CHAPTER EIGHT

MULTI-REGIONAL/ CONTINENTAL WORKSHOPS

In the Autumn and winter of 1995-1996, I facilitated or co-facilitated three workshops which were neither intercontinental nor concerned with one particular country or region of conflict, but brought together participants from a very wide area who nonetheless had much in common. One of these workshops was for women trainers from across Africa, held in Harare in early January; the other two, held in September near Moscow and in late January near Warsaw, were for peace and human rights workers from different parts of the former Soviet Union and what used to be called Eastern Europe.

In these three workshops we were not having to deal with external conflicts being played out in the group's dynamics. In Moscow and Warsaw there were, not unexpectedly, differences in the type of work and approach of those from the two different parts of the post-Communist world, but these differences were not the occasion of conflict. In Harare the potential divide between French speaking and English speaking participants did not materialise, being displaced, perhaps, by polarisation of another kind: that is by South-North confrontation. And in the Moscow and Warsaw workshops there was tension between the Russian and Western members of the facilitation team. So in these three workshops, as in those related to specific conflicts, what I learned about respect was in a sense more experiential than theoretical; about its presence and absence in relationships within the workshop process, rather than about cultural approaches and concepts. I experienced difficult challenges in my role as facilitator and colleague; challenges which I felt deeply, as I tried to keep my head and my balance in handling the power, responsibility and pressure involved. These unlooked for experiences of conflict reminded me both of the limits to its predictability (and to the usefulness of predictions) and of its pervasiveness in human relationships - especially where power and dignity are at stake (as I suppose they almost always are).

In these quite difficult circumstances my theoretical models - and my confidence in them - held up well. In different ways I evaluated the Harare and Warsaw workshops quite thoroughly, from a research point of view, getting feedback from colleagues on my record and interpretation of events, and on my own behaviour. Both these accounts are long, but I feel their length is justified by the importance of the detail of observation about what happened (in the Harare account particularly) and the feedback and discussion which they include. In the case of the Moscow workshop, I have selected parts of my account to include with a framing commentary, rather than reproducing the whole account.

In Moscow and Warsaw, gender was once more an uncomfortable issue; but that discomfort was as nothing compared with what I felt in Harare, where I experienced the contradictory feelings of being both at home and beleaguered in a group of my own gender.

Although the Moscow workshop came first, I shall present it later, in conjunction with the Warsaw workshop, and begin with my account of the Harare workshop. This was perhaps the most challenging piece of work I have ever had to survive, providing a rich but very painful source of learning. The account begins with an explanation of how I aimed to write it. The points which I make would apply to any comparable piece of writing. I think I must have set them out with so much care in this case because I felt how difficult it was going to be to balance my own immediate feelings with a more reflective internal voice and with other perspectives, both expressed and surmised.

Note: The agenda of this workshop was the one used subsequently in the resource pack produced by the organisation I was working for in Harare. It is set out in full in Chapter Four.

In presenting this account I have marked the days with subheadings, but my reflections often travel across those daily boundaries.

'ACCOUNT OF THE HARARE TRAINING FOR TRAINERS

JANUARY 7th - 12th 1996

This one week seminar was intended for African women trainers who were already experienced practitioners in the field of community education, and wished to add to their training repertoire the approaches, ideas and skills of Conflict Resolution / Transformation. The following account, based on my journal notes and memory, is a mix of narrative and reflection, summary and detail. It is written from my viewpoint - it cannot be otherwise - but I have tried not wilfully to select or exclude elements for my own purposes. I say 'not wilfully' as I will clearly have made unconscious and conscious choices in what I have remembered and recorded. I will have noted things (not all things) related to my focus of respect, to my own behaviour and feelings as facilitator, and those of participants, to relationships within the group and between the group (and individual participants) and myself, as well as their responses to, and engagement with, the content and processes of the workshop. My aim in my journalling was to have a record to examine and interpret, rather than to illustrate or prove some theory or viewpoint, but I make no claims to objectivity . In this piece of writing, the narrative is inevitably coloured by, and often explicitly accompanied by, interpretation. I have been vigilant with myself, in order to avoid, as far as possible, self-justifying censorship or embellishment; but my self-awareness will have had limits.

Before the workshop

When I was originally invited to be one of two facilitators in this training for trainers, I welcomed the opportunity of increasing my small experience of working in Africa, but was quite clear that my participation would make sense only if I worked with someone who knew Africa intimately and would be accepted by the participants as doing so - in other words, an African. I also wanted to respect sensitivities about racism and colonialism. I knew, and liked and respected enormously, a Ghanaian woman trainer, Cleo. We had often said we would like to work together. I contacted her and she was excited by the prospect of this training. We agreed to do it. She was in the United States at the time, but we did some planning by 'phone and correspondence, had a brief meeting when she was in London, and planned to spend two days together immediately before the workshop.

Two days before this scheduled planning meeting, I received a call from Cleo to say that someone very close to her, whom she had regarded as a second father, had died unexpectedly; that she was devastated, and that his funeral would take place during the week of the workshop. It was clear that she could not come to Zimbabwe. It was also clear that it was too late for the workshop to be cancelled (since all the tickets had been bought, and some of the participants had already begun their journey), and far too late for me to find another co-facilitator, or for the organisers to make other arrangements. This left me, as I felt it, with no responsible choice but to make the best of a situation which I would have avoided at all costs: undertaking a week's facilitation alone in a training for trainers (always a daunting task), a single European trainer with a group of African women.

I decided that the best thing I could do, from my own point of view and that of the participants, was to explain the position to them and to ask for one person each day to act as co-facilitator, having also helped me adjust or remake that day's agenda in the light of feedback from base groups. Clearly this arrangement would be less than ideal, since the normal overall co-planning would not be able to take place or full co-responsibility be assumed. On the other hand, it would be a way of utilising and acknowledging the expertise contained within the group, and sharing the facilitator's load and power, at least to some extent, and modelling a co-operative way of working. I felt I needed ongoing input into the agenda from an African perspective - and I needed not to be in the uncomfortable and potentially symbolic position of a lone European trainer in an African group. I did not consider such a position as appropriate and did not wish to be seen as so considering it: I wanted to respect and be respected as doing so.

My research agenda for this workshop had been to monitor, as usual, my own respectfulness and to continue to develop my understanding of what respect could mean, in relation to conflict, in different contexts and cultures. In addition, I wished to note the response of participants to the content I was offering on questions of power and justice in conflict, and their relationship to conflict resolution. Cleo had agreed to give me her feedback on this at the end of the seminar. When it became clear that she would not be coming, I asked my colleagues who were organising the seminar, Jen, the training manager and Kirsty, the training project officer, to give me what feedback they could. In addition I planned to use the feedback contained in the plenary and base group evaluations and given to me by my daily co-facilitators.

I arrived at the conference centre outside Harare early on the Saturday morning. We were due to begin the following evening. My first impression of the site was of its pleasant homeliness: attractive gardens, pleasant places to sit and work outdoors, friendly dining room, adequate bedrooms and washing arrangements, and very comfortable beds. I realised that, as is often the case at such events in Europe, some participants and some staff would be sharing rooms. Given the strain I knew I would be under, I was glad that I would not. I learned that the telephone lines were poor and that transport into Harare was unreliable. These disadvantages seemed to me regrettable but manageable. What seemed more serious was that the plenary room was rather small for our purposes, and hot, and that the interpretation equipment necessitated the use of table microphones and thus an undesirable degree of formality and use of space in the seating arrangements. I felt some despair and irritation; then decided there was nothing to be done but to make the best of it, arranging the tables in a horse-shoe shape, bringing in as many fans as possible and resolving to go outside for games and group-work.

Composition of the group; identities and roles

The twenty-five participants came from Burundi, Cameroon, Madagascar, Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Ruanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda. The absence of anyone from Zimbabwe itself was the subject of adverse comment from participants and greatly regretted by the organisers, who had relied on their local partner organisation to make the opportunity known to appropriate groups and individuals.

Maintaining a sense of equality in the workshop between French and English was going to be important, especially showing due respect to French speaking participants who, as things had worked out, were in the minority. Two interpreters, recommended by the local partner organisation, had been hired, and although I facilitated plenary sessions in English (as the strain of trying to do it all in French would have been too great), I was able to understand French without interpretation and to use my French with individuals and small groups. I also made sure that everything went on flipcharts in both languages and asked participants to tell me if any of their language needs were not being met.

Since African women usually divided by language were given the opportunity of working together in this seminar, and since Africa is no doubt blessed with as much cultural variety as any other continent, this was for all of us a 'cross cultural' event. However, the biggest cultural difference - and difference in perspective - was the one between me and my European organisational colleagues on the one hand and the participants on the other. Two African staff members from the organisation, Mbiya and Faith, who were responsible for different aspects of the organisation's Africa programme, were there, at their own request, as participants, and played a very helpful role in that capacity. However, it seems, retrospectively, that however useful to them and well explained their presence and role were, it must have reinforced the idea of Africans being excluded from the leadership. I had not been very comfortable about their coming in that capacity, because of the potential for unclarity.

Opening session and day one

The first twenty-four hours of the workshop were a struggle for me. In spite of all requests to the contrary, many participants came late, so that introductions and explanations had to be carried over from the first, already curtailed, evening to the following morning, and were not as full as had been intended. After a clear explanation of Cleo's absence, a heartfelt expression of my regret on their account and mine, and a request for the group's understanding and support, I had chosen to begin with an explanation of the workshop's purpose, assumptions and agenda, and move on to some consideration of group dynamics and of attitudes to conflict. This was followed by and some work on communication skills, which I explained as constituting the building blocks for conflict resolution. In the plenary evaluation, participants expressed satisfaction with the day's content, the participatory methods used, the contributions of fellow participants, and the 'useful ideas and techniques'; but they complained that the learning objectives of the workshop had not been made sufficiently clear and that they lacked a theoretical framework. In addition, they wanted greater clarity on the difference between training and training for trainers; they wanted to move more, and they wanted more group work.

Here I feel the need to comment on my use of the word 'they'. In group evaluations, without a show of hands on each point made, it is not always easy to tell how many unheard voices would be in support of those heard. Still, the opinions expressed and described above evoked some assent, and were supported by the feedback from the

base groups which met at the end of the plenary session. Here there was appreciation for my facilitation style. I was seen as patient, articulate, sensitive to participants' needs and not wanting to impose. But the sense of a lack of theory and definitions was reiterated, along with the need for greater clarity about the aims of the workshop. In addition, there was an expressed wish for 'a gender dimension', a focus on the role of African women. I noticed and recall two responses in myself. One was of puzzlement that I had given advance explanations, which to me had seemed quite careful, even laboured - about the seminar's concept and aims, my approach to theory and terminology, the fact that for the rest of the week we would be working mostly in small groups and that the focus of our work (for instance, gender issues) would come from participants' own choice and experience, and my explanations had apparently failed to communicate these things. My other response was a determination to meet as fully as I could to the group's clear needs - and to be seen to do so.

