

***We need auto-ethnography.*** Exploring what has shaped us as engaged educators: experiences/ideas/books/people/passions. The Experiment in International Living ([www.experiment.org](http://www.experiment.org)) was for me personally—a member of the GISIG Committee and associated with GISIG since 2002—an absolute eye-opener and life-changer in terms of world outlook, interest in social problems, early teenage high-level proficiency in German as principal L2, encounter with another culture in depth, future choice of career as a language teacher and translator, and involvement on the left: in progressive politics, social justice & critical pedagogy, minority studies, from EIL to *critical global educator*.

I'm a privileged veteran of the EIL, summer 1953, to Münster in northern Germany, a city then still partially in ruins, Cathedral smashed. That summer literally *transformed my life* in various key and lasting ways. I was just 15 years old, an early-entrant 1<sup>st</sup> year at the U of Chicago completed. I heard about the Experiment from our German teachers at U of C. I had also grown up in a highly anti-Jewish Lutheran neighborhood in Chicago as a kid during WWII, and later faced crude anti-Semitic bullying at a large Chicago high school, experiences that shaped me from earliest years. Immersed in this multicultural background, I had become curious about the Germans—as the fateful 'Other,' *the enemy*, anathema to our extended family—and the war, אשוא, German culture and history. And the powerful attraction of the German language, similar in intriguing ways to the Yiddish of my grandparents. I remained from childhood highly sensitive to discrimination and xenophobia of any kind. My later work with Bedouin in Israel, the Palestinian struggle ([goo.gl/KoA9SS](http://goo.gl/KoA9SS)) and marginalized Roma in Bulgaria reflect that. The EIL summer was a primary lesson in honing social empathy.

The transformative power of that experience within the Experiment—in contact with ordinary Germans, homestay within a family environment in an extraordinary German city, and later traveling as a group of young Germans and Americans across Germany, including a brief trip to East Berlin—permeated *all* my later studies at the Univ. of Chicago. So from age 16 I developed a strong interest in German philosophy, esp. Nietzsche, also the work of Martin Buber, his anarchist-socialist politics (inspired by Gustav Landauer). My study at Univ. of Münster in 1956-57, my decision to major in German (U Chicago, U Michigan), my work as a university teacher of German in the U.S. (from 1960) and then at TCD in Ireland, work as a translator on German and Jewish history (cf. [goo.gl/CKrdyo](http://goo.gl/CKrdyo)), my years teaching English at the Univ. of the Saarland, in Nepal, Laos, elsewhere—all this, seen in retrospect, sprang from the seeds the EIL had planted. Predominant was also an interest in bridging between Jews and Germans, 'empathic solidarity' in the shadow of Auschwitz, including in Israel. And 'teaching English as a political act,' a view of Esther Lucas within GISIG ([goo.gl/kw3Wh8](http://goo.gl/kw3Wh8), p. 52).

With critical sensibilities energized early on, I was further radicalized politically in the anti-Vietnam War/Movement and became active in the New University Conference ([goo.gl/qqsJB6](http://goo.gl/qqsJB6)), a social justice pedagogy group in the Modern Language Association. I was later further radicalized in Israel (1984–91), largely blacklisted there as an FL teacher due to my politics / civil rights engagement with Negev Bedouin. Teaching English & German in post-socialist Bulgaria from 1991, I connected with GISIG and the Marxist journal [www.jceps.com](http://www.jceps.com), where I serve on the Editorial Board. My writing and teaching look toward a socialism 2.0 that I am certain our shambolic world is hurtling toward. Cf. <https://independent.academia.edu/BillTempler/Papers> ; see also Maureen Ellis (2013) [goo.gl/Z7avIN](http://goo.gl/Z7avIN) . She stresses an eye to self-ethnography, autobiographics in becoming a critical global educator.