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EDITORIAL

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INTRODUCTION

This issue comes out at a time when there have been many elections across nations. Some have sustained existing governments, and some have voted for radical changes. Given political power influences ideology, we are satisfied to offer another issue of *Psychotherapy and Politics International (PPI)* that explores the relatedness of the systemic to the Psyche. In this issue, authors explore the structure and processes of institutions and how these feed into interpersonal and intrapsychic dynamics, becoming the work done within the consulting room. The peer-reviewed articles reflect the tradition in *PPI* in exploring these themes academically as well as clinically. A note from the front line addresses the role of support groups and the letter we include speaks out about the horrors we are witnessing in the Middle East. We trust the issue will be stimulating and thought provoking and we welcome further feedback from readers.

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

This issue includes four peer-reviewed articles that address hot-button social and political topics such as populism, racism, crime, incarceration, and intimate partner violence. The first two articles offer diagnoses, analysis, and interpretations, while the following propose solutions in the fields of education, ethics, and therapy understood in a broad sense.

In the first of the peer-reviewed articles, entitled ‘A leader or a father?: Exploring transference in large groups as an explanation of populism’, Yana Nikolova interprets the populist tendencies of political forces through the psychoanalytic concepts of ‘transference’ and of ‘name-of-the-father’. The usefulness of these concepts in understanding the

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unconscious dynamics of populism is exemplified by the 2021 elections in Bulgaria. Nikolova's interpretation demonstrates how clinical experience allows us to shed light on social and political phenomena of large groups such as the masses of voters or supporters of leaders or parties in national movements or elections.

Like Nikolova, Seán Manning focuses on subjective processes when interpreting social problems, although no longer at the political level, but at the institutional and interpersonal level. Manning's article, entitled 'Troublesome boys, prison, and intimate partner violence', critically analyses criminal justice systems, drawing on authors such as Simone de Beauvoir, Georges Canguilhem, Michel Foucault, Nikolas Rose, and Judith Butler to theorise the effects of incarceration on subjectivity and in the sense of self. Referring specifically to incarcerated young men, Manning argues that their incarceration perpetuates the conditions of their violence against intimate partners.

Manning's critique of the justice system is followed by a collective reflection on a counselling training program in the article 'Possibilities and limitations of anti-racist training within a counselling programme', by Matthew Whitney, Gillian Proctor, Divine Charura, Tom Denyer, and Kat Wade. The authors draw on a thematic analysis from the participants of a specific anti-racism session within counselling education at the University of Leeds. Based on the responses of the participants, the authors propose that counselling courses should be a space to challenge inequalities, work for social justice, decolonise the curriculum, deconstruct racialised identities, and create conditions of self-reflection and openness for an anti-racist praxis.

Anti-racism first requires the recognition and denunciation of racism in society. This denunciation implies in turn an enunciation of truth such as that which Michel Foucault identified with the Greek term 'parrhesia', which is analysed by Bert Olivier in his article 'Parrhesia as therapy in fragile times'. Discussing Foucault's work in detail, Olivier reflects on the ethical and therapeutic value of the enunciation of truth for those who enunciate it in a political context like the current one.

NOTE FROM THE FRONT LINE

In addition to the four peer-reviewed articles, this issue includes a note from the front line, written by Luis Gerardo Arroyo Lynn and entitled 'An introduction to mutual support groups based on the work of Alan Robinson'. The author draws on the work of the Argentine Alan Robinson, playwright and critic of psychiatry, to question psychiatric discourses and perspectives due to their individualism, their concept of health, and their neoliberal logic. To confront all this, Arroyo Lynn proposes mutual support groups, discussing their possibilities of application in the field of mental health.

REVIEWS

In this issue, we also offer two book reviews of the same book. *Outrageous Reason* by Peter Barham warranted attention from two different reviewers. Both reviews acknowledge this a powerful book, thorough in its analysis of the pervasive nature of the White mind. Sham Selvaratnam acknowledges how the book has spoken to some of her particular life and professional experiences as a bi-cultural woman with influences from Sri Lanka and the UK. In doing this, she links the systemic with the professional and the personal. She expresses her appreciation of Barham's writing in how the author connects the scholarly with lived experience. Kieran Mac Feeley also writes acknowledging his identity as a White man and how the book evokes pain for him as a reader in absorbing the depth and breadth of oppression inflicted on the racialised Other. Kieran describes his appreciation of the research Barham has conducted, making this a meticulous text when it comes to signposting and referencing other authors on this subject. Both reviewers recommend this book to scholars and practitioners in mental health fields.

LETTER

The preparation of this issue of *PPI* has coincided with the Israeli Army's bombings of the Gaza Strip that have killed at least 40,000 people, mostly defenceless civilians, of which two-thirds are women and children. These facts are the reason for a letter in which Fauzia Gaba judges the situation from her point of view as a psychotherapist, referring to her own feelings and those of her clients in her therapeutic work. Gaba clearly describes what is happening as a 'genocide' and as an 'annihilation'.

LOOKING FORWARD

The next issue of *PPI* will be a special issue guest-edited by Andrea Guerra and dedicated to the topic of psychoanalysis and decolonisation. The issue will include contributions by authors from Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia, and the United States who participated as key speakers at a conference on the same topic held in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in November 2023.