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COLLABORATION IN SMALL GROUPS: THEORY AND TECHNIQUE FOR THE STUDY OF SMALL-GROUP PROCESSES

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THE PROBLEM

Little is known about how consultants work with study groups.¹ Bion (1961) describes many of his interventions, but this is quite unusual, since most reports bracket "the group process" as an entity unto itself, as if it were not in fact a relation between a particular consultant and a group. Mann (1975) writes frankly when he suggests that each consultant he has known has had his own favorite phenomena that he is apt to elicit, yet the usual reader is left to infer this possibility and scientific progress in clarifying this relation is hindered.

Recording would not necessarily provide intelligibility. As Lewin (1948) argues, the social field of a small group is complex and quite uneven in dynamic importance. Psychological variables, which may seem very powerful in abstraction, in fact often may have little dynamic importance in a group if the social field is not organized to bring them out. For example, the consultant's apparent difficulty with intimacy is not material if the group is pushing in other directions. Lewin attempted to solve this problem of how the unevenness of the social field might be adequately described in his concepts of "quasi-stable equilibria," "channels," and "gate" functions. Our argument in this paper is that the social field is shaped very powerfully by whether or not the working relation between consultant and group is collaborative or noncollaborative or in transition between these extremes.

What do we mean by "collaboration"? The dictionary reveals a bright and a dark side to this word, which is of great importance to the phenomena we are considering. On the one hand, "collaboration" means working together cooperatively on a project of common concern and benefit. On the other hand, "collaboration" means to work along with opposition or enemies in betrayal of one's own kind or class. In fact, the word can be used to contain a spectrum of meanings from the bright to the darkest. In

the middle of this range, for instance, is the meaning that emerged in the early work of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations with industrial firms after World War II. Jaques (1948) uses the term explicitly to describe the kinds of relations his research group attempt to establish with all parties concerned in a client firm, from top management to supervisors to labor union representatives. The terms of the research group were those of being acceptable to all parties, of making known within the firm the results of all meetings with subgroups, of joint responsibility for the final report. Later (Miller, 1976d) this task was conceptualized by Rice in the concept of "primary task," that each party had a common, collaborative interest in the primary task, which was that task that had to be performed for the firm to survive. We would summarize this as "collaboration for production." Its meaning is, however, quite ambivalent: on the bright side, the success of production and of some work satisfaction, yet, on the dark side, the realization that more fundamental working demands are usually lost in the priority that production takes or is allowed.²

This spectrum of political meaning in the collaborative relation is of greatest importance in the work of a small study group, where a consultant indicates an interest in working "collaboratively" with a group by his remarks or interpretations.³ In our view, what issues is a testing process in which the group tries to find out what shade of "collaboration" the consultant, in fact, means to establish.

The two extremes in meaning of collaboration are reflective of quite different group atmospheres that evolve. On the one hand is a group that is organized around having either an internal or external enemy. In a conference situation this might be the staff or the consultant to the particular small group. There is the feeling that to work with the consultant is to collaborate with the enemy; consultant suggestions are used begrudgingly and there is a continuous underlying feeling that one must be on guard against vulnerability to withdrawal by or assault from leadership. The other side of the coin seems quite a bit more difficult for the group to get at developmentally and relates to some capacity for intimacy: being able to feel that it is possible to work well in cooperation with other members and leadership without having to defend against this mode by either developing a culture of overinvolved oceanic fusion in which all are part of one big happy family, or having to have more distance between the self and others (as in a more highly competitive situation). It involves modulation of distance and comfort with cooperation, and is no doubt based on what a consultant seems to want and encourage by his/her style of intervention.

Our paper is, principally, about this unfolding relationship and process and its vicissitudes. The plan of the paper is as follows. First, we consider the collaborative situation in psychoanalysis for comparison, in the light of recent contributions, from which we borrow. This leads to our formulation of the major initial sources of resistance to collaboration in small groups. Second, we outline the two basic sets of small-group phenomena inherent in the previous small-group literature, those of noncollaborative and collaborative groups, and their relation to the leadership offered. Third, we illustrate these phenomena in practice. Finally, we summarize our

concept of collaborative leadership, passing tests of its intentions and capabilities in the light of the usual resistances.

