

Centre for Trauma, Asylum and Refugees

Activities January - June 2010

25 - 27 June Renos was in Rome where he conducted a weekend training seminar to members of ETNA, a group of psychotherapists who work with asylum seekers and refugees in Italy. ETNA is a young organisation founded by members of AIPA, the Italian Association of Jungian Psychoanalysts. Renos has been having a close connection with ETNA since its inception, about three years ago, and it is the third time that he was invited to offer training events for them. Now, he was asked to assist them with further training in writing specialist reports for asylum applications.

18 June CTAR co-organised with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Tavistock Clinic a special event to mark the beginning of Refugee Week 2010. The title of the event was “No Place Like Home; the refugee experience from dislocation to relocation” and it was held at the Tavistock Clinic” main lecture theatre.

Sarah-Jane Savage (from the UNHCR) opened the event with an introductory presentation about the meaning of the Refugee Week and her agency's work. This was followed by a most realistic and moving short dramatisation entitled “My Life Away From Home” performed by asylum seeking women. The piece was based on their own experiences and was organised by Anne Akaki of the Refugee Council. Then, there were two presentations, one by Professor Renos Papadopoulos (the CTAR director) and the other by Dr Jo Stubbley, Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, Psychoanalyst and Head of the Adult Trauma Service at the Tavistock Clinic. These were followed by open discussion with the audience who participated very actively. At the end, snacks and refreshments were served in the adjacent premises.

By all accounts, the evening was a resounding success and there are plans to establish it as an annual event.

14 -15 June Renos was in Tallinn (Estonia) offering training on the “Identification and Effects of Stress and Burnouts of Migration Professionals” as part of a project co-funded by the European Union and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). This module is intended to be finalised and then offered on a regular basis to staff of the IOM who undertake special missions abroad.

9 - 13 June Renos was in Sardinia where he discussed with staff and postgraduate students of the University of Cagliari the findings of the European project (EVASP) that CTAR is now completing, with particular emphasis on the Asylum Seekers' Protection Index (ASPI). A specific issue that was also discussed is the possibility of collaboration in connection with PhD research projects.

CTAR is pleased to announce that the University of Essex signed a “Memorandum of Understanding” between CTAR and with the Geneva based International Organisation for Migration. This will strengthen the existing collaboration and facilitate further the exchange of expertise between the two bodies.

21 April - 4 May Renos was in Cyprus consulting to the mental health services about work with refugees as well as attending the residential conference “The Alchemy of the Soul” co-organised by the Champwernowne Trust and “Panopeia”. The Champwernowne Trust has been organising comparable conferences in the UK continuously since 1972, and “Panopeia” is a Cyprus professional group of Creative Arts Psychotherapists. Renos was the main speaker and his presentation was “Change and metalliosis” addressing the process of change in psychotherapy in general but also with reference to refugee contexts.

27 April CTAR co-organised with STAR (Student Action for Refugees) within the framework of the “Human Rights Spring Festival Week”. The human rights theatre performance group “Ice and Fire” performed a piece called “Asylum Dialogues”. Four actors played two dialogues between asylum seekers and British residents. The event, that was introduced by Joan Hodges (on behalf of CTAR), was equally well attended and it created a considerable impact.

26 April CTAR co-organised with STAR (Student Action for Refugees) within the framework of the “Human Rights Spring Festival Week”. The documentary film “Outside the Law: Stories from Guantánamo” was shown. The screening was followed by discussion chaired by Joan Hodges representing CTAR. Joan is a student of the MA in Refugee Care course and the president of STAR at our University. The panel included Andy Worthington, journalist and film maker who made this film, former Guantánamo detainee Omar Deghayes, and Mary Snow (representing STAR). The event was well attended and the discussion was lively and informative.

