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## EDITORIAL

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## INTRODUCTION

The pandemic seems to be behind us, but the war in Ukraine continues as a new war breaks out in the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, societies are torn apart by classist, racist, and sexist violence. Our current turbulent context is reflected in this double issue of *Psychotherapy and Politics International*. From feminism and intersectionality in the psychological professions to racism in psychotherapy, Eurocentrism in the training of psychotherapists, social violence towards the trans community, and the impact of the war between Israel and Palestine, this issue tackles some urgent and important themes in the political and psychotherapeutic arenas.

## PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

We start this double issue with a stimulating paper by Stephen Abdullah Maynard. In this article, Maynard examines the intersectionality between Islamophobia and racism in life and in therapeutic work. He reflects on the Western normative context that has tended to avoid the subject of religion or spirituality, leaving them to the realm of specialist counselling such as in Christian or Islamic settings. Positioning a spiritual perspective as central to processes and choices Muslim clients make, he argues a strong case for making intersectional approaches, including spirituality, as central to the therapeutic task. Maynard offers a powerful way to open up our minds to some new information and perspectives that enrich our sense of who we are in the therapeutic professions.

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Following Maynard's article is a fascinating narrative describing the impact of having a dual-cultural legacy of names for the people of Hong Kong. Yoyo King-Yin Chang describes the injuries caused from ignorance and Eurocentrism in social and professional spaces. From the title, 'What's "wrong" with my names?', we witness how meaningful our names are in capturing the essence of who we are as well as shaping the way we become. However, the microaggressions and harm enacted unconsciously aggravate and intensify the distress already caused in European social settings from prejudice. The author argues for an expansion of consciousness and a capacity for therapists to work with identity, privilege, and power and understand how this contributes to conscious and unconscious processes in and out of the therapeutic arena.

The theme of racism continues in Jada Brown and Saafi Mousa's account of their research into the experiences of clinical psychology students. They examine the need for students to have safe enough spaces in an unsafe profession. They acknowledge the impact of the international protests of Black Lives Matter that seemingly has finally enabled psychological training to register the institutional racism in the profession. As a result, a new initiative such as the Safe Space for global majority trainees was developed and this article explores the experience for these students. The research poses questions as to how progressive training is incorporating a deconstruction of whiteness.

After the four articles on topics related to racism and psychotherapy, there are two pieces that offer psychoanalytic approaches to gender violence. The two pieces present original clinical proposals to treat population victims of this violence in Mexico. Both proposals were conceived by the authors of the texts.

Flor de María Gamboa Solís and Adriana Migueles Pérez Abreu recapitulate various relationships between psychoanalysis and feminist activism and tell the brief history of a recent feminist clinic project aimed at questioning, denouncing, and challenging gender oppression in Michoacán, in western Mexico. The high rates of femicides and other forms of violence against women in Mexican society are at the origin of the project presented by Gamboa Solís and Migueles Pérez Abreu. Similarly, Hada Soria-Escalante relies on the attacks suffered by trans people in Mexico to justify her proposal for a 'Tiresian clinic' as an alternative to the 'foreclusive clinic'. Drawing on the Greek myth of Tiresias, the story of a clairvoyant who was transformed into a woman for seven years, the article appeals to the profession to listen beyond the narrow bounds of training or national political discourse. Within the dominant clinical practice in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, in which any non-binary gender experience or identity differing from the anatomical sexual referents, is absolutely excluded through the psychic mechanism of 'foreclusion' described by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan.

The Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective is also presented by Bert Olivier, who starts from Lacan's conception of the subject to hypothetically explain addictive behaviours through a

gash in the symbolic and the imaginary that disrupts the self-representation and self-understanding of the person. This hypothesis leads Olivier to propose a psychotherapeutic treatment against addiction consisting of the repairing of the gash in the symbolic through new forms of symbolisation and personal narration that allow the establishment of significant social and political relationships.

In the final peer-reviewed article for this issue, Rinata Terkulova makes use of personality and political-psychological theories to share her research into how and why Putin acted the way he did with the invasion of Ukraine. Drawing from the field of foreign policy and a study of leadership from a distance, the author explores the decision making process associated with what is revealed as Putin's 'dual framing style'. The article argues for consideration of leadership trait analysis of individuals in critical cases such as invasions and war.

## NOTES FROM THE FRONT LINE

This double issue closes with four Notes From the Front Line dedicated to the conflict in the Gaza Strip that has caused, so far, between October and December 2023, almost 21,000 civilian deaths, including 860 Israelis and 19,700 Palestinians. This death toll is clear evidence of the imbalance of forces between Israel and Palestine, an imbalance that seems to be clear for all the authors included in this section, several of whom are participants in the global social movement for peace in Gaza. The authors, all of them with psychoanalytic sensitivity, offer particular points of view according to their countries of origin and residence, as diverse as Lebanon, Argentina, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France.

Agustín Palmieri interprets the Palestinian genocide as an acute symptom of globalised capitalism that cannot be ignored in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. Psy practices, according to Palmieri, should adopt a critical approach and interrupt the automatism of the social when addressing psychopolitical discontent. This interruption, as Stephen Sheehi and Lara Sheehi show us through direct testimonies of Palestinians in Gaza, can be realised in a certain way through reveries that affirm Palestinian life, wilfulness, and resistance against the backdrop of settler colonial violence and genocide by the state of Israel.

Describing what is happening in Gaza as a 'mass-murder by a racist apartheid state', Ian Parker insists on the need for psychoanalysts and psychotherapists to join the global movement of solidarity with the people of Palestine through a text prepared for the Red Clinic, a collective of communist mental health workers. As we know, this movement has included many Israelis and Jews from around the world. Solidarity with Palestine, however, can be prevented in the Jewish diaspora by forms of identification and assimilation analysed by Sophie Mendelsohn from a psychoanalytic perspective. Mendelsohn's article, like those by Parker, Palmieri, and the Sheehis, reveals a committed psychoanalytic clinic positioned in favour of the weakest in the current world situation.

## LOOKING FORWARD

The troubles in the world, as expressed in this powerful final edition, may weigh heavily on many of us as citizens and professionals as we head towards the final few days of 2023. We also draw hope from our collective dialogues on these essential subjects. Opening up minds, hearts, and souls is the work we commit to, and we can draw strength knowing there are many minds also engaged and committed to this task.

There are many contributions in this issue from psychoanalytical colleagues that prepare us for what is coming in 2024. As well as our generic issues, we have two exciting themes coming in 2024. The earliest being psychoanalytical approaches to colonialism, and then later in the year we have a special edition on the African diaspora. In the meantime, we thank you for reading and contributing to this journal and wish you all a good end of year whilst looking forward to the new year ahead.

We would not like to end this editorial without thanking all our peer reviewers who have supported us by writing reviews this year. Some of you have done so under tight time frames and this has made our work possible. Your reviews really support the editing process, and help authors see how their work has landed and what else they need to consider in order to improve their work. Thank you so much and we look forward to collaborating again in 2024.