

The ISS Peace Research Course

REPORT FROM 1991 AND SUGGESTIONS FOR 1992

By Stein Tønnesson (co-leader with Tord Høivik 1991)

Course C-154 (peace research) of the International Summer School (ISS) went over six weeks from the 1st of July to the 7th of August 1991. Course leader was Tord Høivik, with Stein Tønnesson as co-leader. Both were research fellows at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO). The course leader participated in the selection of the students. Tord Høivik was responsible for the first half of the course, Stein Tønnesson for the second. One of the students, Sam Kalayanee from Thailand, functioned as practical assistant to the course leaders. A programme was sent out in advance along with introductory material.

The basic approach of the course was presented as follows: "We may approach the subject of peace research by two routes. One starts with the problem - violent conflict - and would describe peace research as the study of non-violent conflict resolution. The other starts with the goal - peace - and describes peace research as the study of peace and its preconditions. The first approach is simple, convenient and academically respectable. Conflict, armed conflict, and non-violent conflict resolution are eminently **researchable** concepts. The second is complex, inconvenient, and ultimately necessary. **Peace** is a vision of how we may live together. Social actors - whether nations, groups, or you and me - are moved by visions, dreams, and desires. The skills of conflict resolution are important. But technical skills without commitment to peace end up as tools for bureaucrats."

1. Programme

Week 1: Conflict theory

Introduction to conflict analysis, role play, negotiation theory, visit to PRIO, information on PRIO's research programmes, election of class representative. Apart from the visit to PRIO, Tord Høivik led all course activities.

Visit to the Nobel Institute.

Week 2: Africa

Two lectures on the Horn of Africa by Reidulf Molvær, research fellow at PRIO, emphasizing environmental issues. One lecture on West Africa by Karin Dokken, research fellow at PRIO.

Weekend trip to the forest (Studenthytta) with a programme, GAIA

2050, where groups were asked to edit a newspaper from the year 2050. Activities led by Tord Høivik, with Stein Tønnesson partly present.

Week 3: Mediation

Workshop with training in listening skills, mediation techniques etc. Led by Tord Høivik.

Week 4: Ethnicity, Nationality, Nationalism

Students asked to list and evaluate their own ethnic/national identities by filling out a questionnaire. Lecture by Thomas Hylland Eriksen on ethnicity, by Stein Tønnesson on nationalism, by Stein Tønnesson on the breakup of the Soviet Union, introductions by two students from Latvia and Estonia on national identity in the Baltic region.

Visits to the Human Rights Institute and an Environmental Conflict Group at the University of Oslo. Afternoon discussion on South Africa, with introductions by two South African ISS-students and active participation by a third.

Week 5: The Gulf War

Lecture by Kumar Rupesinghe, research fellow at PRIO, on resolution of regional conflicts. Lecture by Stein Tønnesson on the historical background for the Gulf War. Lecture by Ola Tunander, research fellow at PRIO, on the World View of President Bush. Lecture by Rune Ottosen, research fellow at PRIO, on media coverage of the Gulf War.

Workshop with a simulated peace conference for the Middle East (three separate negotiations with mediation). Conference.

Week 6: Peace from Above or Below?

Lecture by Raino Malnes, University of Oslo, on good government. Sociometric exercise conducted by Melinda Meyer focusing on internal relations in the class, (cooperation and conflict patterns).

Group evaluation of the course.
Exams.

2. Participants

See appendix 2 for a complete list.

Altogether there were 27 students from 18 countries.

In week four, 22 students filled out a questionnaire on their own ethnic and national identities: 7 Americans, 5 Africans, 6 Europeans and 4 Asians. The number of ethnic and national identity options listed by each student varied from 1 to 11. The average was 4.45. The European average was 5,4, the American 5,28, the Asian 4 and the African 3. The students listing the highest number of identity options were from the USA (3), Germany (1), Estonia (1) and Thailand (1).

13 students attributed at least some importance to regional or local identity (a territory or ethnic group smaller than the state they were citizens of): 2 Africans, 5 Americans, 4 Europeans, 2 Asians.