THE ADEQUATE HOLDING ENVIRONMENT

Early psychoanalytic writing emphasized the overcoming of resistance in the patient. A parallel point of view with respect to groups is forcefully carried through by Bion in *Experiences in Groups* (1961), where the pedagogy consists of trenchant descriptions to the group of their irrational patterns of thinking that interfere with cooperation. Bion notes frequently that describing resistance seems to have little effect on it, even when described ever so sharply, but he persists in his efforts to secure cooperation this way nevertheless. In our experience, this method of consultation continues much the same in the traditions fathered by Bion, the Small Study Group Event in the Group Relations Conference, as sponsored in England by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations and in America by the A. K. Rice Institute.⁴ Not only is the oral tradition intact, but there has not been a single article in these traditions that reconsiders the method of taking study groups.

Psychoanalysts seemed to have learned more in the meanwhile from their experience concerning collaboration in the two-person situation of analysis. As children and more disturbed adult patients were taken into analysis, analysts began to appreciate what little cooperation might be gotten from the patient, what were the essential elements in this cooperation, and what the analyst could do to foster it. When it could not be taken for granted and relegated to the background, it became an object for consideration. This is the literature on the "therapeutic alliance" and on the analytic setting as containing elements of the mother-child relation. We will emphasize the contributions of Modell (1976), Balint (1959), and Klein (1959) as the most pertinent to our reconsideration of the group situation. In general, the line of thought is as follows: For the patient to tolerate the painfulness of exploration of old injuries and maintain a lively curiosity to learn from these experiences, the patient must feel adequately "held" by the treatment. Although the reference to being held is a metaphor for the security of the infant held securely by the mother, in fact this security of the patient extends from literally being supported by the couch in a pleasant room through a wide range of further protections. The patient feels held by the understanding of the analyst of matters the patient cannot hold in his own mind, by the calm of the analyst who is unprovoked, by the provision of environment in which reality is not overintrusive, but where fantasy is allowed its own sway (Modell, 1976; Winnicott, 1965). The patient may range freely between the cozy dark comfort of curling up on the couch, if the larger domain is too much for him, to ranging about the room or in his mind on wide-ranging adventures in the open spaces, if enclosure is threatening (Balint, 1959). In all, the adequate or "good enough" holding environment provides the conditions or background of safety (Sandler, 1960; Weiss, 1971). This background is necessary even to the healthiest of neurotic patients for them to spin out the substance of

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their neurosis into the patterning of the transference neurosis that then can be recognized and learned from. More disturbed patients, as Modell (1976) and others have shown, may remain in a "cocoon" transference, as it were, for many months even in the best of facilitating environments.

To be fruitful, study groups, like analysis, require their members to play out the patterns in their minds. What kind of "holding environment" is necessary and possible in groups? In the early days of study groups, it seems as if study group members were buoyed by their identifications with one another in the somewhat heroic pioneering venture of group self-study (Slater, 1966). Missing was the literal security of the couch, being understood individually, having the latitude of movement described by Balint (since the group could be so constraining), but the fixity of purpose of the consultant and his ability to follow and hold the group as a whole in his mind over a great range of its travels could be sustaining enough for some members. Given these conditions as background, the foreground of theorizing about the business of the consultant could be devoted to overcoming resistances to specific understandings. Participation was counted on and needed no theory of its own.

We are in different days and with different members for whom the above conditions are not sustaining enough. In the first place, many people are not personally suited to be pioneers of the group unconscious. In the second place, the social conditions that are the context of the study group intrude upon it so unceasingly that it is no longer the kind of preserve from reality that is possible in the psychoanalytic consulting room. Racial and class antagonisms remain literal in the study group. The boundary between street or bureaucratic life and the possibility for allowing illusions to unfold in a protected space is lost.

