December 2014

Between 20 and 22 November Renos Papadopoulos was in Milan, invited by ‘Terrenuove’, an organisation that provides therapeutic care to refugees and migrants. He offered supervision and consultation to its staff and also participated at a day event that was held at the main hall of La Casa dei Diritti under the title ‘Refugees and displaced persons in Milan: reception and integration pathways’. In addition to his keynote presentation, he was appointed to lead the Q&A and offer his own comments and observations at the end of both the morning and afternoon sessions. The event was oversubscribed, attended by 120 persons working in a wide variety of organisations in the field, and it was introduced by a prominent politician and the director of the services for refugees of Comune di Milano.

November 2014

CPS alumnus Dr Grigorios Chrysostom Tympas will be presenting his recently published book ‘Carl Jung and Maximus the Confessor on Psychic Development’ at The Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington Street, London W1U 5AS on Wednesday 12 November 2014 at 19:15. Panel discussants will be Prof Renos Papadopoulos and Dr Marinos Kyriakopoulos. http://www.helleniccentre.org/pages/events-culture/upcoming-events/carl-jung-and-maximus-the-confessor-on-psychic-development.php

Between 27 October and 3 November Renos Papadopoulos was in Mexico. He was invited by the Juconi Foundation that works with socially excluded children, young people and families affected by violence in Mexico as well as in several other countries. He offered two workshops (on ‘Working with families who survived adversity: trauma, resilience and ‘Adversity-Activated Development’) to 120 professionals, within the framework of the 3rd Juconi International Conference (‘For a world without violence - Strengthening work with children and families affected by violence: From theory to practice’), organised in Puebla and attended by 500 participants. In addition, he offered consultation to several organisations working specifically with survivors of violence perpetrated by narco-gangs in the region. Yet again, unexpectedly, he met an Essex alumna, Mariana Gamez Sagrero, who just completed her Masters in Human Rights and was appointed to a post in UNICEF in charge of developing psychosocial programmes for children and their families who are affected by violence.

Refugee Care students gathered for the annual Autumn Party on the 14 of November at Professor Papadopoulos’ home. It was truly an international affair with Renos and his wife Nina preparing delightful Greek cuisine and students bringing a dish or dessert from their home country. The entire afternoon and evening were spent sharing stories, laughing, and enjoying our close community. It was wonderful that Debbie Stewart, CPS administrator, was able to join us! Now we look forward to the second party, in the spring, after we complete all our essays!

A book launch took place at the Hellenic Centre in London on the 12 November, where Prof. Renos Papadopoulos, Dr Marinos Kyriakopoulos, a NHS Consultant Psychiatrist, and Dr Grigoris Chrysosostom Tympas, a former CPS PhD student, presented the recently
October 2014

Between 8 and 12 October, Renos Papadopoulos was in Georgia offering training at the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. The training was on ‘Working with adversity survivors: trauma, resilience and ‘adversity-activated development’ and it was attended by 25 university staff and senior students as well as staff of relevant international Non-Governmental Organisations working on various projects in Georgia and the neighbouring countries.

David Alexander, a PhD student in Refugee Care, accompanied Renos to Tbilisi and assisted with the training. A welcome coincidence was that Lesley Orr, a Refugee Care graduate (class 2008-2009), is currently the Director of Psychosocial Programmes of the World Vision based in Tbilisi, and she also attended parts of the training.

David sent us the following report of the trip:

In October Renos and I spent time in Tbilisi, Georgia, offering a seminar on his approach to helping persons exposed to adversity. The campus setting was unique, consisting of a number of huge, imposing pre-Soviet era buildings rising out of a wood in the center of the city.

The participants included a wide range of professionals working in the fields of conflict and human distress, including several distinguished professors from the university, a number of PhD and graduate students in the social sciences, and humanitarian staff from international organisations working in the Caucuses (including Leslie Orr, a past graduate of the Essex MA Refugee Care).
The Georgian people have a unique culture and this is reflected in their approach to the social sciences and the helping professions. Their warmth and friendliness made us always feel welcome and their thoughtful appropriation of the material in applying it to their own work contexts (e.g. Abkhazia and Ossetia both of which have been locked in frozen conflict for many years), certainly offered me new insights in the work.

The overall benefit of the training may be best summed up by two of the participants, both of whom are engaged daily in very difficult psycho-social work in Abkhazia. One, a Georgian national and registered psychologist, said this to Renos, at the conclusion: “this is the best training I have ever had in working with people. Every professional in Georgia should be here.”