10 students attributed great importance to an identity correlating with their citizenship: 4 Africans, 3 Americans, 2 Europeans, 1 Asian.

5 students attributed some importance to a global, human or world identity: 3 Americans, 1 from South Africa and 1 from Turkey.

3 students cited identities of a clearly non-ethnic and non-national kind: 1 American, 1 from Thailand and 1 from Germany.

1 student protested against the questionnaire and declared her dislike of using figures to assess such matters.

The students were asked to list the languages they were able to communicate in. As could be predicted, the English-speaking US participants had the lowest score here. The most multilingual students came from Africa (3), Europe (3) and Thailand. The Thai student mastered no less than 9 languages, body language included.

The students were also asked about the foundation of their ethnic and national identity. Shared customs/culture/values and shared history were considered important by most students. As many as 12 considered history to be very important, while 2 did not consider it important at all. Language was generally considered quite important. Genealogy (parents/grandparents), territory/nature/homeland, and state citizenship were all of some importance. While 5 said state citizenship meant nothing to them (1 African, 2 Americans, 1 from Turkey and 1 from India), 9 held it as very important (4 Africans, 2 Americans, 2 Europeans, 1 from Bangla Desh). Physical appearance and religion were generally considered unimportant, but 8 students thought religion was of some importance, and 9 students said the same about physical appearance.

3. Lectures

During the first and third weeks, emphasis was on group work in class, led by Tord Høivik. During the rest of the course, external lecturers were used, mostly recruited from the PRIO staff. By reading class logs and listening to the evaluations in the last week it was possible to assess how well each lecturer

was received.

There were problems with the two lectures on the Horn of Africa. Reidulf Molvær's environmental and factual approach met strong opposition from more ideologically motivated African participants, and the class logs show general dissatisfaction with these sessions. Karin Dokken's lecture on West Africa went better.

The lecturers who received the highest marks from the students were Kumar Rupesinghe and Melinda Meyer. They receive enthusiastic praise in the class logs. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Ola Tunander, Rune Ottosen and Raino Malnes were also well received. Some of the most dedicated peace activists had misgivings about the philosophical lecture by Raino Malnes.

4. Readings

Readings for the first three weeks were handed out at the beginning of the course while readings for the last three weeks were handed out partly in the third week, partly later (problems with the photocopy machine). There was general dissatisfaction among the students about this. They would have preferred to receive a compendium with all recommended readings on the first day, and they would have preferred to be told exactly what to read before each teaching session (see appendix A).

5. Teaching Style

Many students commented upon the enormous difference between the teaching styles of Tord Høivik and Stein Tønnesson. Høivik was relaxed and allowed much space for the students to take initiatives and relate to each other, while Tønnesson was authoritarian, emphasizing facts and lectures and actively directing the group work.

An important group of students who were process-oriented, wanted to create a peaceful world, acquire conflict resolution skills and establish a positive atmosphere in class, were well satisfied with the first half of the course (particularly week 3), and they were also very positive to the session with Melinda Meyer in week 6. They reacted against Tønnesson's authoritarian style. At one point, a meeting was called outside of class to discuss how to save the course and do something useful while Tønnesson was rambling on. During the evaluation session in week 6, one group reported that during the second half of the course, negative attitudes had crept into the class (see appendix 1, group 7). Some of them thought, however, that Tønnesson was able to correct himself somewhat in week 5 and 6, when there was more room for group work.

Another group of students, who had come to the course mainly to learn facts and theory, were frustrated during the first half of the course, when Tord Høivik wasted their time on group psychology and gave them little of any substance. They were relieved in week 3, when they started to feel that they learned something. However, their general evaluation of the course was not very positive (see appendix 1, group 3).

It would probably be advantageous to use a combination of Høivik's

and Tønnesson's teaching style throughout the course, rather than splitting it in two. If there are two course leaders, both should probably be present during the first week to prevent the impression of having a complete change in the middle of the course. Tønnesson learned a lot from observing Høivik's pedagogical techniques in week 3, and also tried to practice some of them in week 5 and 6, particularly during the simulated Middle East conference.