Let us look more closely at each of these kinds of shortcomings of the study group holding environment—the personal or depth-psychological first and the sociological second. To involve oneself in archaic relationships in a group for purposes of study is, to follow Michael Balint (1968), a kind of "new beginning," in the freshness and inarticulate possibilities that emerge. To allow oneself this kind of regression is to proceed backwards beyond what Melanie Klein (1959) called the "depressive" and "paranoid" positions. The "depressive position" is the fear of the total indifference of others and the "paranoid position" is the fear of retaliation. Each position is taken up out of concern for the force of frustrated individual needs, of greed, envy, and hatred. It seems, in groups, that contributions of inner experience cannot be made when the individual is preoccupied with the possible indifference or retaliation of others. This tends to result in singleton ("cocoon") status in the group. A similar finding from the larger context of organizations is that of Jaques (1974), who shows how apparently rather small changes in social organizations are interfered with by massive anxiety about how depressive and paranoid anxieties will be contained in the new arrangements. Balint (1959) describes the related phenomena of the need for primitive relationships to the environment, either of the clinging type or the thrills type. Individuals who must cling do so because of the dread of open spaces. Individuals who must continually

range abroad in thrill-seeking fear being trapped in enclosures. The parallels to these in group would seem to be the necessity for some to be affiliated with basic assumption (Bion, 1961) groupings continuously, for others to be above and separate from the groups as singletons. Of course, such restrictions would be antithetical to the necessary flow of the mind necessary for learning about groups.

What is essential about the recognition of these failures of the group holding environment for the individual is to understand what makes them more likely to be magnified or diminished. It is clear that study groups can bring out these primitive anxieties to the extent that the members feel in danger of falling into very bad early or primitive situations, or they can feel adequate or good enough protection from such misfortunes. We think that Sartre (Laing and Cooper, 1964) goes to the core of the matter when he argues that (felt) scarcity is the fundamental disturbance in group life: scarcity of attention, honor, love, or whatever is wanted. This makes sense theoretically, when we consider, following Melanie Klein (1959), how scarcity could engender anger, greed, envy, and hatred in large measure, and foster either the paranoid or defensive positions. Klein suggests further that identification and gratitude are what tend to make all of this bearable. Scarcity tends to be less acute when members participate by identification in one another's fortunes, and gratitude begets more helpfulness. We shall examine the nature of the collaboration between consultant and group in the next section, to see how it may strengthen or exacerbate the inherent scarcity problems in the group. We should hardly expect that a group preoccupied with scarcity issues would provide much of a holding environment for the play of illusion and learning.

Members of a new small study group come into such a group usually from a variety of previous social experiences. Given the conditions in institutions in which the study group members have had most of their experience, these previous experiences are not apt to have been collaborative in the deepest and best sense. Why should they then expect anything different than they have been used to? No matter the promise of collaboration that is held out to them. False promises may be the rule. Educational institutions generally tend to be directed heavily from above, as Freire put it (1970), with the students as repositories in the "banking" method of education. Study group members sit back then waiting for valuable experiences and formulations to be deposited in them. Bureaucratic institutions may be interested strictly in the letter of regulations to the exclusion of the spirit. As a number of our students once put this matter, "We enter your course via the slot in our schedule which indicates we are to be here." As described in a previous paper (Gustafson, 1976a), study group members may be primarily adherents of other task groups that have assigned them to the study group, which they relate to then as they would to a bus or any other assigned vehicle, as numbers in a series, as passengers holding tickets. An even more dire perspective, as if the previous ones were not sufficient, considers the inherent alienation of membership in capitalist institutions. A worker who uses manual dexterity may function simply as manual dexterity in the abstract sense in a factory, or a bureaucratic ad-

ministrator may be reduced to being an auditor of other people's miscalculations. The whole person is reduced to be part (alienation) in his or her institutional role (Ollman, 1971). What preparation is this for collaboration in depth in a study group? Even further, persons with highly complex talent that has considerable value and allows a great expressiveness for the individual are habitually pulled by the capitalist market into evaluating and calculating and planning their own exchange value, in order to command resources for work (Schneider, 1975). This forced preoccupation with exchange value easily may erode the individual's actual concentration upon the work itself, and again is poor preparation for collaboration with others in depth. The small study group can become reduced as well to an opportunity not for learning, but for impressing and allying oneself with other important people. We have seen study groups completely immobilized by such preoccupations, as if each member were a kind of common stock and the process that of a stock exchange in which values rose and fell.