Day two

Having conferred with Jen and Kirsty and enlisted their help (self-care), I was able the following morning to present participants with a substantial theoretical tract, a list of workshop objectives (which was simply a repackaging of the outline agenda), an extremely detailed week plan, intended for a manual, a repeat of my assurances about group work, a fresh explanation of the way this 'training for trainers' had been conceived and how gender and other issues could become the focus of our work. I explained my view that definitions and terminology, though covered to some extent in the theoretical tract they had been given, should not pre-empt our own discussions and conclusions, and that the one word we had discussed so far, 'conflict', was a word in common use, not to be imprisoned in some narrow definition; that what constituted a conflict was very much a matter of individual and cultural perception, or social construction, and that what we were mainly concerned with was finding ways to avoid the violence and destruction which all too often accompany conflict. To offer any other definition would for me have been to be sucked into something which I considered counter-productive.

In the same way, I had not wished to begin with a theoretical lecture. For me, theory is more usefully constructed elicitively and on the basis of experience, and to begin by lecturing would have been to model the kind of relationship between facilitator and participants which I did not want. It seemed to be my educational understanding and

professional integrity versus their demands. It also felt as if I was receiving double messages - one about the importance of participatory methods and group work - elicitive processes - and the other about the need to be told things, offered something ready made. Of course, these two wants are not necessarily contradictory; and they perhaps represent, respectively, modern and more traditional approaches to learning in Africa - as elsewhere. (I remember similar debates in the North Caucasus, and from my work in England.) Maybe I need to be less unbending and give people the reassurance - and perhaps clarity - which an opening lecture could provide; but something inside me says that to do so would be to give the whole workshop the wrong frame.

I could, I think, use my 'power and conflict resolution' model to present, in an interactive way, the different elements of the week's agenda in a visual and, at the same time, theoretical form, and satisfy, to some extent at least, all these conflicting wants, respecting both my own intentions and meeting the felt needs of participants. At the same time, I wonder to what degree these first day complaints were just that: the vehicle for a kind of early manoeuvring in power relations, relations which are always particularly sharply felt in training's for trainers and which had taken on an added edge because of the north-south dynamic which emerged during the course of the week. With hindsight, I think it was this dynamic which made the group at times resistant to my meanings, unconsciously unwilling to accept or comprehend what I said, coming like an invisible wall between us, or a distorting glass which affected perceptions.

I had explained my idea of inviting participants, in Cleo's absence, to help with the planning and facilitation, and had asked one of the base groups if they could suggest one of their members for the following day. Their message to me after their meeting was that they were not willing to go along with this plan, since the relationship could not be an equal one as they had not been party to the planning of the workshop. At the time I fully accepted this response, recognising the truth of what was being said, while very much regretting that the aims of my suggestion would not therefore be accomplished. I was anxious, too, at the prospect of having to carry the full strain of facilitation for the entire workshop. What I was more concerned about, however, when I thought about it later, was one participant's suggestion that my proposal had been some kind of 'power play'. Presumably she meant that I was insincere in my proposal, wanting simply to appear to share power, while not really meaning to do so. I think now that I should have challenged this suggestion. At the time, I scarcely registered it, and felt I had no choice but to express regret, accept what was being said as

representing the considered response of participants, and carry on alone. I did, at the end of the day, re-explain my proposal and invite any group or individual who felt able to help me to do so, but received no response.

There had been some complaints and suggestions from the base groups at the practical level: complaints about the telephones and food, suggestions for starting sessions at different times, and a request that per diems should be paid, in spite of the acknowledged fact that it had been made clear in advance that they would not. Kirsty promised to speak to the kitchen about the food and Jen offered to send telephone messages, but no reference was made to the matter of per diems, since in their view it had been clear all along that there would be none, and that nothing was to be gained by a discussion. In hindsight this was a mistake. The matter of our morning starting time, over which the group was strongly split, was decided when I asked if my needs could settle the matter, in view of my acknowledged overload (self-care again, combined with a wish to bring the discussion to an end).

At the end of this second full day, the evaluation was extremely positive. The process had been lively, the work interesting, and time had gone quickly. The groupwork had been enjoyable and productive - especially the role-plays - and it had been good to be outside. Both I, as facilitator, and Jen and Kirsty as organisers, had been seen to respond to participants' needs. The objectives of the workshop had been made much clearer, the 'scientific quality' of the day was appreciated, and it was felt we were working on a 'useable module'. One person repeated the request for gender issues to be taken up more concertedly - but no-one spoke in support, and when later I invited her to look at the agenda and come back to me with a proposal, she in fact came back with the view that the agenda provided plenty of scope as it stood.

We seemed to have come to the end of our plenary evaluation and I was suggesting that the base groups could now meet, when one woman declared a need to raise for all participants the question of per diems. I reminded her of our 'speak for yourself' ground rule, but she insisted that there had been much out-of-sessions talk on the matter and that she really could speak for the group. They all felt that it was a bad policy not to offer per diems - a failure to recognise participants' needs - and that the organisers needed to hear that. It was a question of justice. One of the base groups had already raised the matter, yet no response had been made. I explained why that was so, and invited my colleagues to respond now. Kirsty, by temperament exceptionally open and friendly, described in what seemed to me a straightforward way the organisation's

policy on per diems. Referring to the communication that participants had received on the matter, she concluded that they had therefore apparently chosen to participate on that basis, implying that that to her there was really nothing more that could usefully be said.

This response was greeted by an uproar, and a catalogue of complaints about the venue, accommodation, facilities and food, and what was seen as a general disregard of what participants were entitled to expect. It was suggested that this was because they were Africans and women. I continued in my facilitator role, since these were not matters for which I was responsible; but I felt the strain of distancing myself from my colleagues and my own opinions, and my feeling that Kirsty was being very unfairly treated, in view of the immense care she had taken over all the arrangements, both generally and for individuals, for whom nothing was too much trouble. I allowed myself to offer one piece of information, which was that the venues used for the European trainings which I had facilitated for IA had been considerably less pleasant and comfortable than this one. This seemed to have no impact - maybe it was not believed - and eventually Jen was asked to speak. She reiterated the organisation's policy on per diems, but chose also to accept some responsibility for its application in this circumstance, as well as for other arrangements. She said that the cost of the seminar was high - and gave the figure - and that a choice had been made to spend a major amount on travel, bringing together a group of wide geographical scope, to make it a real pan-African event. The venue had been chosen with the help of the organisation's local partners: a venue which they had been felt to be pleasant and comfortably adequate, and had assured Kirsty was frequently used by comparable groups. (One of the difficulties here was that the partner organisation had singularly failed to deliver the kind of reliable support and advice for which they had been contracted and paid, and that Jen and Kirsty felt unable to announce this fact.)

Jen's words in turn caused even greater indignation with some participants. The mention of the cost of travel seemed to suggest to at least one that Africans were being blamed for the appalling inadequacies and cost of African air services, which she saw as yet another colonial legacy. Eventually, however, emotions subsided. I said I was sure that the feelings of participants in this seminar, about per diems and other things, would be noted by the organisation, and borne in mind in future policy discussions - which Jen confirmed - and this assurance was greeted with satisfaction. Participants declared themselves pleased to have had this discussion, glad to have aired their concerns. Several of them afterwards said it had been hard on me to have to hold the

process. In fact, I remember I had at one point asked for an adjournment because I felt too tired to go on, but my request had been refused! I feel no real remorse now for having staggered on, though clearly I failed yet again in self-care.

[Now I would rather say 'self-protection proved impossible'. As I revisit this paragraph now, I am struck once again by the polarity of perspectives, on both the issues and the process: a polarity which I accepted and held as facilitator, but did not comment on or propose for discussion.]

The way that individual participants related to me outside of sessions was in marked contrast to this apparent unresponsiveness. Many stopped me to encourage or congratulate me, a few to ask me how I was coping or to sympathise with me over the heavy load I was carrying. One even told me she had woken in the night and wondered how on earth I was surviving. At mealtimes, people were very friendly - to Jen and Kirsty too. A less positive aspect of mealtimes was the surly way in which some participants spoke to the kitchen staff. I was also unpleasantly surprised by the number of complaints that the food was not what they were used to (and, to my astonishment, that it was insufficient). It seemed to me strange that people would not expect and accept differences when travelling.

Days three and four

During our second day's agenda, focused on problem-solving, the twin questions of power and justice had been raised. I had acknowledged their key importance and pointed to the fact that they would be our focus for most of the second half of the week: an assurance which was positively received. When, on the Wednesday and Thursday mornings, I presented my diagrams, they were clearly of great interest to the group; and yet I felt resistance, particularly at the points when I referred to and we discussed the option for violence or nonviolence. On thinking carefully later, I realised that this resistance had come mostly from one person, but it felt to me as if it created, or maybe represented, a dynamic of resistance. It was clear from the way participants worked with the models later that they were in fact relevant and useful, but in the plenary sessions in which they were discussed, I had the same feeling that I had had earlier, that something was obstructing my words' reception. In my journal I wrote that trying to explain myself was

'like swimming in treacle. Suspicion, I guess, of something about justice coming from Europe. One participant [who I now think was the major player in the group dynamic - see later] seemed to be desperately trying to find ways to wrong-foot me. I suggest international solidarity can help in a campaign, and she says better to be independent. I say fine, that's up to you, and she's frustrated: nothing to punch against.'

That discussion about seeking or accepting international solidarity was in fact an interesting and useful one, when other participants joined in. It gave us the opportunity to clarify the principle, already clear from my diagram, that the leadership and agenda should stay with those who initiate a campaign, ie those whose cause it is.

As I now re-read the evaluations of the Wednesday and Thursday, I feel greatly reassured. According to these, the models were new and helpful, the content of the discussions had been good, it had been good to stay in the same working groups (I had expressed some anxieties about that, but accepted what seemed to be a strong majority view) and the work had been engaging and productive. The role-plays, which I had persuaded them to do alone in their groups, had been really powerful and brought new understanding at an emotional level. I was thanked for the strength and quality of my facilitation and considered to have been articulate and confident. In addition, the food had improved and the Wednesday afternoon's trip to Harare had been enjoyed. Here Jen and Kirsty had had an opportunity to demonstrate their care and responsiveness. One of our party had had her purse stolen, and returned very distressed. Kirsty and Jen had decided right away to replace the stolen money, and this was greatly appreciated by the person concerned, and indeed by the whole group. (Here the overlap between respect and care is apparent, as it was at Balaton.)

Day five

Although one night I had dreamt very vividly of running a workshop in a really incompetent, unprepared way, on the Friday I wrote in my journal,

'I think for me at the moment it's more a question of acceptance than of competence. I dreamt last night that I'd looked in the mirror and found myself to be African after all. It was such a relief!'

I recounted this dream to one or two of the participants, wanting somehow to communicate what I felt. One of them came to me that evening and made me a gift of one of her own very beautiful African dresses. I was deeply touched.

The whole question of individual opinions and 'group opinions' is a vexed one. I referred to it earlier in relation to evaluation. By the end of the week I was of the opinion that one particular person in the group played a key role in defining the apparent relationship of the group with me, and as I have gone through my notes and recalled who said certain significant and impactful things, I realise it was this same person: a Malagasi woman living in England with an English husband, never, as a fellow trainer, stepping out of bounds in terms of process, but from a particular politically correct stance calling into question my whole input and function. By the position she took she drew behind her, at certain times, powerful others; but I think those others, without her setting the pace, might have responded quite otherwise - and to an extent did. Yet this one strong thread of resistance and subtle attack had a major effect on the way things felt, and I think not only to me.

