Wednesday, 26.3.26 14.00-17.00

Precongress Workshop of the IPA

Subcommittee Migration and Refugees:

Migration, Trauma, and the Analyst's Position – A Challenge to Neutrality

M. Bragin, M. Leuzinger-Bohleber, Nasim Ghaffari

Chair: Vladimir Jovic, Belgrade Psychoanalytic Society

Gertraud Schlesinger-Kipp, DPV, Germany

Content

Martha Bragin – Beyond Neutrality: Creating the Analytic Third (NYC)

Inability to bear real-world violence shapes the psyches of exiled people from conflict zones.

Psychoanalytic concepts will be discussed, along with how the far right exploits these dynamics to divide migrants and host communities. A clinical case illustrates the creation—and limits—of an analytic "third space" where forbidden emotions can emerge, be contained, and allow recognition of shared humanity.

Marianne Leuzinger-Bohleber – Threatened Caring Culture: On the Medea Myth (Germany)

Growing contempt for the vulnerable attacks the innate "caring system". Drawing on the Medea myth, this paper examines how unconscious fantasies and early trauma are projected onto migrants and refugees,fueling populist and extremist ideologies. Case material from the MODE study shows how care can bridge polarized groups but also provoke narcissistic rage and destructive end-time fantasies.

Nasim Ghaffari (Switzerland)

The psychoanalyst's position in times of political catastrophe: Reflections of an Iranian psychoanalyst

These reflections explore the psychoanalyst's position in times of political catastrophe from the perspective of an Iranian psychoanalyst living and practicing in Switzerland. Drawing on clinical work with Iranian and non-Iranian patients during the state massacre and war between January and March 2026, they consider how political violence in Iran enters the analytic field in Switzerland. Particular attention is given to the need to reflect upon the analyst's countertransference in order to understand how political catastrophe affects analytic work. Political violence often manifests less through explicit discussion than through its impact on the capacity to think. In such circumstances, analytic neutrality may be understood as the analyst's effort to sustain or regain a space for thinking and symbolization within the analytic field, even as external violence penetrates and disrupts it.