In summary, the good enough holding environment for learning in the study group is apt to be vitiated in advance by deep concerns about scarcity and previous average social experience. We turn now to how the consultant initiates relations with group members who meet him in these conditions.

CONDITIONS OF SCARCITY AND CONDITIONS OF SAFETY

The literature of small-group phenomena is not very large. We think that the previous findings may be organized roughly into two broad categories: (a) the phenomena consequent to conditions of scarcity; (b) the phenomena consequent to conditions of safety. We start with the first class of phenomena, most brilliantly described by Bion (1961) and Slater (1966), but confirmed by many others.

We do not contest the accuracy of Bion's findings, but rather the failure to specify the limiting conditions under which they occur. This is no great matter to discover, if one considers Bion's own text (1961) carefully with some theoretical perspective. In the first paragraph of his account, Bion notes that the Professional Committee of the Tavistock Clinic asked him to take therapeutic groups. Bion's wry comment, "It was disconcerting to find that the Committee seemed to believe that patients could be cured in groups such as these," as refreshing as it may be in its candor, still conveys the contradictory situation he allowed his groups to be placed in, namely, of expecting something from someone who made no claim to be offering what they wanted. Indeed, his very first interpretation to the group he describes conveys his abdication: "It becomes clear to me that I am, in some sense, the focus of attention in the group. Furthermore, I am aware of feeling uneasily that I am expected to do something. At this point I confide my anxieties to the group, remarking that, however mistaken my attitude might be, I feel just this" (Bion, 1961, p. 30). He continues in this vein in a series of ten interpretations, not only to abdicate, but also to intrude, which he concedes he feels himself to be doing, exposing ever

more mercilessly the wish of the group to idealize him despite his abandonment of them.

In the light of our previous considerations concerning the maternal aspects of early holding environments in groups, nothing could be more traumatic than abandonment and intrusion, the cardinal characteristics of very primitive images of the bad mother.⁵ It is under these conditions that Bion elicits with remarkable clarity the so-called basic assumption groups. Bion evinces several explanations for these tenacious and primitive group formations, foremost of which is the need to preserve the group, which would otherwise be dispersed, for example, where Bion states: "Reproduction (basic assumption pairing) is recognized as equal with fight-flight in the preservation of the group" (p. 64). In our study group and clinical group therapy experience, such abandonment and intrusion errors as made by Bion do indeed regularly lead to basic assumption groups of great tenacity, or, on the other hand, to group dispersion, or group rebellion (Gustafson, 1976a; Slater, 1966). According to Yalom (1970), from the context of group therapy, group therapists who cannot be confronted with their limitations, because they are frighteningly formidable or weak and distant, develop groups that never become cohesive and responsible. This finding as well could be explained by the hypothesis that an adequate holding environment is prevented by abandonment or intrusion by the leader.

That there is an alternative way to take study groups is our main practical purpose to demonstrate, but the previous literature is helpful chiefly when findings from events other than the study group are considered. Consider, for example, how different is the relation between leader and members in the following account by Michael Balint of his method for collaborating in group seminars with general practitioners to understand their working problems: "As long as the mutual identifications of the members are fairly strong, any individual member can face strains because he feels accepted and supported by the group. His mistakes and failings, although humiliating, are not felt as singling him out as a useless member; quite on the contrary, he feels that he has helped the group to progress, using his failings as stepping-stone. *It is a precondition of our technique to establish this kind of atmosphere in the group, and it is only in such an atmosphere that it is possible to achieve what we term 'the courage of one's own stupidity.'*" This means that the doctor feels free to be himself with his patient, that is, to use all of his past experiences and present skills without much inhibition" (1954, p. 40).⁶ In brief, we have another world of small-group phenomena here, which, as Balint astutely points out, depends as its "precondition" on the leader being able to establish the right conditions (of safety). Balint even goes on to explain how the group norms follow from his own (collaborative) relation to the group: "Perhaps the most important factor is the behavior of the leader in the group. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that if he finds the right attitude he will teach more by his example than by everything else taken together. After all, the technique we advocate is based on exactly the same sort of listening that we expect the doctors to acquire. By allowing everybody to be themselves, to have their say in