How do the quiet and the silent voices relate to the loud voices?
How can they be detected and valued? The base group feedback process was designed to give them a chance, and I am sure most women spoke up in the base groups; but were all voices represented in the base group reports? I guess that was a question of who was facilitating. There were a few women who stood out as different in style. One of them would make separate, personal evaluatory speeches of an enthusiastic kind which tended to be laughed at by the others; another just felt to be separate, engaging with the others, yet in some way remaining contained within herself and not following the emotional movements of the group.

There is such a thing as a group dynamic, but no such thing as a group mind, except in the sense of an acknowledged consensus which has been worked for and which somehow expresses or takes into account the different minds of individuals. Such consensus can be more or less easy to achieve. When it is difficult, this can be on account or two things, or a mixture of both: the inability or unwillingness of individuals to make a particular choice, wanting to have the penny and the bun, or a polarisation between individual choices within the group. Thus when we had to decide whether to end early, on account of the early departure of a substantial number of participants, because they had chosen to opt for more convenient flight schedules, some insisted that we should do the impossible, curtailing nothing and including everyone in everything, and complained at every choice or formula for compromise; others took a strong position one way or the other. Who, in this circumstance, was responsible for finding a way forward? In my theory, that responsibility was shared (and here

responsibility is the flipside of respect). In practice, I kept trying different formulae and combined my final best offer with a process reflection, pointing out that it was not possible to meet every conflicting want, and that I could not make it so.

The result of the decision we did take was that our work on 'recovery and healing', which was of great importance, had to be curtailed, and some participants were left dissatisfied and with some raw emotions. I felt sorry for this, though only partly responsible. It was a consequence not only of my compromise proposal, but also, more fundamentally, of other people's choices over flights, or insistence that we should all be together for a full evaluation, which then necessitated the shortening of the other afternoon work. No-one, I now reflect, offered to share the responsibility for this lack of time for the question of healing.

One might expect that trainers in training would more readily accept co-responsibility, but in my more general experience, trainers 'on holiday' like to behave as if they are on holiday, as well as competing with each other in knowing better than the trainer(s) for the workshop. In addition, this was a group, largely, of feminists, advocates and trainers for assertiveness. Maybe there was something of a contest as to who could be most assertive, with me as a kind of substitute male authority figure! I need to bear these possibilities in mind when I try to estimate how much of the dynamic within this group of participants, and between them and me, was or was not a question of culture, historic relationships or race, or related to aspects of my behaviour. Maybe the African-European relationship was to some extent a focus or cover for some more universal class-teacher dynamic. (I am acutely aware of how far this is all a matter of speculation - and maybe projection - on my part.)

I also find it interesting to speculate whether antagonism towards the European organisation and leadership of the workshop played a role in unifying potentially conflicting elements within the group, for instance the French and English speaking subgroups. In the final evaluation one participant (the usual one), complaining about the standard of translation, and describing what she saw as the lack of care taken over it as an insult to Africans, laid the blame for linguistic barriers in Africa at the door of colonialism: a view which seems to me to be at least over-simple.

The inadequacy of our session on recovery and healing also confirmed for me the subject's importance. I need to think more about it. One thing that became clear inside me that afternoon was that I was tired of running 'introductory workshops' - while still

acknowledging their usefulness - and longed to do more in-depth work on specific aspects of peacemaking. Recovery and healing would be one such aspect.

Evaluation

Our final evaluation was done both in base groups and in plenary. The casework of the final morning, with action plans and role-plays, was very positively evaluated. Assessments of the whole week were appreciative of the workshop's overall style: my 'allowing problems to be aired' and responsiveness to participants' needs, my 'knowledgeable and articulate' facilitation, my approach and methodology, in particular the participatory processes used; the practical usefulness of the knowledge generated 'for day to day conflicts' through the opportunity in groupwork to look at real conflicts from the participants' own experience. There had been 'much learning of fundamentals.'

There were, however, some apparent contradictions which I found puzzling. In spite of the sense of solid and useful learning, of new and practical knowledge, there were still complaints about a lack of theoretical grounding. One group saw this as a question of time, suggesting that the balance had been right and that different aspects of the work, including theoretical, would need to be developed in follow-up workshops. This made sense to me; and I want to consider seriously the idea that a more theoretically structured opening would be helpful. One group said that the issue of power and justice had not been adequately handled. Since the daily evaluations on this part of the workshop content had been entirely and enthusiastically positive, I can think of three possible explanations of this criticism: one, that the subject was of such importance that the time available was experienced as insufficient (but this feeling was not expressed in the daily feedback); the second, that it was considered impossible that a European could understand these issues, and therefore impossible that these sessions could have been adequate; the third, that our brief exploration of the choice between violence and nonviolence had provoked feelings which were not dealt with. From the subsequent remarks of Mbiya (one of the two African staff-participants) and associated memories from our discussion during the workshop, I see reason to favour this last explanation. My description of nonviolence thinking was intended to be descriptive rather than prescriptive, but I also made it clear that our purpose in this workshop was to examine and develop nonviolent rather than violent strategies and methods - which was of course well known, but may still have been felt as some kind of put-down of

violent struggle and therefore of struggle itself. (This is one of those 'swimming in treacle' areas where all the explanations in the world seem to communicate little when people from the old colonial nations are talking with those who have been colonised.)

Another area of complaint was that I had not adequately 'contextualised' my material. I had tried repeatedly to explain that I, not being African, was deliberately choosing non-African examples, on the whole (though certainly not mostly European) to illustrate what I was presenting, on the understanding that the participants were the Africa experts and it was for them to bring in their own experiences and examples, and to test and apply the models and theories under discussion in relation to their own examples. For me this was very much an issue of respect: to know the limits of my own expertise and competence and to acknowledge theirs - as I explained. I considered it would be of interest to them to hear, for instance, of struggles for justice in other parts of the world, illustrating the universal dimension of some issues and experiences. Instead, it was taken, by some at least, as a measure of my lack of interest in African experience - or maybe simply of my ignorance. (Earlier in the week, the 'ice-berg' diagram I had used to delineate the processes needed for problem solving had been felt by one group to be inappropriate for Africa. I had half-expected this response, but told myself not to be silly, since we all occupied the same planet and I probably live no closer to ice-bergs than Africans do.)

The last complaint about the workshop content, which came from one group, was that I had failed to respond to repeated requests for a gender focus. Here I realised - and explained - that I should perhaps have told the whole group about my conversation with the one woman who had repeated the request, but that I had thought she spoke only for herself. In practice, I think the women were free to work as much as they liked on gender issues, and did so when they chose.

The evaluation of practical and organisational arrangements surrounding the workshop was much as could be expected, though by now delivered in a more measured way. The criticism of the translation provision was new and felt harsh. In particular, I felt for the two interpreters who were obliged to translate the view that they needed to improve their fluency! Much of the feedback delivered during the week could, from my cultural perspective, have been described as brutally frank. Whether this had to do with African culture or with feminist assertiveness training I cannot tell. It had the great advantage of clarity and the drawback of bruising; though the tendency to be bruised may also have been cultural. (I think not, though, when I recall reactions to Kirsty and Jen.)

Final morning

Thursday evening had brought the surprise arrival of two participants from Burundi. We had all been extremely worried about their apparent disappearance in transit, and although their coming was now really too late to be useful, we were relieved and delighted to see them, and they received a very warm welcome. They were eager to learn what they had missed (and it seemed to me unwilling, quite naturally, to accept that they had missed it), so our eventual plan for the final Saturday morning was to use it to run through the week's learning, which process could serve as a useful digestion and clarifying procedure for those who had been there, at the same time as informing the Burundians. However, when morning came, several women came to me and said they wanted to go shopping in Harare instead, mentioning that they thought the Burundians had business in Harare too. When I spoke to the Burundians they said they had made a tentative appointment in the hope that I would agree to run our session in the afternoon instead. By this time I was almost too tired to function. The thought of having to stagger through a rather dense and intense morning had already seemed fairly daunting, and I knew I could not keep myself in a state of alertness till the afternoon. I also saw no reason why I should adjust yet again; so I said no, adding that if the other women were willing to take the process on, I would be prepared to be called in as and when needed to help with explanations or clarifications. This last idea was then adopted, but in fact, when it came to it, one of the Burundian women retired to her room unwell, and the other said she was too tired to work, so the whole thing dissolved, with my Malagasi friend (and she was, curiously, also a friend and the one who organised my lovely scarf gift and accompanying thank-you card) almost the only one left to disapprove of the whole sorry procedure.

Coping with fatigue; self-care

I found it an immense effort to resolve to describe this last episode, the exhaustion and need to give up which I felt at the end of the workshop being replicated now, as I write my account: which brings me to the question of self-care. I allowed myself to moan to my training colleagues, be bought drinks and generally be clucked over, and accepted whatever help could be offered by them, in terms of sorting flipcharts and preparing handouts and diagrams. I tried not to work inordinately late, and drank an unusual

amount of whiskey, which I sometimes followed with paracetamol tablets (self-care indeed), in a vain attempt to sleep in spite of the presence of noisy, frightening insects, and the endless activity of an overtired brain. On the Wednesday, our half day, Jen insisted that Kirsty and I went into Harare, with only a little business to do at the travel agent's, and spent the rest of the day wandering around, drinking coffee and eating an excellent dinner in a very comfortable hotel. The overall stress of lone facilitation in that particular context I could not avoid; but once the groupwork was well established, I was able to slip away to my room for odd minutes, just to be on my own, and walk around in a relaxed support capacity. I also managed to accept that I could do no more than my best in a situation not of my choosing, to keep calm and internally relatively still, and take things as they came. I kept my journal writing to a minimum, noting only things I was afraid I might forget, and tried not to worry my head about understanding what was happening - only to notice and be alive to feelings and insights within myself.

After the workshop

On the final Saturday afternoon I sat under the trees with Jen and Kirsty and we unloaded our feelings together. Then I asked them for their feedback on the workshop content. Jen, as training manager, was clear that the organisation would want to include my power and justice material (and indeed the whole workshop) in their manual and in future workshops, seeing it as a vital element in conflict prevention (a phrase which I have since added to the final stage in my diagram), which in turn is central to the organisation's work. She said it also brought wholeness to the concept of conflict transformation and corresponded to participants' realities. She believed that my 'power and conflict resolution' model provided a strong framework for the construction of such workshops, and that the analysis it represented would be supported by the rest of the organisation's staff, from their own concerns and experience. She was also of the opinion that the models and exercises which I had used had been 'excellent'.

The assessment of the workshop's content and the material used had been intended as my primary research focus for this workshop. In the event, I found (and still find) it difficult to give this evaluation the weight that I want to. The emotional content of the workshop's dynamics tends to overwhelm everything else. Yet I should recognise that my understanding about what constitutes the basic mix of ingredients, the scope, of

such an introductory workshop, and in particular the inclusion of power and justice issues (and, which was less of a conscious focus, of the question of healing) was strongly vindicated, along with the related materials, models and processes that I had selected and developed.

After my return to England I received similarly positive feedback from Cleo, when she had heard my verbal account. She was familiar with the proposed workshop content and agenda, which in the event I had adhered to almost entirely, in the light of the positive daily evaluations. She saw it as I had framed it for the manual: as one arrangement of essential basic elements, adding, as I had done, that it would be up to individual trainers in a given context to construct a workshop shaped and proportioned to the needs of a particular group of participants.