The choice of teaching style also has something to do with the selection of students. At the 1991 course the ideal students were the two Mosambiquans, who were strongly interested both in acquiring conflict resolution skills, in learning facts and theory, and in contributing their own vast experiences. They were also the ones who could benefit most directly from the course in their future work.

6. Excursions

The visit to PRIO was well attended and gave the students a general impression of what is going on at PRIO. Some students used the PRIO library during the remainder of the course, but it is a general problem during summer that libraries are not open long enough.

The visit to the Nobel Institute was not well attended, and that was a shame since the Nobel library could be very useful to students preparing term papers.

The weekend excursion to Studenthytta (together with the development course) was an intense social experience. GAIA 2050 left some students bewildered as to what was expected. They were told to produce a newspaper from 2050, no more no less. The project led to interesting result. In particular it was revealed that most students had an extremely pessimistic attitude concerning the future of the world.

The visit to the Institute of Human Rights was well attended. Asbjørn Eide as well as other staff members gave a good introduction to the IHR activities.

The visit to the Environmental group at the University was not well attended, and mainly consisted in chatting. But it was nice for those who went there (cakes and nice people).

7. Social events

Two parties were organized, one midterm party at Kumar Rupesinghe's house and one farewell party at the house of Stein Tønnesson's parents. Both parties were great successes. On each occasion groups of students prepared exquisite food, but the parties were expensive. The expenses were covered by the ISS, but it was made clear that this could not be repeated next year.

8. Examination Forms

The students are graded from A to C. A is good, B acceptable, while C means the student has not passed. Grading is partly based on an evaluation of each student's participation in class, partly on a written contribution. The written

contribution can either be an exam, a term paper or a class log. If the student chooses the examination, he/she has to sit for 4 hours and write an essay about one of 3-4 subjects. A term paper should deal with a specific subject, which must be approved in advance by the course leader. Tønnesson organised tutor sessions to discuss term papers outlines with each student.

A class log is a sort of diary where the student writes down reflections on each teaching session and on the readings. The log is handed in at intervals during the course for comments from the course leaders. Class logs (which were mainly preferred by the Americans) are extremely helpful in establishing a close relationship between the course leaders and each student. Much of this report is based on what was written in the class logs. But the class logs are difficult to grade because they are so personal.

By 13 November 1991, Tord Høivik and Stein Tønnesson had read and graded 2 examination essays (1 European, 1 African), 10 term papers and 8 class logs (7 American and 1 European).

9. Evaluation of the Course

See appendix 1 for the students' own evaluation.

Tord Høivik has conducted the peace research course a number of summers and has developed a process-oriented teaching style meant to promote not only factual learning, but skills in active conflict resolution, both on a personal and a group level. He found the 1991 class to be more challenging and more disparate than usual. Expectations, academic qualifications, language abilities and degree of experience differed so radically that it was sometimes difficult to keep the class together.

For Stein Tønnesson, the peace research course was a completely new experience, and a great challenge. He found it very difficult to do so many things at the same time: contribute substance to the course, conduct workshops, organise excursions and social events, give response to class logs and term paper outlines, try to establish a positive atmosphere where all students had a chance to come forward, relate to ongoing conflicts between the students themselves. He tried it all, with some failures and some successes. But he was unable to do it in Tord Høivik's relaxed manner. Instead Stein Tønnesson was hectic and intensely authoritarian. He got much feedback from the students, both positive and negative,¹ and he learned a lot from the experience, but it was all-absorbing and left him literally exhausted.

¹ Positive: "Your style was different from the first half. I enjoyed that"; Subtle criticism of teaching style: "I really admire enthusiasm % excitement you express while sharing your knowledge with us, but I like you most while you are dancing." More outright criticism: "Thank you for the lectures - despite the opposing views".

10. Suggestions for next year's course

10.1. recruitment of students

An attempt should have been made to encourage applications from people who are actively involved in conflict resolution work in various parts of the globe, but this is too late now. There ought to be more students from the various countries in the former Soviet Union, and from the Middle East. Also there ought to be at least one Chinese and one Japanese participant. Kumar Rupesinghe and the BPP's international networks should be used in the future in recruiting good applicants.

