Pacifism and Its Prospects for Social Peace

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Abstract

The paper critically examines the pacifist doctrine, which maintains that the practice of non-violence provides a guarantee for social peace. It scrutinises the underlying assumptions of the theory, its essential characteristics as well as the extent to which it can actually promote social peace. The paper maintains that as a theory, pacifism holds great promise in the quest for a peaceful social order. However, it has a number of problems that inhibits its practical effectiveness.

Keywords: *absolute pacifism, violence, direct action, structural violence, private pacifism.*

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Introduction

Pacifism, otherwise known as the practice of non-violence, is the attempt to achieve positive social change without recourse to any form of violence. It aims to abolish all forms of social discrimination, political and economic oppression and all social structures that engender violent conflicts. Pacifists maintain that violence should never be used to achieve any end, however attractive this might be. Rather, non-violent techniques

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should be adopted. They often appeal to diverse religious traditions that profess abstinence from violence and the promotion of peace as supreme values in life. Examples of such traditions are found in Christianity and the Hindu religion (Groff and Smoker, 1996a, p. 58). Leo Tolstoy and Martin Luther King, for instance, derive their pacifist positions from the Christian precepts of love, forgiveness and the sacredness of life. Mahatma Gandhi, for his own part, borrowed copiously from the Hindu conception of human life and the status of the human soul. According to Tolstoy, violence would be abolished in human society once we "let the mist evaporate that hides from men the true meaning of certain deeds of violence and the Christian public opinion that is growing up will overcome the obsolescent pagan public opinion that permits and justifies deeds of violence"(Tolstoy, 1987, p. 178).

Underlying Assumptions of Pacifism

Proponents of the principle of non-violence build their position upon a number of assumptions that can be classified into two: religious-spiritual assumptions and moral assumptions.

Religious-Spiritual Assumptions

Some pacifists see conflicts as instigated and maintained by illusions even though actual conflict may be real (Duncan, 1971, pp. 63-65). They argue that underlying every conflict is "the ultimate illusion that each individual (or group) is separate from everything and everyone else and has to look after its own interest, first, at the expense of others" (Ambler, 1990, p.200).

For Tolstoy and Gandhi, there is unity of life. Humanity is not separate but profoundly tied together and the sole meaning of human life is realized by "establishing the greatest possible unity among all living beings" (Tolstoy, 1987, p. 194). The core of the unity of life position, according to Paul Smoker and Linda Groff (1996a, p. 71), is simply that as a result of the interdependency of life, no one and no group can win or lose anything without others also winning or losing. This understanding, according to Tolstoy, renders the use of violence counter-productive and undesirable. When violence is employed against others, you are indirectly harming yourself.

However, to fully understand that there is unity of life, advocates believe that we need to develop a new spirituality which, in this context,

is "an attempt to grow in sensitivity to self, to others, to non-human creations and to God who is within and beyond this totality" (Said and Funk, 1996, p. 4). Reality and everything in existence must be seen as essentially interdependent and interconnected. Achieving such spirituality requires activities like meditations, prayers, fasts, self-introspection and self-analysis.

Another spiritual assumption of many pacifists is that human life is a sacred creation of God. Life is seen as essentially inviolable and intrinsically valuable. Hence, violence is rejected because it endangers and violates the sacredness of life.

A problem with the afore-mentioned assumptions is that there seems to be no way to verify any of them. For instance, there is no objective way to confirm that humans truly have a soul that may be purified by non-violence and perverted by violence. Materialists vehemently deny the existence of any spiritual entity as the soul in human beings that can be purified by non-violence or perverted by violence. Similarly, belief in the unity and sacredness of life is premised on the controversial existence of a God who is the creator of life. Until questions about the existence of God are laid to rest, it is best to avoid appealing to the existence of God to support any position or theory that one hopes to present before a wide range of people that might include atheists.