I have noticed that my feelings and overall impression of the workshop have kept slipping into a persecution frame, with me and my colleagues as victims, and the workshop as a failure; and yet, when I look at my notes and push my memory to sharpen itself up and become specific, I see that there was much that was affirmative and that, by and large, the workshop could be considered a success. I will not have been helped by my tendency to see things which are not perfect as disastrous, nor by my personal need for gigantic dollops of reassurance. Being somewhat obsessive about questions of justice, I not surprisingly found it difficult to be associated, as it felt, by geography and race, with colonialism and oppression, and experienced this as persecution. Whereas the group clearly experienced me as powerful, on account of my role and Europeanness, I was more aware of their power and my isolation, both functional and racial/cultural. Their power was not only numerical, but moral, or quasi moral: they occupied, as it seemed to me, the moral high ground of belonging to the historical victim group. And all these constructions were ones which I had aimed to avoid, or at least minimise, by working with Cleo, by using base groups to devolve power, and by working with a largely elicitive process.

My debriefing with Cleo was important to me. Knowing that she had wanted to work with me had been a very affirming thought, even in her absence. As I talked to her about what had happened, I explained, unnecessarily, that this was only one person's perspective: that she would need to ask others' views, for instance Faith and Mbiya's. She replied, very firmly, that it was my perspective that she cared about and trusted. Whether this was wise in Cleo must be open to doubt, but it was very good to hear.

I had been unhappy with myself that, although I had given as one of the workshop assumptions the notion that at times our own process should be the focus or our learning, I had not fully lived up to that promise. I had allowed the anger of participants to be voiced in that plenary session, and had provided channels for ongoing feedback through the basegroup and plenary evaluations, but I had not named or confronted what I saw as the lack of care and respect which I felt in some of the attacks made on Kirsty and Jen, when it was care and respect that were being demanded; or the behaviour of participants towards kitchen staff, when issues of justice were so high on the agenda. I did make some reference to these things, the morning after the turbulent plenary, noting to the group that the ways in which we expressed differences amongst us provided us with material for learning; but I did not, as the week progressed, make explicit my interpretations of the underlying dynamics within the group, or raise them for discussion. In the case of the attack on Jen and Kirsty, I felt that to make my judgements known would conflict with my function as mediator/facilitator; and in the wider matter I judged it as beyond my power to raise the matter in such a way that my interpretation would be understood or taken seriously, or would not be felt as the final affront and demonstration of incomprehension. It felt to me like a choice between completing a clearly useful agenda and falling into chaos and recrimination - and any constructive approach to conflict or education needs to be based on a realistic assessment of likely outcomes.

I had shared my concern and checked my assessment with Jen and Kirsty during the workshop, and did so now with Cleo. She, as they had done, supported my judgement at the time and dismissed my doubts. In her view, I, as a single, European trainer, could not usefully have confronted what was happening: that maybe the two of us could, had she been there - though then the dynamic might have been quite different. I still wonder, though, as I write. One problem is that it is with distance that things seem to become clearer - both what was actually happening and what responses could have been made. For instance, had I been clearer sooner about the role being plaid by the Malagasi participant, I could have asked her privately what was going on between us. This could have had an impact on the dynamic. It would not, however, have provided an opportunity for the whole group to reflect and learn.

Cleo found it strange that participants had been individually supportive of me, yet sometimes hostile in the group (and it was certainly, in some cases, the same people). She believed this must have been on account of the dynamics between the participants themselves, perhaps a need to prove something to each other. She found it ridiculous

that there had been an objection to the 'iceberg' model, and felt that participants could have been expected to accept that my role was not to attempt to supply the African material for them, but to make a space for them to reflect upon it.

I have thought much about the repeated complaint about the perceived 'lack of contextualisation'. In the first place I could not have done otherwise than I did, since I am not an Africa expert and had expected Cleo to fill that role if necessary. Secondly, I still find my logic sound: that the contextualisation was best done by the participants; and this was proved to work well in practice. Yet I cannot ignore the objecting voices. They came from a wonderful group of women, deeply committed to ideals that I share. I have reached three explanatory hypotheses. One is that they needed me to give African examples first, not in order to build conceptual bridges, as they claimed, but emotional ones: bridges that would have given me credibility in their eyes.

When I shared this theory with my daughter, she remarked that if I had attempted to do this, I might possibly have succeeded in building a bridge, or, more likely, exposed myself to metaphorical gunfire by trying to cross one. That remains an important question for me, along with the twin one of authenticity: I should have felt artificial if I had tried to obtain credit by seeming to be familiar with experiences of which I could know only relatively little. Maybe that means I should simply stay and work at home. When I said this to Cleo, she responded that separation was not the answer: 'We have to get beyond these things.'

My second tentative explanation of this insistence on 'contextulisation' is that people who have suffered oppression and belittlement need affirmation, in this case the affirmation of having the importance of their own experience validated by its use in examples. I possibly caused unwitting offence by seeming not to think African experience sufficiently significant to be cited (with the exception of South Africa, which is already viewed with some suspicion by other African countries as being Westernised and the favourite of the West). I have found that West Europeans (and indeed East Europeans) in my workshops have been keen to be given examples from other continents and cultures. I have the impression of having met some resistance to this universalise approach in Beirut, and at times in the former Soviet Union. I imagine this has something to do with how much the people concerned are feeling the need to assert their own identity and place in the world.

Jen, Kirsty, Mbiya, Faith and I had a further evaluation meeting once we were all back in England. Mbiya and Faith had remained silent during the plenary evaluations in Harare. During the workshop generally, I had found them very supportive, Mbiya volunteering to do much of the French flipchart writing for us, and Faith playing a constructive and in some ways bridge-building role in plenary discussions. When it came to this meeting in London, however, whereas Jen had hoped they might offer some sort of bridge perspective - organisational at the same time as African - in fact they held very firmly to the viewpoints expressed by the more vocal of the other participants. Mbiya's opening was, 'You've already had participants' evaluations. I don't have anything to add.' Such proved to be the case, for her and Faith, except that Mbiya usefully raised the question of the sensitivity of nonviolence as a subject 'which cannot be neutral', and made the helpful suggestion, with reference to contextualisation, that participants could be invited to write pieces about their own conflict experience, for circulation in advance. Along with other participants, they raised the idea of having a trainer in reserve, in case one has to withdraw. Otherwise they concurred with the points made in the end-of-workshop evaluation. When Kirsty expressed her puzzlement at the strength of the anger directed at her and Jen on the Tuesday evening, they were told in no uncertain terms how insensitive and provocative they had been, and Mbiya particularly laid emphasis on the negative impact of the inconveniences and discomforts of the venue. Overall, it seemed that, away from their African co-participants, they felt the need to stress their primary identification with them rather than with their employing organisation and colleagues.

I had one final opportunity to digest my Harare experience with the help of others. I had felt reluctant to talk about it in my CARPP group, afraid of challenging reactions from my British/ Afro-Caribbean colleagues, and doubtful of my capacity to handle them. When, in the event, the story came out in spite of my reluctance, their response was one of ready and eager understanding, both emotional and conceptual. I felt support for the content of my research, for my concern to bring issues of power and justice into the scope of conflict resolution, and to counter tendencies towards 'pacification' - the desire of the comfortable to avoid turbulence and challenge. They were interested in my dilemma as to whether or not I could or should have named what I thought was going on in the workshop dynamic, and what can prevent something from being named, or make its naming appropriate. They noted that the dynamics of power and justice my theoretical model was designed to represent had been played out in the process of the workshop. They saw the demands for greater luxury in the accommodation, and the treatment of kitchen staff as unjust, and noted that

oppressors in this case seemed to have been rendered unassailable on account of the victim frame in which they had placed themselves and the complex power relations between the majority 'oppressed' (participants) and the minority (European facilitator and staff) 'oppressors'. This leaves me with much food for thought - and confirms for me the importance of our CARPP learning community as an external reference point.

PS.
I sent the above account to Kirsty and Jen, who said that for them it described well the events and dynamics they had experienced; in Kirsty's words, 'You put into print all those things I couldn't formulate.' (I am aware that I did not dare give my account to Mbiya or Faith to read, and that, notwithstanding Cleo's reaction, their responses would probably have been very different.)'

I later received a digest of written evaluations, which, along with the organisation's record of the final base group evaluations, provides a useful cross-reference for this account. It is interesting to note that the negative aspects of the individual evaluations are relatively slight in tone and proportion. I was left in no doubt about the usefulness of the workshop. All of the content material from Harare was subsequently incorporated into International Alert's 'Resource Pack'. It has also been used by participant African trainers working in Africa, who felt that the workshop had prepared them to become trainers in this field. At a conference in Oxford the following Autumn I was delighted to find that one of the speakers was a Somali participant, who described how in her work with women's groups she began by getting them to analyse the injustice they suffered, using a diagram with an inverted pyramid supported by pillars. The Goss-Mayr models have clearly travelled well!

I think what I learn from this whole experience now, at two years' distance (apart from what punishing situations I allow myself to get into) is that that the 'cultural barrier', when there is one, is less about the substance of what is on offer, or even the pedagogical approach, than about interpersonal perceptions and relationships which are at the same time more than personal, carrying, inevitably, an enormous amount of historical, political and economic baggage. In other words, it is a barrier created by the experience of (and response to) power relations. That

probably applies in interethnic relations generally; it certainly, in my experience, seems to apply in the relationship between facilitator and participants.

ANOTHER CONTINENT

In some ways the African and European workshops described in this chapter seemed worlds apart. The contrast in settings could hardly have been greater, nor the participants more different. The Harare participants were mostly professional trainers, and the workshop was designed to help them add to their existing knowledge and skills. The Moscow seminar was planned as one in a series, the first in an ongoing project for 'training and supervision', offering a new form of support for people living in areas of ethnic tension and attempting to play some kind of bridge-building role. The seminar in Warsaw (and a later one in Minsk) were part of the same series, with the same group of participants.

In Harare the participants were all women, and I had come under fire for not focusing exclusively on women's issues. In the Moscow and Warsaw workshops, both the participants and the team were mixed in terms of gender, and I re-lived some of the tensions I had experienced during my first workshop in Rostov, as a feminist in a 'macho' culture. Here, however, I felt less isolated among my colleagues in my response, since the wider team had women members; and some of the women participants were quite powerful, if reticent in plenary sessions.

As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, the tensions involved in my work in Moscow and Warsaw both echoed and differed from the South-North tensions experienced in Harare. I think that differences over teaching-learning styles were greater, while sensitivities about power and neo-colonialism were less - but still present. Whereas in Harare we had planned to have an African-European facilitation team, and I had ended up working alone, in the Moscow and Warsaw workshops we were a threesome: German, Russian and English. This brought its own difficulties, and the greatest tensions were felt not between facilitators and participants, but within the facilitation team itself.

The Harare workshop had been seen by all concerned as an important opportunity for French and English speaking Africans to meet. Similarly, plans to bring former Soviet citizens together with participants from central and eastern Europe in the Moscow and Warsaw workshop were based on the idea of an exchange of different experiences and viewpoints. In the event it became clear that to bring together the two different parts of the post-Communist world was problematic, in that participants from the two regions faced very different situations and types of conflict, as well as having very different skills.