Scandinavians should also be encouraged to attend the course.

10.2. cooperation with other institutes

"Human rights" should be included as an independent subject in the peace research course. This could be done by asking the Institute of Human Rights to organise one of the six weeks and to contribute supervisors for those students who want to write term papers about human rights issues. A representative of the IHR should be present already during the first week. Contact with the IHR to discuss cooperation in 1992 should be made as soon as possible.

It is a great problem that the students have so little time to work in libraries, which are mainly open during the teaching sessions, and which often do not include the books or journals the students look for. The Nobel Institute library is probably the best library that the students can use. Contact should be made with the Nobel Institute in order to find out to what extent the students can be assisted in that institute during summer. A visit to the Nobel Institute should be organised during the first week, and all students must then attend. When the students have been selected, they should be asked to bring with them source material to be used in presenting their country's conflicts to the course, and in writing term papers.

10.3. course leaders and teaching style

It is essential that Tord Høivik's process-oriented teaching style is preserved and that his great pedagogical experience is utilized. Therefore Tord Høivik should be asked to be one of the course leaders also in 1992, even if he will no longer work at PRIO. The other course leader(s) should include at least one member of the PRIO staff. Both course leaders should be present during the first week, and there should be a mixture every week between substance-oriented and process-oriented teaching. It must be avoided that the course is divided into two completely different halves.

10.4. programme

The first week should include a general introduction to peace research. One week should be dedicated to human rights. Melinda Meyer should be asked to conduct three sociometric sessions during the course, with two weeks' interval. The lectures must reflect ongoing research activities at PRIO. One or two regional conflicts should be selected for special sessions. It is essential that the region studied is also represented in the student body.

10.5. readings

A sample of readings for the whole course should be handed out on the first or second day of the course.

10.6 suggested time schedule 1992

March/April:

- Discussion of the present report
- Select course leaders
- Establish cooperation with IHR and Nobel
- Define main structure of programme
- Talk with PRIO staff as well as IHR and Nobel about lectures, supervision, term paper topics
- Select scholarship students with ISS
- Specify lectures/lecturers and finalize draft programme
- Contact development course staff to discuss cooperation (shared lectures?).

May: Mail draft programme + introductory materials to students.

June: Arrange extracurricular activities (separate excursion budget). Revise programme. Prepare lectures. Prepare PRIO, IHR and Nobel.

July: GO!

Appendix 1:**Minutes from class evaluation of the ISS peace research course (C-154)**

7 August 1991

Minutes by Stein Tønnesson

The class was divided in seven groups all of which were asked to discuss two future-oriented questions:

1. What can be done to improve the quality of the peace research course next year (1992)?
2. To what extent will the course be useful to you in your future activities?

After an hour's discussion, the groups reported their conclusions in class.

Group 1: Bridget Ann Hynes (USA), Jerome Athol van der Schyff (South Africa), Stefanie Wood (USA)

There should be more emphasis on creative, positive conflict resolution patterns. One should look at the pattern of conflict resolution in the past more than on the content of the conflicts.

Factual overviews of the subjects taught should be handed out in advance to serve as basis for discussions.

The fact that the students were on such different stages of learning made it difficult to interact. In particular it was a problem that some did not speak English fluently. It might be an idea to organise special sessions for those who do not speak English fluently.

Stefanie had not got very much out of the course from a peace research perspective, but had learned from interaction in the groups. She felt she might now be able to see things more realistically. Jerome criticized the role games (mainly the Middle East Peace Conference) for having been unrealistic; in the real world negotiations are much harder, people do not give up their interests so easily. Bridget felt the course had helped to avoid seeing the world from an ethnocentric angle. Also she had learned that conflicts are not endless.

Group 2: Anuradha Muni (India), C. Terezinha da Silva (Mozambique), Ramesh Vassen (South Africa)

In the beginning of the course there should be more lectures and less exercises.

More data should be made available to the students on wars, conflicts and peace. There had been a lack of basic data.