Moral Assumptions

Apart from the religious-spiritual assumptions identified above, many pacifists also hold that the use of any form of violence is always morally unacceptable because it involves the use of humans as a mere means to an end and not as an end in themselves (Ambler, 1990, p. 202). This use is said to violate the inner dignity of the human person and can never produce any good result. Gandhi, in this regard, argues that although violence may be effective in the short-run, it alienates an opponent, makes dialogue impossible and has no good effect in the long run. Similarly, Tolstoy contends that morally acceptable actions are essentially exemplary and capable of making the world a better place. Violence, however, is believed to be incapable of improving the world and for this reason; it is rejected as morally unacceptable. Conversely, non-violence is supposed to make the world a better and more peaceful place. Hence, it is suggested that everyone should become a pacifist.

Nevertheless, there are reasons to doubt the veracity of the view that violence is incapable of improving the world and also enhance social

peace. For example, it may be necessary to employ some measure of violence to apprehend criminals, quell social uprisings and riots, and generally deter prospective criminals. Also, in-spite of the fact that violence may involve the use of a human person as mere means to other ends, in some situations, there may be no other option but to do so. For instance, if you find yourself in a situation in which you either kill a hired assassin or get killed, it may not make much sense to argue that using (killing) another person, as a means of survival is unacceptable.

Pacifism: Theory and Practice

Given the assumptions discussed above, pacifists argue for a universal rejection of all forms of violence in all spheres of human life. The term, "violence", in this context, is often used to signify "the wilful application of force in such a way that it is intentionally injurious to the person or group against whom it is applied" (Bondurant, 1988, p. 9). It prevents the actualization of an end that the victim of violence desires to achieve (Galtung, 1990, pp. 9-10). Thus, "violence" refers to all forms of repressive social arrangements and practices like colonialism and tyrannical government (Carter, 1990, p.210).

Pacifists contend that the non-violent method is the ideal approach in conflict resolution and quest for social change. The term "non-violent", as employed by them, implies the restraint from taking up arms and a consistent effort to persuade opponents to see the justice of one's cause. The non-violent approach does not aim at victory over the opponent, but at mutual benefits. Hence, a non-violent society avoids social hierarchies, discriminations, political and economic oppressions and all arrangements that can engender violent conflicts.

However, pacifism is not restricted to only a passive resistance and an appeal to the conscience of the opponent. It may include the exertion of non-violent pressure upon those resisting change so as to get them to consult their conscience and reconsider their positions. This is called radical or direct action (Deming1990, p.100). Gandhi and King are good examples of pacifists who have put such radical action into practice. They see non-violent resistance as an effective and creative means of opposing social evils, a reliable means of promoting social peace and as a moral alternative to war.(Bondurant, 1988, p. 3) Gandhi calls his technique for conducting conflict in a non-violent way satyagraha. This means "adherence to truth" or "commitment to truth" in Sanskrit language. It could also mean, "truth-force" as opposed to brute physical

force. Satyagraha is to be employed to oppose error and dispel the illusion upon which conflicts and the consequent violence are founded (Duncan, 1971, p.3). Gandhi presents the process of making peace as including two activities that are quite difficult to undertake simultaneously. One is the active and persistent rejection of the falsehoods imposed by the antagonist and the second is the positive affirmation of the opponent as a fellow human being. In rejecting the falsehood imposed by the antagonist, Gandhi suggests that we rely on persuasion rather than on any coercive tactics. This includes setting out all relevant claims and facts as clearly as possible, in the forms of petitions and arguments. They are meant to win the opponent over and to give him every decent opportunity of response (Ibid.). It is only after such persuasion has failed that pacifists allow for the use of non-violent direct action as a last resort.