their own way and in their own time, by watching for proper cues, *i.e.*, *speaking only when something is really expected from him* and making his point in a form which, *instead of prescribing the right way of dealing with the patient's problems, opens up possibilities* for the doctors to discover some right way of dealing with the patient's problems, the leader can demonstrate in the 'here and now' situation what he wants to teach" (p. 41). Again, we discover through Balint's cardinal importance of being there when needed (not abandoning), but not being intrusive and prescriptive. With these conditions of safety, we get an entirely different kind of small group than under the conditions of scarcity provided by Bion.

The distinction being drawn between the Bion method of group analysis and the work done in Balint's groups involves a substantial conceptual issue: How can covert processes that inevitably occur in groups be worked with so as to create collaborative work atmosphere?

The mechanism of projective identification is probably inevitably in operation, particularly in groups structured as study groups. In this projective process members unconsciously imbue leadership and often each other with important thoughts and feelings that have powerful influences on their (member) behavior. Partly members do this because of the regressive power of the group situation, partly they do this as a communicational device that is intended to make leadership aware of covert forces that cannot be verbalized (for a variety of reasons, such as their being out of the awareness of the members involved) by inducing the warded-off attitudes in the consultant. For example, a group unable to handle its own contempt may take actions that induce contempt for them in the consultant. They thus communicate the problem to him and have the opportunity to learn from him how to manage it.⁷

Bion makes it quite clear that this projective identification is occurring and in fact uses whatever data he has of these projections as the substance of his interpretation. It is as if the kind of work that members do with consultation in a Bion-type group is to provide the data for exposing basic assumption functioning. This kind of uncovering almost inherently encourages an increase of such functioning since, it becomes either explicitly or implicitly what the work contract is between leader and member. *It is the end to which the projective data is used that is the crucial difference in the Bion and Balint situation.* It is possible to use the more covert, projective data about basic assumption life in a very different way, to foster a more collaborative work contract.

In a more limited conference situation, it seems to be assumed that what members are least able to sense explicitly, and what the function of consultation should be, is openly dealing with their fantasy and impulse life. Within this context it is possible to exaggerate such behavior. We are assuming that behind this basic assumption functioning, or along with it, is an equally difficult kind of work collaboration that doesn't involve a mutual admiration and mutual protection atmosphere, but rather the use of the covert process material to focus on difficulties with and fantasies about a more mutual and reality-based work relationship. This is not to deny or try to bypass the difficult underlying material, but not to use it

only for the exposure of the infantile side of group behavior. We are suggesting that the material be used both in its meaning as a resistance and as an expression of difficulty in experiencing one's strength, skills, and competence, taking responsibility for these experiences, and functioning in a collaborative way in the face of strong irrational desires and needs. That is, members not only resist collaboration, but may also *make prominent* what their difficulties are in collaborating in order that the difficulties may be clearly grasped and overcome.⁸ Balint's method seems to accept the members' contributions in this spirit, which, we think, allows members to be more able to continue showing what they need help with.