The theoretical content of the Harare workshop had clearly been a strength. In Moscow I made no specific theoretical input, but in Warsaw I used the 'stages' diagram in a presentation, and elaborated my related ideas about roles which can be played at different stages of conflict. As in Harare, I asked for and received evaluative feedback from colleagues, explicitly as part of my research. The question of contextualisation which had been raised in Harare came up again in Warsaw.

Although the European workshops were less stressful than the one in Harare, I still had my work cut out to keep steady, and alert to my own reactions and behaviour. I have compared the task of describing and interpreting events at Balaton, with all the emotion that that represented, and describing and interpreting the workshops in this chapter, and tried to put my finger on the difficulty I have experienced with the latter. What I have come to realise is that at Balaton I was in the role of mediator and supporter, whereas in Harare, Moscow and Warsaw I was, however unwillingly, a party to the conflicts that took place, so that holding a perspective which embraced different points of view was much more difficult.

MOSCOW AND WARSAW

The project which embraced the Moscow and Warsaw workshops was jointly 'owned' by three different organisations: one in Berlin, one in Moscow and one in London. I was employed on a freelance basis by the London-based organisation. I understood that the lead organisation in

Berlin had a research interest in the project, but thought that the focus of their research was the efficacy of the proposed form of support: of creating a group out of individuals and group representatives from many different situations and organisations in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and offering them periodic seminars for training and supervision. To me this was an interesting model, offering an opportunity for the sharing and comparing of skills and experiences and understandings, as well as for ongoing support; potentially efficient in terms of time and money, giving something to be taken back to many regions and groups.

My Moscow account was written longer than usual after the event (though from extensive notes made at the time), since at one stage I had thought to exclude this project from my research, as it was not described as a training project. I later decided that the distinction between support and training was more about form than function, and that what I was learning from these workshops was too relevant to exclude. Since the account I eventually wrote seemed, on re-reading, to be rather 'dead' and tedious in parts, I decided to summarise some of it but to reproduce other parts in full, when they seemed significant. Names and organisations are, as usual, disguised.

MOSCOW

Background to the project

The Moscow account begins with a detailed description, which I shall summarise, of the first full planning meeting I attended in Berlin. That meeting seemed important to record and reflect then, and to outline here, because of the issues which came up. One theme which reappeared was the question of western intervention: how it was meant and how it would be perceived. This project was intended to be supportive in character, rather than didactic, the basic assumption being that the participants would already be experienced practitioners. However, the word 'supervision', which had initially been chosen to describe the form of support being offered, came under scrutiny. I raised a concern that in view of its double meaning in English (ie hierarchical and normative *and* egalitarian and supportive), with the additional complication of translation, the concept was likely to be misunderstood and to seem dangerously colonial. It was decided, after

discussion, to describe what we proposed as 'support', rather than supervision, and Friedrich, the head of the Berlin organisation and project co-ordinator, subsequently adopted the phrase 'facilitated self-reflection', which I had produced while groping for some useable term.

Other familiar questions reappeared for me in this meeting: questions which had raised themselves so forcibly in Israel/ Palestine and in Geneva, about the context and framing of work I am employed to do, and the extent and limits of my responsibility for them. In this case I was included in the project planning, as indeed I had been for the Geneva workshop, but not at Neve Shalom. In the case of Geneva, the problem lay in broken agreements. This time there were initial confusions and gaps in my knowledge, and later conflicts of view and interest. My account describes the discoveries I made about the variety of research agendas being attached to this project, and the conflict this provoked. I and the Swiss supervisor who had been engaged by the Berlin organisation took the line that no research agenda should be allowed to interfere with the way in which the project's primary objective of support was carried out. The meeting was an explosive one, leading to the supervisor's withdrawal from the team.

The facilitation team

Team work and co-facilitation are part of my 'respect' focus, and they were a constant issue in this project. The co-ordination of roles and responsibilities had already proved difficult, but there was more difficulty to come. The other core team member, Vasily, head of the Moscow partner organisation, having suffered a slight heart attack, was not present at our first planning meeting, but was represented by Tanya, his assistant. Friedrich, who knew Vasily, had doubts as to his capacity or inclination for the kind of facilitation needed for this project; but he had been recommended by a mutual colleague, who thought he was flexible enough to learn from the experience, as well as bringing undoubted regional expertise. Friedrich and I had a meeting with him a month or so later, which started with apparent noncommunication but ended quite well. When I finally wrote up my notes about that meeting (after completing my report of the second seminar in Warsaw) I reflected on subsequent experiences of the dynamic between Friedrich and me and Vasily, and made the following observations,

'I recognise a pattern in the flow of our planning meetings: proposal, counter-proposal, re-explanation of original proposal, incorporation of elements of counter-proposal, and collapse or evaporation of resistance - or positive agreement. I realise now that, quite apart from natural sympathies and culture, Friedrich and I had already, by our first meeting together with him, become 'we' and Vasily 'him' - by the fact of his absence at the first planning meeting. This division has remained, and indeed become more pronounced.'

When it came to the Moscow seminar itself, the division was not only about points of view, but working style and process. The account continues with a discussion (quoted directly from my journal) of the ways in which I did and did not see this friction as a cultural issue:

'Vasily has found Friedrich's and my need to plan for hours, in detail, with care, ridiculous, and has been hard to plan with. He has an idea and says 'This is what we should do' and can't see a need for anything more. In the workshop process he sees instruction as very important - top down - and so do most of the Former Soviet Union participants. He and Tanya had changed [because of earlier workshops they had been involved in], have changed and are changing. Do Friedrich and I need to change too - value more their ideas: more authoritarian and teacherish, having more input?'

I think now that I was wrong in bracketing Tanya with Vasily. It became clear that she had a very different perspective and character. Of Vasily I wrote,

'I think his attitude is part of a cultural lack of care for the individual - less of what I would call respect. Does this mean more respect for something else, for instance for authority?'

What I meant was that the source of his style of behaviour was a mix of individual personality and Russian culture. The society by which he was shaped did not value individual needs and sensitivities, and certainly did not encourage men to do so. (Tanya's very caring ways, clearly part of *her* personality, may also have been influenced by social expectations, in this case about women.)

At the end of the week I added in my journal,

> 'Friedrich's and my contretemps [see later] with Vasily sharpens my dilemmas over cultural respect - though I think part of the trouble is that Vasily is autocratic and arrogant, as well as clever, friendly and entertaining. Tanya observed that Friedrich's and my style of work was a 'form of conflict resolution behaviour', ie a model of it. She also saw that to do things in a consultative way - the 'conflict resolution way' - took lots of preparation during the evenings of the seminar - which was what Vasily couldn't stand or understand. As Tanya also said, 'Vasily can't be like you."

As I have since reflected, this division in the core team embodied in a very immediate way the clash between didactic and elicitive styles which constitutes an important challenge for respect in cross-cultural training: one which had already presented itself in Rostov, at the beginning of my research, and which came up again in Harare. The irony is that an insistence on non-hierarchical ways of working, which respect the existing expertise of participants, can also be hierarchically imposed and seem disrespectful in relation to preferred approaches to teaching and learning. In the same way Friedrich's and my democratic approach to planning was experienced by Vasily as an imposition on him of unreasonably arduous and lengthy preparation sessions. Here again, it is hard to distinguish between individual disposition and cultural norms. Practically speaking, both need to be acknowledged, and in that sense respected. Is it also desirable that they should both be challenged, and am I, in turn, ready to be challenged on both counts?

Evaluation

One of my criteria for respect is the usefulness of what is offered to workshop participants. My account continues with a discussion of the qualified success of the 'self-reflection' sessions, and the conclusions reached in our team evaluation at the end of the week - from which Vasily had chosen to absent himself:

'Tanya likened our idea of 'facilitated self-reflection' to 'a black cat in a dark room' - a difficult new concept which still needed further explanation and experience to be fully understood. Some

people still expected a more 'normal' seminar, and wanted to be given answers. They needed to be convinced of the value of what we were offering. This raised again the question of learning styles and expectations, and who knows best what is good for participants: they themselves or we in the planning and facilitation team - and which participants and which team members? As Friedrich said also, our 'contract' was 'not quite clear.' Who defined the project? We had given the idea that we would follow 'their' needs, but we were convinced that 'facilitated self-reflection' was the best way of doing that, and not everyone was in agreement with us.'

We noted, however, that in the participants' evaluation, although some of them did express a desire for more theoretical input and more training, and substantial case studies, it was clear from what they said that they had all greatly appreciated the supportive function of their exchanges in the self-reflection sessions; the understanding they had received from each other, and the knowledge that others were in many ways in the same boat and confronted by comparable challenges.

I observed that many of them had seemed confused about their own roles and possibilities, given their identity and context: preoccupied with the assumed need for impartiality, when in fact many of them were working as advocates. This gave me the idea that some clarifying discussion about stages and roles in conflict (my developing theory) would be helpful at our next workshop.

Other evaluation points included the question of women's participation. Anita observed that in the reflection groups which she had observed, the women had opened up and the men had given them advice! And in plenaries men had done most of the talking.

More about teamwork

My Moscow account concludes with a description of an abortive attempt by Friedrich and me to use the time without Vasily (which we had not chosen, but which was imposed on us by his decision to break his agreement to spend the week-end planning with us) to get ahead of him and

get some control over him. We were committed to working with him for at least one more seminar, but wished to preserve the integrity of the project; and we did not want our work in the next seminar to entail so much stress, for him or us. We used the morning and afternoon of that day to draft an outline agenda for the next seminar (since we would not all have the chance to meet before it). We tried to think strategically about Vasily's role: how to honour his potential to contribute, while curtailing his potential to make more difficult, or less effective, the things that we wanted to do and which were really outside his interest or competence.

We devised a week plan which pleased us greatly: one which combined the various elements which had arisen from the participants' evaluation and been confirmed by the 'team', framing it also in terms which linked it to Vasily's own promises to the participants in the final plenary (promises made off the cuff and without any prior discussion with Friedrich and me, let alone the rest of the team). The elements we included were: a process to integrate new participants (for instance those who had been invited and unable to come this time); facilitated self-reflection; a case study or case studies offered by us, and an opportunity to look at their own successes and failures in their work; some theoretical and methodological input; some skills training; more games (to keep up energy and provide some fun) and an exploration of ideas for any continuation of the project. This seemed an ambitious wish list for five days. However, we noted that several of these elements could in practice be combined: for instance, theory, case studies and training. We felt we had a winning formula.

In the event, we found that Vasily had used his own time strategically. As we sat down to dinner that evening he produced a document for us to read. In it, he expressed his irritation with the week's proceedings: both our planning process and the content, and made various statements about what was needed next time. Although the construction he had put on the week's events felt somewhat insulting to Friedrich and me, we found we could nonetheless relate our plan to his comments and proposals and proceeded to do so. So as had happened before, after some bad moments we cobbled together an agreement with Vasily not at all unlike the one we had planned.

I found (and still find) this episode funny and rather shaming. At a distance I was able to see it as a rather extreme form of the regular pattern of our negotiations. When we met again in Warsaw,

we found the strategy Friedrich and I had devised for both honouring and 'containing' Vasily worked well, even if it was a sign of our having fallen short of the ideal. I think that is something I need to reflect on: pragmatism versus idealism in the living out of respect: respect for human fallibility - my own and others'.

