

## ON THEORY AND PRACTICE

ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT tasks in any publishing venture is to ensure continuity. With this thought in mind, it is with tremendous satisfaction that I congratulate the editors and contributors of *NIMEP Insights* on their second volume. This journal once again speaks to these students' dedication to serious inquiry and to their bold approach to confronting the world as young scholars and analysts. NIMEP represents a vibrant community of learning. I am privileged to witness these insightful youths reinforcing one another in constant human interaction, intellectual dialogue and argument. I admire them greatly as they wrestle with their personal, intellectual, ethical, and emotional struggles, seeking ways to comprehend complexities and to attempt to contribute to breaking the vicious cycles of violence in the world.

It is particularly gratifying to see the intellectual interaction between one of my current students, Matan Chorev—native of Israel, a co-founder of NIMEP, and now a Master's student at the Fletcher School—and Mouin Rabbani, a Palestinian, one of my students from the first year of EPIIC in 1985-86, and now also a friend. Mouin helped lead our first colloquium on "International Terrorism," where students attempted to distinguish and differentiate between gratuitous, brutalizing violence, and other more legitimate forms of political and militant resistance. Now a senior analyst based in Jordan for the Middle East Program of the International Crisis Group, Mouin was invited back to Tufts this year to receive an alumni award at the 21st EPIIC international symposium on "The Politics of Fear." Such continuity is critical to building our most valued asset, our community.

Almost thirty years ago, while I was the Hillel Director at Boston University, I was the motivating force behind *Leviathan: A Journal of Middle East Politics and Culture*, a cooperative endeavor of Muslim, Arab, Jewish and Christian students. *The New York Times* came to Boston to laud the magazine as a "unique collaboration." Unfortunately, given the paper's international circulation and the prominent government positions of family members, the publication's Arab student members became uncomfortable and felt obliged to withdraw. Consequently, on July 31, 1977, *The New York Times* featured the article, "Islam-Jewish-Christian Magazine on Mideast Falters." In the

article, the then regional director of the B'nai B'rith-Hillel Foundation, said that it was “unwise for students to work together outside of the context of an international settlement,” adding, “The building of bridges is disruptive. It doesn't help anybody. It just isolates them from their communities.”

For me, both then and now, this is a self-fulfilling, stunningly defeatist, and dangerous attitude. In my teaching, I have not deviated from trying to inspire, encourage and enable students to prepare themselves to challenge and think beyond the strictures of orthodoxy. Indeed, we chose “Thinking Beyond Boundaries, Acting Across Borders,” as the credo of the Institute for Global Leadership. It has informed our precedent-setting research trip to Iran to engage in dialogue with the students of Mofid University (see the inaugural issue of *NIMEP Insights*) and continues to enable our Tufts students and students from China to meet, talk with, and learn from the cadets of the United States Military Academy at West Point.

As a teacher, it is a constant challenge to provide context and perspective for my students. As one who graduated from college in 1965, I try hard to accurately remember my own intellectual and emotional experiences and maturation as a student and as a teacher. As a young graduate student in the Committee on the Comparative Analysis of the Study of Developing Nations in the African Studies Department at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, I undertook my first immersive education experience. I was studying Israel's then burgeoning relationships with Sub-Saharan Africa. I first met my Sudanese counterparts in the development town of Dimona, Israel when I headed the North American delegation of the World Union of Jewish Students. I then traveled with the Anya Nya insurgents of the Southern Sudan, who Israel had trained and armed, shipping weapons via Ethiopia and Uganda. I did not know at the time that I was witnessing what has since become the world's longest running civil war.

Upon my return to the US, as a graduate student at the University of Chicago's Committee on International Relations, I was shocked by the dissonance I found between theory and practice. I vividly remember my disbelief and dissatisfaction at being urged to couch my direct experiences with the chaos of human devastation, uprooted and impoverished peoples, and death and warfare, in academic terms such as “dysrhythmic change.” I also remember, during these years, that I had my first academic introduction to the controversial concept of “nation-building” in the context of studying Lebanon. This state's strict allotment of power and constitutionally enshrined

allocation of government positions along sectarian lines was enthusiastically understood within the Academy as the paragon of stability.

Such experiences reinforced my determination to always bring practitioners to bear on the conundrum issues that attract me, in order to ensure that theory is informed by reality and to expose my students to compelling role models who had successfully fought their own demons, as well as their opponents.

Thus, for this year's EPIIC "Politics of Fear" symposium, we brought as speakers the courageous and tenacious Chileans, Carmen Hertz and Juan Guzman, the leading lawyer and judge pursuing Pinochet's prosecution for the crimes and gross human rights abuses of his junta as well as the courageous Nobel Laureate for Peace, Shirin Ebadi, a tireless Iranian advocate for the rights of women, children and political prisoners. We also had a compelling evening of dialogue between the former political and military leaders of the African National Congress resistance to Apartheid, Mac Maharaj and Aboobaker "Rashid" Ismail, to dialogue with Hentie Botha, former member of the security branch of the South African Police, and Roelf Meyer, the former Minister of Defense and Minister of Constitutional Affairs in the South African Apartheid government. All of this was made possible by Padraig O'Malley, a long time friend who has won the much deserved accolade of being the "man who reconciled the irreconcilables."