16-18 April Renos was at Queens' College in Cambridge, contributing at the closed interdisciplinary seminar organised by the Templeton Foundation. This was the second and last event before the preparation of the book on the Seminar theme “The Spirit in Creation and New Creation”. The first seminar was held in November last year in Heidelberg and was co-organised by University of Heidelberg’s Internationals Wissenschafts forum. Renos' contribution is addressing the renewing dimensions of “adversity-activated development” in the context of trauma epistemologies and work with survivors of political violence.

27 March Renos was one of the main invited speakers at the John Bowlby Memorial Conference to mark 20 years from his death. The Conference was held at the Institute of Child Health in London and Renos’ presentation was on ‘Refugees and Attachment: “Nostalgic Disorientation” and “Adversity-Activated Development”’.

24 March Renos Papadopoulos and Zuhura Mahamed offered a training day at the Asylum Link Merseyside (in Liverpool). The event was attended by representatives of most of the key organisations in the field from that geographical region. The training was part of the EVASP (Enhancing Vulnerable Asylum Seekers' Protection) project that is funded by the European Refugee Fund and it was a repetition of what was offered in London the previous week. The feedback was equally positive and already several organisations nationwide undertook to use ASPI (Asylum Seekers' Protection Index) on a regular basis.

18 March Renos Papadopoulos and Zuhura Mahamed offered a training day at the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture in London. The event was attended by representatives of most of the key organisations in the field. The training was part of the EVASP (Enhancing Vulnerable Asylum Seekers' Protection) project that is funded by the European Refugee Fund. The main aim of the day was to offer training on how to use ASPI the new instrument that Renos developed on the basis of the findings of this research. ASPI

(Asylum Seekers' Protection Index) is a systematic framework that maps out the vulnerabilities of asylum seekers in relation to the existing services as well as their own resilience and Adversity-Activated Development functions. The training was characterised by the participants as ground-breaking as it is the first time that a concrete and viable framework for shared practice has been developed in this field.

1 March Renos was at the University of Durham in the department of Theology where he acted as an external examiner of a PhD on 'The Philokalia and Mental Wellbeing' that researched the psychological dimensions of this collection of texts on Eastern Orthodox spirituality.

20 February Renos offered a training day on 'Conflict Resolution' to the course leading to the 'Diploma in Organisational Development and Executive Coaching' that 'The Grove' Consultancy organises in the UK. The course participants were executives, HR managers and other consultants from corporate organisations, the NHS, local government and NGOs.

5 - 7 February Renos was in Leiden (Netherlands) for the third steering committee of the partners of the research project "Towards Effective Reception of Vulnerable Asylum Seekers in Europe" (Acronym: EVASP: Enhancing Vulnerable Asylum Seekers' Protection). This EVASP research project, is funded by the European Commission (through the European Refugee Fund) as part of the plan to establish a "Common European Asylum System". The research meeting focused on the planning of the last phase of the project and also approved the formulation of ASPI (Asylum Seekers' Protection Index), an instrument that Renos developed to ascertain in a systematic way the vulnerabilities of asylum seekers in the context of their own resilience and Adversity-Activated Development functions and in relation to existing and potential services.

2 February Renos gave a seminar at 'The Place To Be', in London, on 'Working with asylum seekers and refugees; issues of diversity and cultural competence'.

26 January Renos chaired a panel on 'Life After Genocide' as part of the activities of the Holocaust Memorial Week on the campus. Four speakers, all postgraduate students, addressed three genocidal contexts: two on Armenia (Karine Ghazaryan and Nazim Cicektakan), one on Rwanda (Angelique Umugwaneza) and one on Sudan - Darfour (Huda Al Amin). The event was well attended, the participants engaged in lively discussion and it was felt by all that the gathering had a good mix of personal experiences, historical accounts and academic reflection.

28 January Renos was invited by the psychology department of the University of Warwick and offered an Open Seminar on 'The relevance of Jungian analytical psychology to academic studies' where he argued that the heuristic value of Jungian epistemology for social sciences has been undervalued and offered examples of his own activities, especially focused on refugees and other survivors of political violence.