Gender note

In the more detailed version of the above 'team' episode included in my account, I made the following comment:

'**I should confess here that I left the lead negotiating role to Friedrich. He clearly feels more powerful to Vasily, both as an equivalent academic male (my construction) and as the head of the lead organisation involved. I felt something like an orphan, since my two former colleagues at the organisation employing me had left, and I had been left to do this piece of work without any real organisational backing.**'

When I think about this now, I realise that there really is a gender issue for me here, if not for my colleagues. I often think of myself as being indignant about what I perceive as sexism, but do not often admit to being intimidated by gender relations, and I think that in relation to my role in this team I was intimidated, in spite of excellent working relations with Friedrich, even if was only by my own projections.

Our ability to cope respectfully with uneasy working relationships were to be further tested in the New Year, when we worked together again, with largely the same group, in Warsaw. I was well prepared for this workshop, in terms of my research, and chose to focus on my theoretical contribution and on my respectfulness as a facilitator.

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Although in terms of my research focus I was prepared for Warsaw, in terms of physical and emotional energy I was not so well-placed. The workshop came hard on the heels of the Harare training for trainers, and I was in no condition for it - nor for the extreme cold of Warsaw in January. Compared to Harare, the Warsaw workshop was not unreasonably taxing, but the combined impact was physically overwhelming. So much for self-care - again.

Research preparations; sources of feedback and evaluation

As I had done in Harare, I had made an advance request to colleagues for research feedback. In this case I asked my three colleagues from Berlin - Anita and Sasha (responsible for record-keeping and documentation respectively), and Friedrich, my colleague in the facilitation team. I had asked these three because I knew I would have time with them before and after the workshop; because they were all action researchers in my field, whose observations and assessments I would value, and because I felt I was on good, open communication terms with each of them.

Later, when I was writing my account of the workshop, I felt challenged to explain to myself why I had not asked my other core team colleague, Vasily, to give me feedback in the same way. There were practical reasons - like the fact that I had no chance to meet with him before the seminar and would not be travelling with him afterwards. More importantly, I think, we were not on sufficiently open terms for me to feel comfortable about asking this of him. And I would not have expected him to understand the personal focus (that is, the reflexive nature) of my research. When I first noticed that I had not considered asking him, I felt that I had limited the validity of my research findings in a way that I need not have done. However, when I think about it now, I recognise that Sasha provided one Russian voice for me; that my reasons for not asking Vasily were reasonable, and that in fact he - and Tanya - gave me some useful feedback as part of the team evaluation process which was no less valid for having come in that context. (In the same way Faith and Mbiya, who were not specifically invited to give me research feedback, since I did

not know when I made my plans that they would be at the Harare workshop, did give me plenty of feedback through our more general evaluation process.)

I have to consider that there may in both cases (ie the Harare workshop and the Moscow/ Warsaw project) have been a gravitation towards those I considered would see things somehow from my point of view, or at any rate evaluate me on my own terms. On balance, however, I think I chose sensibly and did not filter out other voices. In the end I have to make a subjective evaluation of feedback and judge whose feedback will be useful and important, in what context, on the basis of what I know about them. For instance, although I greatly respect Vasily's acumen and knowledge, I do not think he really understands 'training' as I understand and intend it; so I would not see him as the best judge of what I did as a trainer. He is also impatient of lengthy analysis after sessions. However, his viewpoint on my work was significant for me to consider, because he was my colleague and because of his own expertise in the field in which I work. And I have learned from this reflection that I want to be alert to any protective boundaries I place around myself.

As Anita, Sasha, Friedrich and I travelled by train from Berlin to Warsaw, I explained more fully to Anita and Sasha what I was asking of them (I had already talked about it to Friedrich at our planning meeting). I said I wanted feedback on the usefulness of my theoretical input, and on my behaviour as a colleague and facilitator in terms of respect. When they asked me what I meant by 'respect', I said I was interested to know what they meant by it and what they would identify in my behaviour that related to or clarified their meaning; that I wanted feedback both on what I actually did and how they interpreted it; and that I was exploring the meanings of respect in other people's understandings and cultures, as well as subjecting my own behaviour to scrutiny.

Having summarised the explanation of these feedback arrangements with which my account begins, I shall reproduce the rest of it in full, with added subtitles and occasional commentary. What I wrote about day one raises an issue which I touched on in Chapter Four, in my discussion of the purposes and content of workshops: the usually unspoken purpose or function of workshops in inspiring participants in their efforts for peace.

'**Day one**

For a variety of reasons six of the eighteen participants were new, but they were quickly and easily absorbed into the group. The first day's work (which probably helped), after introductory procedures, was given to story-telling in small groups, facilitated by participants, illustrating experiences of success and failure, with the aim of reaching some general conclusions as to what can contribute to either. Although in some ways it felt, from the plenary reports and discussion, as if these conclusions were so numerous, and so similar to things said in the previous workshop, that they represented no real advance in generalised understanding, the day was highly valued by participants, who clearly found it inspiring. It has struck me recently that 'providing inspiration' is not usually included in explicit workshop objectives, but that it probably ought to be, if organisers are acknowledging participants' real needs, and that inspiration is very often, in practice, a product of such workshops.'

My account of the second day describes how my theoretical presentation went and the feedback I received on it, both during and after the workshop. I note now that my nervousness about the presentation (paragraph two) seems to have been to some extent related to gender. (I had not spotted this before, which demonstrates to me that this writing process is in itself a continuation of the research process). This was the occasion on which I was first obliged to think whether my 'stages' model was descriptive or prescriptive. From the account it is clear that my presentation was, as usual, laced with caveats and disclaimers, and that I thought a good deal afterwards about the issues raised for me in the discussion. My account is perhaps excessively detailed, and the recording of evaluative feedback is very long. However, since this was an important research cycle for the theoretical thread of my inquiry, I have decided not to cut it.

'**Day two, morning session: theoretical presentation.**

The morning of the second day took the form of two sessions on 'theory and methodology of piecework: phases and constructive roles in conflict.' At the Moscow workshop participants had expressed a desire for more theoretical input, and had demonstrated a good deal of confusion as to roles in peacemaking. It had therefore been decided in the core team (Friedrich, Vasily and me) that I should present my 'snake' model as a rough outline of one route into and out of conflict, suggesting, as an

adjunct, the possible roles that could be played by insiders and outsiders to the conflict at different points in its development.

I felt very nervous, given the high academic standing of both Friedrich and Vasily, and the critical nature of my audience - especially the men from the Former Soviet Union. Friedrich gave me a lot of encouragement in advance, and Vasily was very positive in the event. I said to Friedrich later that whereas I might appear confident, I was in some ways extremely insecure, so that speaking to certain audiences could cost me a lot of effort and courage. His reply was that he thought maybe that was where the impression of strength came from - an impressions he was sure most people had of me. Ironic, if so.

I will not here give the content of my presentations, as it has already been presented in Chapter Two. In the first part of the morning I spoke of the growing criticism of approaches to Conflict Resolution which ignore questions of power and justice, of my own aims in relation to that deficiency, and of my additional criticism of what seemed a narrow and unhealthy emphasis on the role of third parties, and a consequent relative neglect of the possibilities for more constructive approaches by the conflicting parties themselves, or members of them. I introduced my model as representing not *the* route into and through conflict, but one way of representing one route, adding that, like all models, it would be a very approximate and imperfect description; that the stages represented would not, in practice, have clear boundaries; that the flow of events would not always be in the same direction; that in real life conflicts are not single, but multiple, in any society at any time; that there would be stages within stages, conflicts within conflicts, parties within parties; but that nonetheless I hoped that the processes represented, and their ordering, would bear some relation to participants' experiences, and prove a useful tool for thinking about them.

At several points in my presentation I used the example of South Africa, on the assumption that this would be a case broadly familiar to all participants. After the break I presented my ideas about roles, and outlined some possible criteria for choosing them. Both of these presentations seemed to hold participants' attention, and the level of engagement evidenced in the interesting discussions which followed them, and the positive remarks of participants, made me feel that they had been of use - an aid to more conscious choice of action. One thing that became clearer to me in the discussion was that what to one person or group is oppression may to others appear as equity or even generosity: that what I have described as 'oppression' might be better described as

'perceived oppression'; and yet I feel that there are many situations, especially those characterised by major power discrepancies, where I would feel that oppression existed 'in fact'. This raised in turn the question of whether my model was descriptive or prescriptive - to which I replied that I thought it was a mixture of both. I need to think more about this. I seems to me that it is at the point of choice of values to uphold, and modes of behaviour to follow, that moral judgement is applied; but the words 'oppression' and 'reconciliation' have moral overtones, and the 'conflict resolution' grouping of processes could be seen as describing an ideal; though I believe that in practice those things very often happen, however messily, and perhaps without the final phases - which in my view are essential if future violence is to be avoided. In fact, of course, this model is designed for use in contexts where participants are engaged in a search for ways of reducing violence, so the context itself is, in a sense, prescriptive.

Later feedback on my theoretical presentation

In the evaluation that evening, within the extended team (including Sasha and Anita, as well as Friedrich, Vasily and me), Vasily said with conviction that he considered the morning to have been successful: 'a new step' in the group's level of understanding; that participants had been very interested, the discussion had been good, that the ideas presented had provided a challenge to people's thinking, and that the 'schema' I had used would be useful for them in the future. Sasha agreed that the morning's work had constituted a step forward and that it had been interesting, stimulating, for him and, as he had observed, the participants generally. Anita had some reservations about the general applicability of the first phase of the 'snake', but considered the categories of roles I had presented as 'spot on'. Friedrich was enthusiastic about the whole morning. He had been more or less familiar with the 'snake' model, and found it 'inspiring'. Now he was particularly taken with my differentiation of roles, and intended to use it in future. In addition to all this acclamation, Vasily announced that he planned to organise his case study presentation the following morning along the same lines, dividing it up between analysis and action. I greatly appreciated this most sincere form of 'process' compliment from Vasily.

In the conversation I had with Anita at the end of the workshop, she expressed her concern that my 'snake' model came from a particular cultural viewpoint, which yet by its nature purported to describe something universal. (Here I feel the need to refer back to all the caveats and disclaimers in the preamble to my presentation.) I had not, she

said, been imposing in the way I had presented it, and had been open to participants' responses, prepared to change and adapt it; but still my suggested model, my viewpoint, remained dominant within the session. She was clear that many participants had really liked the model, and that as I continued to amend and develop it could become 'even better'. Her question was how we could achieve equality in a situation of inequality. We had, she observed, been slow to 'bring anything in', and had offered this theoretical session only in response to repeated requests. It had been greeted by a feeling of 'How nice - at last! We can exchange'; and Anita was of the opinion that my model was 'better than anything they would have come up with'! At this I demurred, and Anita responded,

> **'At the personal level you're right: the participants could be respected by you for their theories, because you're more respectful than I am; but on the wider level.....Vasily gives in to us [on how to run the workshop] because we have the money and our ways are the up and coming ways.'**

At this point I sighed out my now recurrent question: Can I do cross cultural training, with respect, at all as a North Westerner? Harare was still very fresh in my mind, along with many other accumulating experiences. Anita's response was a more down to earth version of Cleo's: 'But that's the situation and you may as well contribute.' I could, in her view (as I had done) choose a process of discussion and argument rather than a 'power process', one of imposition, and I could be open about the dilemmas of unequal relations at the structural level. Essentially I agree with her, though I see another potential dilemma in that in some cultures such openness would be unacceptable - another cultural imposition.