Very much related to Balint's way to taking groups is that advocated from an entirely different context by Freire in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), in which he describes his "culture circles" and projects to teach literacy to peasants in Latin America. Freire adds to Balint's appreciation of the depth-psychological conditions of safety his own grasp of countering the sociological or political tendencies that would interfere with the right relationship of the leader to the group. Freire describes the so-called "director culture," in which powerful people from the cities enter the rural areas to prescribe and proscribe, to define the terms of the conversation, which are then the terms used by the peasant participants, who themselves remain in a "culture of silence" concerning their own actual experience. Problem-posing technique, as used by Freire, completely avoids formulation by the leader, because of the endemic tendency of the participants to then become lost in using the leader's terms. Freire poses problems, often nonverbally with pictures, asking the participants to find their own expression for what concerns them about the situations. From the depth-psychological perspective, this is brilliant avoidance of inflicting the intrusion trauma that is chronic for these peasants. From the sociological or political perspective, it represents the clearest signal of a new situation for these participants from what they are used to, so as to minimize the carryover of expectations from noncollaborative oppressive social institutions. The reader may, at first glance, take Freire's practice as peculiar to extraordinary circumstances of oppression. Our experience is contrary, in that we find students, bureaucrats, doctors, and housewives entering study groups trying to grasp the right terms of the leader to manipulate for themselves. This tendency must be countered, as by Freire, if true collaboration is to emerge.⁹

IN PRACTICE

The weaknesses of a tradition are often painfully obvious in its neophyte practitioners. Their earnest imitations of classical practice not only reveal their own clumsiness, but also can remind observers of the classical practice itself, which is revealed through the exaggeration (caricature). To illustrate our thesis about the difficulties of collaboration, we have chosen a rather simple dynamic, in which the needed intervention is clearcut, as a series of seven neophyte consultants tried to grapple with it. The context was a special type of Small Study Group event devised by Rioch (unpublished).

in which the seven members of the group took turns being the consultant. Each had the opportunity to take this role for a period of an hour and a quarter, following which the individual had an opportunity to discuss his/her interventions with the staff observers. The ordinary difficulty in any study group of obtaining collaboration was enhanced by the competition of the members to do the best job and earn further opportunities to consult in Group Relations conferences.

Each of the seven consultancies began with lively expectation, even excitement, which in every instance but one went dead. The six consultants who allowed this to happen very early showed to their colleagues their discomfort, insecurity, and lack of confidence. They were then not attacked directly, and gradual withdrawal ensued. The seventh consultant (actually fifth in sequence) began very aggressively by pointing out the attempt of the group to subdivide into cozy parties as an avoidance of dealing with the end of the event. She indicated by her demeanor as well as her interpretation that she was prepared to deal directly with their hostility to the task and her leadership. Excitement continued as the members felt free to bring forward their rivalry with her without fear of injuring her, without the depressive anxiety that they would later have to live with serious guilt about their actions. In this depth-psychological sense, she provided an adequate holding environment for the expression of what the group members were full of, namely, their own fierce competitiveness *and* their wish to collaborate in exploring it.

Once the other six consultants had signaled their need to be protected by showing obvious weakness—not making an interpretation for a half hour despite many opportunities, mumbling the first interpretation, sitting away from the chair previously reserved for the consultant—the collaboration was in serious difficulty, unless the consultant could show some clear ability to recover strength that would reassure the members that they might bring forward their hostilities safely. The obvious move (to the staff observers) was to confront directly the dramatic change in climate from excitement to deadness, the most straightforward and explicit process. This would be reassuring at a depth-psychological level to the other members, because his/her equanimity in facing early difficulty would signal strength that could be safely challenged, which is what they wanted to express. None of the six could bring up this dramatic process. One showed some later vigor and secured some involvement with his consultation that was marred by heavy undertones of depressive anxiety, as the fear of injuring him could not be relieved when he could not face directly their first loss of faith in his dominance.