The other, a Belgian national working with an international NGO in the region said this: “look at my notebook…last week I attended a three-day training, and came away with one paragraph of notes. This week I have nearly filled the book.” The chance for me to travel with Renos, to interview and interact with seasoned academics and caregivers and to trade ideas with a high-caliber group of Tbilisi State University PhD students, all of whom are deeply embedded in demanding psycho-social work, was a rich experience that I will not soon forget, and one that has created new lines of thought in my own research theme, the interface between trauma, Complex Combat Activated Disorientation and moral injury. I would like to offer my thanks to CPS for a research grant that contributed to making this trip possible for me. David Alexander

**June 2014**

Between 25 and 30 June, Renos Papadopoulos was in Cyprus where he was guest speaker at the Conference on Humanitarian Missions was organised jointly by the International Humanitarian Aid, the St George's University of London at the University of Nicosia Medical School, and the Bishopric of Constantia. The title of his key-note presentation was on ‘Humanitarian Aid in Times of Crises; Challenges and Dilemmas’. During his visit, he also consulted to the Engomi community project that offers psychosocial support in addition to material aid to those who were affected by the economic crisis in Cyprus.

Warmest congratulations to Bitenge Makuka (MA Refugee Care, 2013-2014) who has just been appointed as the Congolese Family Support Coordinator for Family Action based in Hackney; he will be working in partnership with all statutory and private agencies dealing with Congolese families who are facing any issues related to immigration, mental health, educational matters and relocation.
Warmest congratulations to Steven Petric, a graduate of the MA Refugee Care (2009-2010), who has just been appointed Country Director of the Danish Refugee Council in Afghanistan! Following his graduation from Essex, Steven returned to work in the field and he was in charge of several worthy psychosocial projects.

Between 30 May and 1 June, on the initiative of David Alexander (CPS PhD student), Renos Papadopoulos organised a closed Colloquium on the interface between Psychotherapy and Ancient Christian Spirituality. The Colloquium participants were a small group of invited professionals including Dr Nicholas Sakharov (CPS Fellow) and two alumni, Dr Georg Nicolaus and Dr Gregorios Tympas; both (supervised by Renos) wrote their PhD theses in this field and were published by Routledge.

May 2014

Between 24 and 26 May, Renos Papadopoulos was the special guest speaker at the 9th Jungian Odyssey Annual Conference and Retreat in Grindelwald in the Swiss Alps. This annual event is organised by the International School of Analytical Psychology (ISAP) and this year’s theme is ‘The Crucible of Failure’ and Renos’ presentation and follow up seminar were on ‘Failures and Successes in forms of Involuntary Dislocation: Trauma, Resilience and Adversity-Activated Development’. The conference is attended by over 70 participants from about 30 countries.

March 2014

On 26 March, Renos Papadopoulos was invited to participate on a panel with Susie Orbach and Colonel Tim Collins on the theme 'The psychoanalytic case: trauma, shellshock and the horror of war' at Donmar Warehouse Theatre, to accompany Peter Gill’s production of 'Versailles' as part of the series 'Impossible Conversations' intended to explore the debate around the legacy of WWI.

February 2014

Between 20 and 22 February 2014, Renos Papadopoulos was in Milan invited by ‘Terrenuove’ one of the most prominent organisations in Italy that work therapeutically with refugees and migrants. On Thursday he offered a consultation workshop for ‘Terrenuove’ staff as well as for directors of asylum and refugees centres in Milan and on Friday and Saturday he offered four training modules on ‘Migration, Trauma and Vulnerability’ to another group of professionals working in this field. This is the third time Renos was invited by ‘Terrenuove’ to offer training, consultation and supervision to their own staff as well as to other professionals working in Milan and in neighbouring regions. The difference is that this time he started offering an actual intensive training course that, it was agreed, to be presented modularly over two years. Further information can be found on this website: http://www.terrenuoveonlus.it/papadopoulos/