More generally, and on reflection, I find Anita's concerns both overstated and deeply challenging. In the context of the group in question, I would argue that the presentation of theory by the core team members was appropriate, wanted by the participants and clearly found useful by them. I did not find them, either at that point or at any other time, over respectful, ie bowing to me or anyone else as an authority figure or out of politeness. As a group they seemed ready, indeed eager, to challenge. Vasily had given major input in Moscow, and did so again in Warsaw, so it was not disproportionately Western. Any input given by the leadership of any workshop can be seen as 'dominant', but it can nonetheless provide a spring-board for other ideas and be useful in itself. This is clear from participant responses. The challenge, as I see it, is to discover the best, most empowering balance between input and out-drawing. The issue

of structural and cultural power relations remains, and Anita's point about Vasily's position contains at least some truth, I imagine.

Anita commented that it was good from a feminist point of view that I had made a major input at this workshop; and here I see much more of a problem in power relations within the workshop process. In my plenary session, as in others, most women remained silent, though in the groupwork they played a stronger role. Gender relationships at the wider social level seem to be replicated to a considerable extent within the group itself. More of this later.

Sasha's post-workshop feedback to me on my theoretical input was the same as he had given in that day's evaluation: that it had been useful, helpful, and that this had been proved by the discussion and feedback within the plenary.

Friedrich's later feedback was that, as he had also said earlier, he had found the 'snake' model and the 'roles scheme' - especially the distinction between partisan, semi-partisan and non-partisan roles, which was new to him - helpful and inspiring. He had also observed that they were helpful to participants. In particular he remembered the response one young and earnest participant, heavily engaged in very difficult and dangerous go-between work, and seeking, but resistant to, new ways of understanding things, who had found my ideas 'very helpful - the most eye-opening things'. Friedrich felt that had I had time to invite participants specifically to relate their own current experience to the model (as I remembered I had done in the Geneva workshop), rather than simply to discuss it in general, that would have maximised its usefulness (and put flesh on the bones, so avoiding the comment 1 remember one participant made, that the session had been 'a bit dry'). We had also planned to invite participants to refer to the 'phases and roles' outlines in our later case study, but, under pressure of time, forgot.

Friedrich agreed with my thesis that the usefulness of theory offered was a key factor in assessing the respectfulness of offering it. 'Applied science', he said, 'always has to apply these ethical standards of respect'. For instance, in medicine, which is applied science par excellence, the essential question was whether 'it works for ill people'. As regards my theory, the usefulness/ respect would depend on my enabling people to relate their activities to the 'scheme', and helping them to see what was appropriate for them to do in a situation. He saw my work as needing further development in this direction. (I developed a list of criteria for choice of role as one initial step.)

Friedrich made one other very useful observation. My presentation had, in his words, constituted

> **'something of an academic lecture, and one moves in the framework of certain paradigms. In the conflict intervention field you want to contribute to a paradigm shift, and therefore have to confront other people and their paradigms.'**

He asked whether it is possible to challenge and still to respect, then answered his own question: 'Yes - so long as you make place for the old as well' - by which I assume he meant value it. That is a most appropriate reminder for me.

Day two, afternoon

So much for my theory session. It was followed, on that second afternoon, by the first of two half days devoted to 'reflection groups' based on the original idea of 'facilitated self-reflection.' The original idea had been that these sessions would provide an opportunity for participants to focus on their own current practice and any dilemmas, emotional, practical or analytical, which arose from it. Some participants, along with Vasily, had favoured a process more resembling a discussion group, looking at issues decided at the outset in accordance with the expressed interests of those who wished to take part. At this workshop, therefore, we used the name 'reflection group' to describe both this more generalised form of discussion forum and the original 'facilitated self-reflection', more akin to group supervision. Participants chose their group according to which 'core teamer' they wanted to work with, knowing that Vasily's group would be for issue-based discussion. As it turned out, the groups were more or less equal in size.

The two sessions in these three groups were highly valued by all participants. I was struck that two of the men most engaged in political level mediation in violent situations, one of whom (Vladimir) had been doubtful, in Moscow, about the usefulness of this process, chose to participate in my group, and in their participation were extremely open about the personal and emotional dilemmas which confronted them. This seemed to me to represent something of a cultural transformation for men coming from a very macho society, where fear and vulnerability are taboo for males. I believe

the space for this change was created by the women in the group: by their unapologetic openness about their own dilemmas and by their clear questions to their male colleagues. (I have just remembered that one other man was in the group, and that whereas he made quite useful analytical contributions, he steadfastly avoided using the opportunity to reveal anything about his own inner or personal world. I wonder why this was. Maybe his daily and inescapable vulnerability as a person with quite severe physical disabilities made him reluctant to expose himself in this voluntary way.) These sessions were moving and apparently very helpful for all concerned. This was confirmed in our team meeting and in participants' final evaluation, where these sessions were valued most highly of all. This was particularly gratifying for Friedrich, since the idea for what was then described as supervision was his, and one of the distinctive aspects of this project.

(Sasha was, with participants' permission, an observer in my group, recording our conversations for his own research purposes. In his post-seminar feedback to me, referring to my facilitation, he replied, 'You're always respectful. You're a respectful person.' He did, however, remember one instance in which I had been 'a bit like a teacher' in my response to one person's question to the group, in spite of my couching my remarks in terms of my own experience.)'

The apparent increase in participants' enthusiasm for the 'self-reflection' sessions gives me more food for thought about cultural respect in terms of what to offer to a group - and indeed persist in. This was certainly something new, which had in some ways gone against the grain; and it seemed that our conviction that it would be of use (based on experience from within our own culture) was not mistaken.

The next day I was confronted again with the issue of gender. Rereading my account I consider my handling of it on this occasion as a sign of some progress.

'Day three

On the third morning, Vasily's Chechnya case study presentation was received with great interest, and generated a good deal of comment and discussion - though dominated by the three men who had had some involvement in attempts to bring the violence there to an end. His list of 'criteria for action' stimulated a more generally participatory and lively discussion. He was clearly pleased with the way this, for him,

new style of lecturing had gone, and with the positive feedback he subsequently received.

During the plenary discussion in his session, one of the men made a remark about the inappropriateness of 'taking women into some situations'. This remark was the occasion for sniggering among participants group. I felt a wish to say something, but the speaker looked embarrassed and had clearly been misunderstood - whatever he had meant and been understood to mean - and I let the moment pass. However, when later in the discussion I had an opportunity to address several points raised, I expressed my discomfort about the question of gender in relation to the matters under discussion, and also in relation to the dynamics within the group. I said that I appreciated that these were, among other things, cultural matters, and that when people were working in dangerous situations they had to know what would work and what would not; but that I longed for women to have the opportunity of contributing to the maximum of their potential, and that I wanted to register my unease with the status quo.
These remarks were heard with serious attention and followed by a strong contribution to the discussion by one of the women who worked in Chechnya, who described what she and her organisation were doing. In her final feedback to me, Anita said she considered my intervention as having been important in raising the group's awareness, and opening the floor for Marina. I have already recorded her remark that it was important that I, as a woman, was part of the core team and had 'given a lecture'. She observed, as I have done, that women tended to say little in plenaries, but were strong in smaller groups.'

The challenges of day four were related to the process Friedrich and I had chosen, and our handling of the facilitation it required. As with the 'facilitated self-reflection', we were steering participants through a process which they did not trust to begin with, but which seemed to prove useful in the end. I describe in some detail the process by which this end was achieved and reflect on the respectful use of a facilitator's power and knowledge, and the difficulty of distinguishing between manipulation and facilitation.

Day four, morning

After the free afternoon which followed, and the second round of reflection group sessions on the fourth morning, it was time for the second case study. This had been

planned by Friedrich and me, and prepared with the help of two participants from Belgrade. They opened the session with an explanation, with diagrams, of the past, present and possible future situations in East Slavonia, where areas currently under Serb control and inhabited almost exclusively by Serbs, many of them refugees, are due to be handed over to Croatian control. They outlined some of the dilemmas and anguish which were likely to ensue.

After this presentation and subsequent questions, we invited the participants to divide themselves into three groups: one representing a Belgrade Peace organisation, one a Croatian peace network, and one a peace group in East Slavonia itself. Using the two Belgrade participants as consultants, these groups were asked to make an assessment of their own possibilities for making a constructive contribution in the situation described, and a corresponding set of action proposals to take to a joint planning meeting with the other two peace organisations. (We had intended to refer them back to the 'phases and roles' material of two days earlier, but amid time and information pressur
es sadly forgot. It would be good to know whether they would have clarified or complicated things. My feeling is that they would have been useful, and that the exercise would have been an excellent way of testing and digesting the theory; but to do it all thoroughly would have taken far more time than was available.)

Once these plans were drawn up, the groups sent two representatives each to the joint planning meeting, which took place in a 'fish bowl', with the other participants watching. Friedrich and I had thought this process would be more interesting than the usual group reports and would have the added benefit of some learning about the possible dynamics of intergroup co-operation. It worked reasonably well, but we really needed time for thorough de-briefing and discussion.

The final stage of this experiential case study was a role-play, which took place on the fifth and final morning. Each group was to take one small episode or event in one of the proposed lines of action, and enact it. This necessitated, initially, some further elaboration by each group of some element in their action plan which now felt realistic. When the groups were originally formed, Friedrich and I had asked them to make sure that at least one of their members would be able to facilitate a role-play. When it came to it, one of the three had been doubtful whether any of them would be able to do that, and we had observed that the two volunteer facilitators in another group were in fact hectoring and bullying the group in competition with each other. Only in the case of

the third did we feel confident. We decided to facilitate the other two ourselves. For Friedrich, in the group with no self-identified facilitator, this presented no major problem, but for me, in the group with a self-identified facilitator, Ladislav, already in place (the other having by now left the seminar for an unavoidable appointment), this was a sensitive matter. I decided to approach the difficulty head on, explaining that we had decided to help with the facilitation because we did not have sufficient time to explain in detail what was required of facilitators. (This was true; and had there been time, I might have attempted an in-depth discussion with Ladislav about facilitation.) I said that nonetheless I felt like an intruder, and I hoped that the erstwhile facilitator and the others would accept my intervention.

They were courteous, Ladislav admirably gracious; but I also felt resistance. There had already been protests from participants, in the previous stage of the exercise, that it was all too unreal, that they lacked sufficient information and understanding of the real situation in East Slavonia to do it justice or come up with any sensible ideas - in spite of reassurances from the Belgrade members to the contrary - and that the simulation exercise was not serious and therefore disrespectful to the reality of the case. This resistance now resurfaced with a vengeance, and I used a combination of re-explanation, reassurance, acceptance of my own responsibility in asking them to trust me, together with active facilitation to elicit a clarification of existing ideas, to ease them through to the point of feeling they had a realistically useful and practicable plan to form the basis for a role-play. I had not been sure whether we would manage it, and was first relieved and then delighted with the outcome. They really entered into the role-play when it came to it, and found it rich in learning, both about the feelings and difficulties involved for the different players, the behaviours which made the process easier or more difficult, and the circumstantial requirements of the type of mediatory meeting they had enacted. By the time we met up with the others for evaluation, resistance had been transformed into pleasure and satisfaction.

