeutic practice, and, like Parker, he situates his proposal in relation to the current particular form of capitalism, which, in his case, is characterised by globalisation and the incorporation of the constitutive elements of all social life. The present-day historical orientations of capitalism, according to Skott-Myhre, are a good reason to change our psychotherapeutic methods, which should not be rational anymore, as rationality only facilitates the capitalist appropriation of what is rationalised. Instead of rational mainstream perspectives, Skott-Myhre intends a re-examination of Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's schizoanalysis as a revolutionary, shamanic approach to psychotherapy.

It is well known that Deleuze and Guattari developed schizoanalysis as a critique of psychoanalysis. This psychoanalytical viewpoint is the common ground of the following three articles. In the first one, the Mexican psychoanalyst Raúl Páramo-Ortega, one of the pioneers of Freudo-Marxism in Latin-America, explores different convergences and complementarities between Marx and Freud, and between Marxism and psychoanalysis. His main purpose is to discover conceptual bridges or passages between the two perspectives, for instance between their respective conceptions of dialectics, the body, love, and sexuality. For this purpose, Páramo-Ortega draws on the work of classical authors such as Otto Gross, Igor Caruso, Georges Devereux, and Helmut Dahmer.

While Páramo-Ortega departs from the separation between Marxism and psychoanalysis and tries to find connections between the two, David Pavón-Cuéllar presupposes these connections by focusing on the Freudo-Marxist tradition (Luria, Bernfeld, Reich, Fenichel, Adorno, and others), and, more specifically, on concepts taken from this tradition and used as critical resources for the assessment of psychotherapy. Here psychotherapy is conceived as an ideological practice that both asks for a Marxist critique and involves a psychological theory that can also be criticised from the standpoint of Freudian psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytical perspective is seen as knotted with Marxism, but also as incompatible and irreconcilable with psychotherapeutic activity.

Unlike Pavón-Cuéllar's article, the following and last article, written by Anup Dhar and Anjan Chakrabarti, professors at Ambedkar and Calcutta universities in India, respectively, does not oppose psychoanalysis to psychotherapy; neither does it assume the link between Marxism and psychoanalysis. The authors consider that this link has to be made and so they proceed, as Páramo-Ortega does, from the separation between the perspectives that have to be linked. However, instead of linking these perspectives by examining the convergences between them in their original or given forms, Dhar and Chakrabarti consider that Marxism and psychoanalysis can only meet and set up a dialogue by transforming themselves and going through some conceptual displacements like the ones made by the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser in his correspondence with the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (between 1963 and 1969). According to the authors, these displacements can give us a deeper understanding

of both Marxism and psychoanalysis, and should allow us to discover a relation between the one and the other, the critical and the clinical, that paradoxically might take the form of a separation, an edge, a cusp irreducible to a synthesis, as illustrated by the misunderstanding between Lacan and Althusser in their correspondence.

As is usual with the last issue of the year, the final pages include a note of the peer reviewers who have reviewed articles which have appeared in this year's issue, to all of whom, a sincere thanks as without their work the journal would not maintain the high standards it seeks to achieve.

This year's volume of *PPI* has seen a number of firsts as well as one last: this is the first year the journal has published two, special, themed issues; and the first time that it has been co-edited; and I hope these particular firsts continue. There will be more themed issues; ones on "Groups and Crowds", "Transactional Analysis and Politics"; "The Politics and Psychology of Apology", and "Politicians on Therapy", are planned and I (Keith) am open to colleagues approaching the journal with ideas for themed issues and offers of co-editing – as well, of course, as continued submissions – which, from next year, will be processed through the ScholarOne software programme from the journal's webpage. The "last", if you are reading the printed form of this issue, is precisely that, as, for financial, ecological, and administrative reasons and benefits, the journal moves to becoming an online-only journal. As someone who loves the feel of the printed page and publications, I have some regret about this, but as someone who supports sustainability and who wishes to see the reduction of the carbon footprint of printing and mailing, including that of this political journal, I welcome the decision as I hope you, the reader, do. I look forward to seeing you online!

## REFERENCE

- Parker, I. (2013), Psychology and Marxism in Mexico. *Psychotherapy and Politics International*, 11(1), 92–96.