LA ESCENA CONTEMPORENEA International Conference Lima, Peru 6-8 April 2018

Review by Jonathan Sklar

Moises Lemlij recently ran his fifth international conference, having begun with the series with *The End of the Millennium Conference* in 1988 followed the next year by *The International Interdisciplinary Symposium on Universal, American and Contemporary Myths* held in Cusco in 1989. The International Symposium, The Novel in History and History in Novels that was held in Lima in 1995, followed this. And in 2001 At the End of the Battle was held.

To put these in context several Peruvian psychiatrists came and trained at the BPAS in the 1970's. Most were trained in the Independent tradition, with Moises in the Contemporary Freudian Group. Max Hernadez, Carlos Chrisanto, Saul Pena and Moises all returned to Lima and soon after established the Peruvian Psychoanalytic Society.

Nowadays this is a thriving component society of the IPA and Fepal. The small society has punched above its weight in the IPA with Max being V.P of the IPA in 1987 and later Moises served as Treasurer. Hilke Engelbrecht and Álvaro Rey de Castro were members of the House of Delegates, and Álvaro too was elected Vice-President of the IPA. Recently Maria Paz de la Puente and Jorge Bruce serving serially with Jorge Cantor presently on the Board.

In *La Escena Contemporanea* Moises vision was to establish a series of conversations between international culturists, philosophers, politicians and psychoanalysts from Europe and South America. The opening Cowap conversation was on the theme of violence in contemporary society . Concurrently there were 3 conversations on Art, Cultural Practices and Memory ;Sex and Contemporary Society and The 'Normalization' of Corruption

These were followed by lectures by Lord Alderdice, on the theme of Fundamentalism, Radicalization and Terrorism and Max Hernandez on The Crisis in Democracy. Both papers were searing descriptions, the one of a return to discussions and eventually peace in Northern Ireland and particularly highlighting humiliation , disrespect and the failure of democratic pathways due to states of political regression and the other of the vicissitudes and eruptions of conflicts and totalitarian/mafia politics in Latin America.

On the Saturday the conversations were Families at the Frontier; Modern Society and Gender Issues ; The Chaos of Globalization; The Power of the Media and The Leadership Crisis and Political Models.

There were three lectures in the afternoon- The French Social Scientist Daniel Dayan on Media Events: the Broadcasting of History; Jonathan Sklar on Europe in Dark Times;some Dynamics in Alterity and Prejudice and the Spanish philosopher Carlos Thiebaut on Post Secularization.

Saturday night saw us celebrate the work of the conference as well as Moises 80th birthday with an extraordinary party at the Lima Art Museum with an exhibition of Miro, a scintillating Peruvian–Cuban large music combo that got everyone dancing and an atmosphere that encouraged friendships new and old.

The Final event on Sunday morning was a Conversation led by Miguel Giusti (Prof of Humanities Pontificia University Catolica del Peru), the Peruvian historian Hugo Neira , the policy scientist Francisco Sagasi, Leo Nosek (psychoanalyst Sao Paulo) and Estela Welldon.

This was an exceptional meeting of important voices ranging across society, in this instance rooted in Latin America with an analytic holding of the whole and with each informing and

learning from the other. The key to its great success was the main time given to dialogue in panels ,which were open to audience participation. This is now unusual as so many analytic conferences seek to provide lecture platforms, for many speakers at the cost of shortening speaking time to 20-30 minutes with hardly any talking space for audience inclusion. Complexity as a result is hardly unravelled and perhaps this too is a bow towards fast consumption of sound bites that is becoming our news feeds.

Lemlij has also provided us with a new model that does not put psychoanalysis in the centre but gathers important voices with different disciplines and views so that we analysts, whilst shaping the envelope can listen and be part of the necessary contemporary debate.

This is a timely conference in the time of profound societal disruptions and the return of totalitarian and nationalistic politics as well as mafia governments.

Might we emulate this gathering by offering something similar for Europe?