Meyer became the chief negotiator in constitutional negotiations with the ANC's chief negotiator, Cyril Ramaphosa. These negotiations paved the way for South Africa's first fully democratic elections in 1994, after which Meyer served as Minister of Constitutional Affairs in the Cabinet of President Nelson Mandela. He admitted at our forum that as a leader he knew what was needed to be done for peace and justice to prevail in South Africa, but that for many years, at the cost of many more lives, he lacked the courage to do it.

Days after the symposium, I traveled to Toledo, Spain, where I attended the extraordinary conference "Lessons Learned from the Central American Peace Process." The conference was hosted by the Toledo Center for Peace and was organized and conceptualized by another one of my Institute students. It convened in dialogue the former combatants and antagonists of the brutal civil wars of Central America of the 1980s: the Contra War in Nicaragua, the FMLN insurgency in El Salvador, and the Guatemalan military rule. Former

presidents, guerilla leaders, ministers of defense, ambassadors, and peace activists, among others, took part in the proceedings. The Toledo conference was co-convened and facilitated by the Project on Justice in Times of Transition (PJIT), under the tutelage of an extraordinary negotiator, and another friend, Tim Philips, an Institute Practitioner-in-Residence in 2002 and 2003.

Philips attended EPIIC's 1991 symposium on "Confronting Political and Social Evil." That forum concluded with a five-hour marathon panel on retributive and retroactive justice. Philips attributes that panel with having planted the intellectual seeds for the remarkable PJTT. This panel was profoundly inspiring for me as well. Retribution was powerfully attractive for me. Not many years younger than my current university students, as the son of a Holocaust survivor, I thought I knew exactly what I wanted to be in life. I wanted to be a Nazi hunter to avenge the persecution of my father and his family. As a saber fencer, who lost friends and a coach in the 1972 Munich Olympic massacre, I struggled again with the powerful desire for vengeance and retribution.

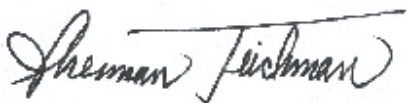
However, upon meeting with the remarkable Pavel Bergmann at that EPIIC symposium, an individual who had survived Hitler's Auschwitz to become a founding member, along with Vaclav Havel, of Civic Forum and Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia in 1989. It was truly a privilege. His passion for the future and firm conviction to transcend history's cruel grasp once again tempered what W.B. Yeats clearly understood and feared as the "blood loosed tide," in his celebrated poem "The Second Coming." I am clearly committed to holding the center that we often fear "cannot hold." It is a fulcrum for accountability, sanity and decency. Thankfully, I have learned from many extraordinary thoughtful and experienced survivors to blunt and channel my aggression. From my father I learned to hang on the pendulum of history in order to avoid its excesses.

One of the co-conveners of the Toledo conference was Shlomo Ben-Ami, Israel's former ministers of security and the foreign minister under Prime Minister Ehud Barak. He recently, and quite controversially, counseled that Israel negotiate with Hamas. He argued that an agreement with Hamas is both "feasible and possible" pending its recognition of the State of Israel. The alternative, he cautioned, will only cause Hamas to return to terror.

I am committed to creating an educational and political environment where this type of discourse can occur. As friends and colleagues, members of NIMEP clearly understand that the true reward of the journal is the process of putting it together. NIMEP is a forum for editing and argumentation, but also for exposure, and even vulnerability. It is not made up of a presumptive, neo-professional staff soliciting articles, but rather is an outcome derivative of common experiences and self reflection. Individually and as a collective, our students are self-consciously struggling with parallel, if hardly exact, circumstances, and understand that they are experiencing something profound.

You have Negar, a student trying to negotiate her secular upbringing with her efforts to redefine the philosophic approaches to democratic Islam; Nora, an Egyptian-American traveling to Egypt to uncover the sensitivities of her fellow people towards the country she calls home today; Matan, traveling through the Turkish-Kurdish conflict with his dear friend Mehmet, allowing him to observe from a more dispassionate perspective struggles reminiscent of his very first immersive education experience with NIMEP in Israel and the West Bank. As Matan pithily put it to me, "Mehmet's journey was my journey."

After Meyer's presentation at the EPIIC symposium, several NIMEP members immediately confided in me that they hope they will have the courage that Roelf Meyer wished he had back in 1985. It is not beyond their imagination that ten years from now, Hamas and members of the Israeli parliament will sit together and admit to one another that they too knew the path but lacked the fortitude to cross the rubicon. Let us hope we will not have to wait that long.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sherman Teichman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Sherman Teichman  
Director, Institute for Global Leadership  
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