During the second half of the course the readings were handed out too late. Therefore there was no chance to read them deeply.

Before coming to attend the course, **the participants should have**

been asked to bring written sources with them from home to be used both in the discussions and in writing term papers. It is not possible to rely on Norwegian libraries, which often lack the necessary information and are mainly open during the same hours when there are classes.

An active, experienced mediator should be invited to give a lecture and provide training in mediation techniques.

The course could be condensed from 6 to 4-5 weeks. In particular the first two weeks should have been condensed to one.

Concerning the future use, Anuradha intended to develop an independent course at her university (the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi). Terezinha thought she could make good use of the course in organizing a peace movement in Mosambique and working with NGO's for reconciliation of the country's protracted violent conflict. Ramesh intended to introduce issues of peace at public meetings in Mosambique, and thought the peace research perspective was of great use in the current situation in Southern Africa,.

Group 3: Antje Stannek (Germany), Edgar Bwalya (Zambia), Rochus Johannes Pieter Pronk (Netherlands)

All the readings should have been bound together and handed out during the first week so they could have been read actively before each session. The students should have more of a common frame of reference by reading the same material.

Often there was too much concentration on specific cases. It would be good to have more sessions where two different viewpoints were presented on one subject. Here, the South Africa seminar was a good example: Mark versus Jerome/Ramesh.

The mediation week (week 3) had been the poorest part of the course, while the guest lecturers had generally been good. There should be more lectures, and preferably with opposite viewpoints. It would be a good idea to invite foreign diplomats in Oslo to the course to discuss their own conflicts with each other and the students.

The language problem had seriously hampered the quality of the course. In the future the organizers should make sure that all participants are able to express themselves in English. After all it is a graduate course. Several of the participants were on an undergraduate level (at least as far as language was concerned).

The group had desperately searched for something positive to say about the course and had come up with the following: there had been a lot more interaction among the students in the peace research class than in the other classes at the Summer School.

Group 4: Manon Felicitas Danker (Netherlands), Jonathan Allan Sigman (USA), Atiye Onur (Turkey), Raul Sidonio dos Santos (Mosambique)

The class activities should be of a kind that allows the participants to express the whole self, not only the intellect. There should be more of the kind of teaching practised by Melinda Meyer: community building in class. What Melinda did only once towards the end should have been done once every week.

There should be an introduction to a more person-oriented peace research. The teachers should induce the participants to more self-supporting activities.

The workshop "Gaia 2050" during the forest trip revealed that the participants had an overall pessimistic attitude. People were not empowered to think that they could do something about the state of the world. The course should be more empowering.

The handouts were not sufficiently related to the lectures. The texts should have been used more directly during the lectures in the way Tord did when he demonstrated conflict mapping. When a theory is presented in class, it should also be applied. More background information should be given on the specific cases presented in the lectures, e.g. the Horn of Africa.

Concerning the usefulness of the course, Raul intended to include peace philosophy and some of the teaching styles used at ISS back in Mosambique. He had also picked up some ideas for negotiating techniques which could be useful in the negotiations between the Mosambiquan government and RENAMO. Perhaps he would also work for a conference on war and peace. Atiye wanted to take up peace education in Turkey. She thought the world had got smaller for her since she now knew people affected by the many conflicts she used to read about. Atiye thought there should be more singing in class.

Group 5: Liana V. Yermolayeva (Latvia), Nghiem Duc Tu (Vietnam) Andrea Rozsa (Hungary)

Tu had found it difficult to express herself in English. It is not easy to learn English in Vietnam. The brochure about the course should emphasize the need to have a good command of English.

Tord used to note down the gist of the lectures on the blackboard. It would have been better if the essential points had been summarized on a handout.

The group would have liked to have more background information, more workshops and fewer lectures. If you have read background information, you are prepared to be active in class. It is a good idea to have individual participants give introductions to particular conflicts in their own countries, such as was done on some occasions.

There ought to be more cooperation with other courses, in particular the development course. And some of the morning sessions should be moved to the afternoon to make it possible to do library work (libraries in Oslo close early during summer).