In the conference discussion between the observing staff and the seven member-consultants, the dramatic change in climate in six of the consultations was soon identified, and the question was posed to them by the staff: What made it difficult for them to confront that process directly? Their replies were intense and thoughtful and confirm our major theses about the difficulties in collaboration. All of the six consultants sensed the change in the group during the time that it occurred, but felt helpless to discuss it with the group. Some felt that only full interpretations of what

was wrong would be acceptable, and since they could only acquire a partial understanding while it was happening, they did not feel free to bring this forward and ask the members to meet them halfway. They conceived of their role as having to be oracular. Some felt that direct discussion of one's first interpretation as inadequate was to invite disaster, in the form of the group's pleasure in that, or one's own anger at them for wanting one to fail. These personal responses were greatly feared by the six consultants, who were desperately trying to hold onto a professional role. They reported they felt they could not think about the significance of these strong emotions because they feared them as merely personal and idiosyncratic, i.e., not signifying some general relevance to the situation, because they were desperately preoccupied with maintaining the right external professional visage, because they then had to cut off their own fantasy, fearing to go inside themselves to get in touch with it, because they needed to keep an eye on the group members continually. Their solace was that "the respect" for the consultant and his chair, however formalized and dead a religion, was better than none at all.

In summary, the difficulties of these neophyte consultants reflect both a sociopolitical resistance and a depth-psychological resistance. The first is straightforward, in that the social role of the consultant is conceived of as having to be oracular, i.e., which is an impossible idea when the consultant is dependent on his colleagues for the data to work with and must secure their collaboration. The second resistance to taking a collaborative stance is the depth-psychological (primitive) dichotomy between being all-powerful or totally helpless, where one inept intervention equals a completely inept consultant. What was needed in these difficult situations was neither pronouncement nor invulnerability. Had the staff attempted either in the conference discussion, more deadness would have ensued. What was needed was for someone to *pose the problem* (Freire, 1970) of the dramatic change in process and encourage participants to have the "courage of their own stupidity" (Balint, 1954), which when supplied in the conference discussion, resulted in the outpouring of collaboration (about what had gone wrong) which has been just described. One might wonder about the selection of the members for this conference, whether they were well-suited for consultant work. It is possible that some of them were not, but we take another point of view as well: namely, that they were *making prominent* (Sampson, 1976) their difficulty with collaboration—a difficulty the tradition of Group Relations Conferences had left them in, all having had several previous memberships in these conferences—in order to be helped with it. When the difficulties were received in this spirit in the conference discussion they began mastering it.

OUR MODEL OF COLLABORATION IN STUDY GROUP CONSULTATION

We may now summarize what we take to be the essential points of technique in consultation to study groups that will bring out collaboration in depth. The abandonment-and-intrusion model of Bion (1961) leads to

collaboration only under the very special circumstances of having exceptionally hardy or pioneering members who are able to overthrow the leader and establish their own cooperative arrangements (Slater, 1966). It is otherwise overly traumatic in the depth-psychological sense, and overly dominating and defining in the political sense, to constitute an adequate holding environment for learning.¹⁰ Balint's emphasis on being there for the members "when something is really expected" but not otherwise, and in a "problem-posing way" so as to avoid the director culture, as demonstrated by Freire, is entirely in the right direction for the study group consultant.

Balint's method is very similar to that recommended by Weiss (1971) and Sampson (1976) in the context of psychoanalysis as conditions for the emergence of deeper concerns. The provision of "the right relationship," that is, supplying the missing ego function and/or the analysis of the resistances to the first emergence of that functioning in the patient, leads to the emergence of new themes from the patient. This is again a case of being there in the right dose and with the right function that is missing, but not being too much there when the patient can be helped to supply it himself. Again, the opposite of abandonment and intrusion is providing the right relationship. In our view, the "emergence of new themes" in the group occurs under these conditions of safety described by Weiss and Sampson from the individual psychotherapy context. If the group members can supply the function themselves but are having trouble maintaining it, the consultant's task is to help them see their interference with their own work. If they are entirely missing a sorely needed function, he may provide it but then step back to let them use it themselves.

Finally, we would emphasize, with Jaques (1948), that the intention thus to provide the right relationship to foster the capabilities of the members of the group will be continually *tested*, both from the depth-psychological and political perspectives. The consultant is invited to be intrusive or to be neglectful of critical matters. He is invited to take over formulation and direction. Only when he passes these tests continually can the conditions for collaboration in depth securely hold the members in a group culture, that is, a "new beginning," that is thereby acquired and distinguished from the dreaded internal dangers and average social oppression.