On 12 February 13 students from the MA Refugee Care and two students from the MSc in Human Rights visited the Hatton Cross Asylum and
Immigration Tribunal accompanied by Professor Renos Papadopoulos. The visit is an annual event Professor Papadopoulos organises with Judge James and the Resident Judge of the Tribunal Judge Conway. The visit included observing the hearings of five separate and individual appellants (i.e. persons who had appealed against the Home Office decision to refuse them staying in the UK), discussions with a barrister who was the Home Office Presenting Officer, lunch with the judges and speaking to them informally, a talk by and discussion with the Resident Judge Donald Conway and, finally, open discussion with two Tribunal Judges, Judge James and Judge Martins. Before the observation of the tribunals we were well aware of the huge responsibility resting on Judges’ shoulders and, now after our visit, we developed a more thorough understanding of the humane side of justice. This was certainly a unique occasion for us to understand and have a first-hand experience of the complexities involved in these court hearings. The visit has been very fruitful for gaining the insight into the crucial role of the judge who, needing to comply with the existing law (that is ever changing), has to determine whether the appellant “fits” the strict regulations on immigration and try to uncover as many details as possible to provide a just decision within an incredibly short period of time. It was very instructive and disheartening to see how poorly the appellants are often represented, with their legal representatives either not preparing their cases well or failing to produce important details that would support their arguments. We are extremely grateful to all Hatton Cross Tribunal Judges, especially Judge James, and Renos Papadopoulos who made the visit possible.

On 8 February, Renos Papadopoulos offered a day-long training on 'Conflict Resolution - a psychosocial perspective' to the 'The Forgiveness Project' in London. The training was part of the 'One - Year Diploma in Group Facilitation, Conflict Resolution and Counselling Skills' that has about 30 participants from a variety of backgrounds, e.g. victims and perpetrators of violence, lawyers and journalists, educators and counsellors, artists and community workers, organisational consultants and HR managers.

On 6 and 7 February Renos Papadopoulos held consultation meetings with the ‘War Trauma Foundation’ (WTF) in connection with updating their collaboration (with the ‘Centre for Trauma, Asylum and Refugees’), exploring new ways of actualising further the Memorandum of Understanding that our University signed last year with WTF. The officials from WTF that flew from Amsterdam to the meetings with Renos were Marieke Schouten, the WTF director, and Dr Jaap Kool, senior consultant.

On 6 February, Renos Papadopoulos was the external consultant to the annual day-long Continuous Professional Development event of ‘Safe Ground’, a charity that 'works to reduce the risk of offending and reoffending based on a continually developing understanding of the origins and impact of crime and a commitment to empowering people to change, whether in prison or the community'. In addition to members of staff from ‘Safe Ground’, the Event was attended by staff from other related organisations and services, including a Prison Governor.

January 2014

Between 2 and 18 January, Renos Papadopoulos was in South Africa. During his visit he worked in African Townships, offered consultations, two public seminars and a training event. He continued his work in Gugulethu and Khayelitsha, the African Townships near Cape Town, on the Nontsikelelo Arts Project mainly consulting to Ntombi Magantsela, the project director, and Evgenia Sofianos, a senior consultant to the project. In addition, he consulted to (a) Robyn Rowe (an ‘MA in Refugee Care’ alumna, 2007) who is now the
manager of 'Bonne Esperance - Refugee Shelter for Women and Children' in Philippi (another Township in the same region) that is run by the NGO 'Catholic Welfare and Development' (CWD) – the main subject was a major transition point in the development of this most worthy project; (b) Tom Parry, Chief Executive Officer of the ‘The Business Bridge Initiative’, an organisation that assists micro-entrepreneurs in townships throughout South Africa – the consultations were about the introduction of a psychosocial component to the training programmes they offer which, now, are limited to marketing and accounting skills; (c) Professor Leslie Swartz of the University of Stellenbosch, a leading international researcher in the field of community mental health – the aims were similar to those of the ‘Business Bridge’; (d) Macrina Walker and Christopher Ioannou who work in Robertson (a town that is just over 100 miles north west of Cape Town) with neglected farm-labourers’ children – the consultation, that was offered in Robertson, addressed issues of psychosocial assistance. On 14 January he gave a public seminar/workshop on ‘Psychology and the Eastern Christian Orthodox Tradition’ to mental health and other professionals as well as members of religious organisations and of the general public at the ‘Orthodox Centre’ in Pinati Estate, Cape Town; the following evening, he offered a similar workshop for Russian-speaking professionals and intellectuals. On 15 January he offered a training event at the Woodstock Exchange organised by the ‘Business Bridge’; the title of the event was ‘Introducing a psychosocial dimension to community trainings’ and it was attended by staff and trainers of the ‘Business Bridge’ as well as by other community trainers and activists as well as by Professor Swartz and members of his team.