Tu emphasized that students from socialist countries are used to being passive in class, concentrating on listening. Now Tu planned to try out inter-active teaching methods in Hanoi. Liana felt the same. In the beginning she had not wanted to say anything. Now she understood the need to be active. She wants to be a teacher in Latvia and now understands that teaching is not only about facts, but also about viewpoints. Andrea was going to work for the Hungarian Army after her return to Budapest. She had found the course very useful.

Group 6: Jill Astrid Simpson (USA), Sitthipong (Sam) Kalayanee (Thailand), Mengstab (Eritrea, not a regular student, but participated during the last part of the course)

Guest lecturers ought to have more teaching experience. One-sided presentations ought to be avoided. Guest lecturers should start their lecture by making known their personal views ("admitting their personal bias").

Both course leaders should be present during the first week. Each student should make a report on his/her own country in the beginning. A self-portrait had been made, but that was not enough as a presentation.

Jill intended to use the course in her graduate studies. It had helped her define the fields she wanted to study and to build contacts. Sam was already active in conflict resolution. The course had given him an impression of how intellectuals feel, and he had also been able to extend his international network during the course. Mengstab had liked the course so much that he wanted to apply next year. He belongs to a student group in Norway discussing Eritrea's national experience. He wants to form a peace group in Eritrea and keep in touch with PRIO.

Group 7: Ainslee Olson (USA), Karen Holt (Jamaica/USA), Rodrigo (Rocky) Hernando Timaran Timaran (Colombia)

The readings should have been handed out at the beginning of the course in a compendium. The size of the class could be bigger so as to include participants from South- and Central America, and more students from Asia. There should be simultaneous translation for those who are not fully idiomatic in English. Headphones could then be used.

When the programme is set up for the course, it should be based on where the participants come from. The Horn of Africa had not been well chosen since none of the students came from that part of the world.

Then the course should be run by one teacher during all six weeks, not be split in two halves. When a newcomer takes over, it provides some students with an excuse for dropping out. During the second half of the course, negative attitudes had crept into the class. During the first half of the course there was a lack of background information. It had been difficult to grasp conflict theory as long as it was not discussed in relation to particular conflicts.

Rocky told that he was a candidate for political office in Columbia. The course would be useful for him in dealing with the conflicts in the Amazon region between farmers, drug-traffickers, guerrillas and native Indians. Ainslee had found the course really helpful, especially the third week with its focus on mediation techniques and active listening. Karen had also been particularly interested in what she learned during the third week. Mediation is an interesting alternative to taking conflicts to court. Often mediation may lead to more justice than a strict practice of the law, which is not always just.

Appendix 2:

**List of participants at the Peace Research Course Summer 1991
(C-154)**

AFRICA

Jerome Athol van der Schyff (South Africa)
 Ramesh Vassen (South Africa)
 Edgar Bwalya (Zambia)
 C. Terezinha da Silva (Mozambique)
 Raul Sidonio dos Santos (Mozambique)
 Hellen Kafumba (Tanzania)
 Mengstab (Eritrea) participated during the last two weeks, but was not a regular student

ASIA

Nghiem Duc Tu (Vietnam)
 Anuradha Muni (India)
 Taher Md. Kasim (Bangladesh)
 Sitthipong (Sam) Kalayanee (Thailand)

AMERICA

Rodrigo (Rocky) Hernando Timaran Timaran (Colombia)
 Ainslee Olson (USA)
 Bridget Ann Hynes (USA)
 Heidi L. Harriman (USA) - had to leave before the end
 Jill Astrid Simpson (USA)
 Jonathan London (USA)
 Jonathan Allan Sigman (USA)
 Karen Holt (Jamaica/USA)
 Stefanie Wood (USA)

EUROPE

Atiye Onur (Turkey)
 Franz Petutschnig (Austria)
 Manon Felicitas Danker (Netherlands)
 Rochus Johannes Pieter Pronk (Netherlands)
 Andrea Rozsa (Hungary)
 Liana V. Yermolayeva (Latvia)
 Riho Laanemäe (Estonia) - joined the course after a week
 Antje Stannek (Germany)