Anita, who had observed all this, told me in our post-workshop session, that as a facilitator I was in general 'almost excessively open to people's demands and recognising other people's wishes'. I also had an 'uncanny' feel or level of awareness of group dynamics. It was as if I could find my way in the dark, picking up things 'stunningly often' and finding a way of naming them in such a way as to confront them without occasioning affront. She had, however, an interesting observation to make about this particular occasion. She said that when I had come into the group and said 'I feel like an intruder' - naming what was going on - I had made it impossible for the

others to object (or taken their objection away?), so that my respectful behaviour had at the same time closed their option to feel annoyed. For me this idea brings to mind the proverb that 'a soft answer turneth away wrath'. Are disarming behaviours in the end disrespectful, or is respect disarming? Is it bad to be disarmed? In this case, were people genuinely helped to feel content with my intervention, on account of my words and demeanour, or were they simply 'prevented' from voicing their continuing displeasure? Or again, did my words simply buy time so that the satisfactoriness of the process to remove any continuing resistance? Anita thought I should have named my intrusion as such and owned my decision to intrude. That to me would be to 'call a spade a fucking shovel' (to use a convenient proverbial metaphor); in other words to present my intervention in the most negative light. I was trying to point to an uncomfortable closeness between a helpful intervention and an intrusion, but to offer reasons for choosing the former framing. I think I am not such a purist as Anita, though I should be sorry to think I was manipulative. If my words brought difficult feelings into focus without dishonesty, and enabled them to be set aside, to useful effect, then I think I am satisfied. Nonetheless, I think there is a thin line between what I like to think of as my skilfulness as a facilitator, a helper of communication and process, and manipulation. I must watch it.

(I remember an occasion in Balaton - one which I failed to record in that account, though it is written in my journal - when a basegroup representative, during a discussion about free time, reported that someone in her group had remarked, 'We'll always end up doing what Diana wants us to do, because she's so nice and we'll end up wanting it too.' I was stunned, and immediately declared a free evening, adding only that if anyone really wanted to come back for a voluntary, additional role-play session, I would make myself available just in case. In the event, almost everyone came back! QED!)

Friedrich had had the same experience of having to overcome a good deal of resistance in order for the group to win through to a powerful role-play and sense of fulfilment. The third group had had its own particular difficulties, but in the end also managed to complete the task and felt good about the work. This raises for me a question more general than the one about my own particular ways of 'getting round' people. How far is it respectful to persuade people against their own judgement to go with a process, if as facilitator you feel pretty sure they will be glad in the end? My sense is that if one is honest in one's persuasion, and operates on the basis of consent, one is not violating

the dignity or rights of participants, but respecting the responsibilities of one's own function.

Final afternoon

The first part of the final afternoon was given to special interest groups. I facilitated the one on research, and was asked at the end to describe my own research project. I was pleased and encouraged by the response: one of both interest and, more surprisingly, understanding. (I tend to consider my project too obscure and complicated to be readily understood. This particular group was composed almost entirely of women. I may be wrong, but I have the impression that, generally speaking, men have more difficulty in accepting the breadth of scope of my research, and its complexity, along with essentially shifting definition of its focal concept. I also find it difficult, but think that to hang on to all the complexity and unclarity is in itself required by respect for the nature of the beast.)

The final session was devoted to evaluation: a long and lively process in which all were involved, writing comments on cards and placing them, along a negative - positive continuum, on sheets of paper headed for the different sessions; this followed by a plenary round of overall comments. The results of this evaluation were contained no real surprises and were in line with the responses I have already recorded.'

Having completed my description of the workshop itself, I continued my account with a few reflections. To begin with the themes were familiar:

Teamwork; gender

I should comment on working relations in the core team. I think Friedrich and I and Vasily worked together in a more mutually respectful and pleasant way, and with less tension, than last time. We had agreed roles in the leadership which reflected our different interests, styles and abilities, and keeping to those roles, working on different sessions, helped us all to be effective, reduced the hours needed for planning, and therefore the strain of over-work and over-complication. It also removed the contradictory moments which had flawed our leadership in Golitsino. We all made an

effort in this accommodation - and probably all slipped at times. Certainly we all had our moments of irritation.

According to Anita and Sasha, Vasily seemed more like a kind of guest lecturer this time than a co-facilitator - which seems a fair description of the reality, and not in itself negative. The question remains for me, though, bearing in mind Anita's comments about dominant cultures, whether the formula we reached, which clearly enabled us to be more comfortable and effective than in Moscow, was a sensible one which respected our different styles and capacities, or one which failed to address some more fundamental issues relevant to the field of conflict and its resolution. When I think of the strength of Vasily's reputation and connections in both East and West, and his own success in raising funding, I find it hard to see him as oppressed; but no doubt he works within certain constraints.

In relation to the gender/ power issue, I should perhaps comment that Anita thought that, between Friedrich and me, Friedrich appeared as 'the boss' and I as his co-worker. Sasha, on the other hand, felt participants saw Friedrich and me equally as 'the main carriers' of the workshop, and that Friedrich seemed finally 'the main one' not because of the way we worked together, but because he was the head of the Berlin organisation which was the prime mover in the project. I also noted to Friedrich that I dislike doing the more formal bits of facilitation (fear of getting things wrong): welcomes, thanks, official framings. He, on the other hand, enjoys doing them, and this affected our division of labour. Does it matter, I wonder?

Self-care

A note on self-care: I went to Warsaw in a state of exhaustion, too soon after Harare - which had come later than originally intended, in order to accommodate Cleo, who then was not able to be there. It was extremely cold in Warsaw, and I went on an outing when I already had the beginnings of a cold, not realising how much time would be spent outside, how ill I would feel, or how late I would get home. I at no point thought of asking for a taxi. As the week wore on I slept less and less, being always overtired from preparation work, and disturbed by the enormous noise from the partyings of participants which grew louder and later (till four o'clock in the morning) as the week progressed. I thought I should not complain, as this seemed a pleasure to everyone else. I already felt I was failing to be a sociable and fun-loving member of the group, by

going to bed 'early'. The lack of sleep, and the hard work of the days, made my cold worse, as did the horribly smoke-filled atmosphere of almost all our leisure spaces. Again, this seemed to suit others, and I did not wish to be entirely unsociable. I did explain my noise and smoke dilemmas to fellow team members as an after-thought in our final evaluation, and they felt I should have spoken up for myself. Too late! By the time we reached a freezing Warsaw railway station on departure day, I felt terrible. Completing the journey home was a nightmare, and I was ill for the next two weeks and more. Another resounding self-care success!

If questions of role and gender and self-care are old ones, the thought in the following paragraph represented, I think, quite a new angle on the theme of respect, though it has resonances with my experiences in Harare.

'**Respect and reciprocity**

On the train on the way home, Anita allowed herself to express pent-up displeasure at the sexist and, to her, objectionable attitudes and behaviour of many male participants, and the collusiveness of many of the women. She recognised that this was a question of differing social and cultural norms, but expressed her frustration:

> **'We're always supposed to respect other people's culture, but why shouldn't they respect mine? Why is it always one way? Why should I put up with people touching parts of my body that I don't want touched, or making remarks that I find offensive, or expecting me to fulfil a role that I don't see as mine? If other women like it, that's up to them, but I don't.'**

I realised that, apart from tiredness, one of my reasons for not being too keen to join the group in the evenings related to the attitudes Anita was describing.'

End notes

The final paragraphs of my account are based on notes I discovered in my journal, written some time after the workshop itself. The first was related, I think, to the Anita's comments about constant (and sometimes, seemingly, one-sided) efforts at respect on our part as westerners.

'Thinking of one participant's remark that my presentation had been 'a bit dry', and of Sasha's question whether my model was descriptive or prescriptive, and my reply, 'a mixture' (and subsequent thinking), I wonder if generally I'm trying to be too 'pure' - keep myself and my passions, hopes, beliefs, out too much - which in the end I can't: they'll be there whether acknowledged or not. Who/how am I respecting when I try not to impose? Is it as much about not exposing myself?' A big question in relation to Harare too, and the whole question of nonviolence.'

The other journal note I found was about 'contextualisation' - another Harare theme. I observed that although the word is normally used to mean localising, it should also mean universalising - locating things in the wider context of human experience. The note continued with a surprising nugget of information from a colleague in the London organisation to which I had been responsible in this project, and with whom I subsequently discussed it. She told me that when their Secretary General (a Sri Lankan) spoke at a conference in Moscow about the organisation's work in Burundi, conference participants were insulted because they 'felt they were being likened to a third world country'. My own final comment was:

'It amazes me that we ever manage to communicate anything across the veil of assumption and prejudice which obstructs, distorts and confuses. (Harare again.) And yet we do.'

That, then, was the final paragraph of this long account. Rereading it all, I have been struck by the signs of change taking place in the attitudes and behaviour of men from the former Soviet Union: the men in my 'facilitated self-reflection' group, encouraged by the women; those who resisted the role-play exercise changing their point of view in the process of participation, and Vasily changing his style of delivery and relaxing a little with the workshop process. Is this all to be seen as good: good adjustment and management of relationships, helpful new understandings? Or was it another example of one way influence, the triumph of the dominant culture? Maybe it was both.

Closing thoughts at the end of a chapter, and of the 'accounts' section of my thesis

In my next chapter, in my discussion of the issues that have recurred in my work, I will compare my different experiences of acceptance and resistance to my presence in a group as a facilitator from Western Europe. Clearly the workshops described and discussed in this chapter gave me much food for thought. Our team relations in the second two demonstrated to me what I knew already: that there are limits to my own respectfulness.

In my search for a way of being, as a woman, in my work, and a way of speaking for that, I believe I have detected some progress. But I have been confronted by my continuing ambivalence about being myself and containing myself in terms of my values and beliefs (a question that was first raised for me at the end of my very first research workshop, in Rostov). *Should* I express who I am more? Am I ever prescriptive? Do I sometimes want to be? Can I - and how can I - deal more helpfully or powerfully (see Boulding 1978) with the question of violence and nonviolence, bearing in mind my own identity as a citizen of a country which has built and maintains its position of power in the world through the threat and use of violence on a massive scale? Do I want to hold on to the moral commitment (and political positioning) implied by words like 'oppression'?

In spite of my unclarity on these questions, I have seen that my theory on stages and roles in conflict, although it may carry within it my own confusion about describing and prescribing, can nonetheless be useful in opening up new avenues of understanding and debate.

And what of my need to act responsibly in circumstances not of my choosing? As I reach the end of this 'accounts' section of my thesis, I conclude that I will never work in perfect circumstances, even when I have had an opportunity to help shape them. Nor will I deal with them perfectly once I am in them. However, if I think about the workshops described in this chapter and stand back from them a little, I can see what a wonderful opportunity they provided for their participants to meet and learn from each other. It would have taken much more difficulty and disharmony to destroy that benefit; and to cope with such things is part of going on learning to deal with the world as it is.

That 'standing back a little' is something which I have attempted to do regularly in this inquiry process. I have tried to look both inwards and outwards, and at times to put myself in the shoes of others, in as far as that is possible. I am both excited and depressed to discover that each time I have gone through the raw material of what I have written over these research years, I have had the feeling of understanding with more clarity and subtlety the meaning of it for me, and its possible use for others. That in itself seems positive. The depressing side of it is that it means I shall never have a real sense of completion. But if inquiry is a process, and I am a member of various communities of learning, that process does not end with this thesis, and is not confined to within me.