In carrying out a non-violent struggle, Gandhi identifies four phases to be passed through before the final the stage for direct action (Groff and Smoker, 1996b, pp. 15-17). In the first stage, existing constitutional machinery is employed to resolve conflict and achieve a satisfactory result. If this fails, we proceed to the second stage, which is the agitation stage. Here, efforts are made to heighten awareness and educate people as to what the conflict is all about. The third stage involves the presentation of a document listing the people's needs and stating that continued opposition would produce some sort of direct action. It is only after this fails the fourth phase is embarked upon, which is the preparation for direct action. This involves the effort to develop the spirit of harmlessness and non-violence (ahimsa). Members undertake a process of self-examination, meditation and prayers in order to purify their souls and ascertain that they have enough self-respect to command the respect of the opposition. It is during this process that measures are taken not to dehumanize the opponents by seeing them as enemies.

The fifth stage is the stage at which direct action is actually undertaken. This may take the form of economic boycotts, sit-down strikes, non-payment of taxes, mass resignations from public offices, and deliberate and organized disobedience to certain laws perceived to be unjust. In carrying out direct actions, practitioners of non-violence refrain from any use of violence, but are willing to suffer violence from the opponent. In the Indian tradition, this is referred to as tapasya (Saxena, 1976, 239-247). Gandhi believes that if pacifists are able to resist violent opponents for a long enough time there will be a complete collapse of the opponents' morale and strength, and a shift of power to the Satyagrahi.

The variant of pacifism advocated by Tolstoy, Gandhi and King is Absolute Pacifism (Lackey, 1989, p. 11). It rejects all forms of violence and coercion, whether direct or structural, in all spheres of life. All social hierarchies and discriminations are considered as manifestations of structural violence that must be abolished. A second type of pacifism rejects only direct violence, especially the one that involves killing people. Albert Schweitzer (1965, pp. 7, 9, 25), in this regard thinks that other forms of violence, besides killing, may be acceptable under certain circumstances. Hence, war is particularly rejected, given its nature as necessarily involving the killing of people.

A third type of pacifism is private pacifism (Lackey, 1989, p.7). It maintains that while violence between individuals (personal violence) is always morally wrong, political violence may be acceptable. St. Augustine, for example, is said to believe that though inter-personal violence is wrong, it is sometimes morally permissible for a nation to go to war. What unites the various forms of pacifism is the general rejection of violence as something that ought to be avoided as much as possible. Nonetheless, pacifists disagree on when, where and to what extent it may be permissible to employ violence.

Of the different forms of pacifism, absolute pacifism seems to be the form that promotes social peace the most. This is because it rejects violence wholesale while other types of pacifism accept the use of violence under certain circumstances. A society in which violence is non-existent in all its structures would be more peaceful than one in which certain forms of violence are acceptable.

Justification of Pacifism

Several arguments may be employed to justify pacifism as the most acceptable and effective means of achieving social change, resolving conflict and promoting social peace. One is that it produces far fewer casualties than the violent approach (Deming, 1990, pp. 102-103). A violent response to an attack provokes a more violent counter response and brings greater casualties while a non-violent response inhibits the ability of the antagonists to hit back. Violence used against pacifists can only increase for a while, after which it will reach a point of de-escalation, at which the aggressor will become discouraged to continue with the use of violence. According to April Carter (1990, p. 212), the readiness of the pacifist to suffer imprisonment or physical injury without retaliating could sap the morale of the opposite side and work

through its persuasion power.

Although the non-violent approach can lessen the number of casualties, sap the morale of the opponent to use violence and get him to review his position, it remains ineffective against a ruthless and completely inhuman opponent. Against such a foe, non-violent resistance may amount to mass suicide (Deming, 1990, p. 102). For instance, it did not have much gain when used against the Nazi regime in Germany during the Second World War. Its efficacy requires a minimum level of humanity on the part of both contending parties. For instance, it was the humane tendencies of both the British government and the practitioners of non-violence that accounted for the success of the approach in India's struggle for independence from British rule.

However, this does not imply that violence offers a better alternative. It may be equally ineffective against ruthless and inhuman opponents. That you respond violently against a violent attack does not guarantee the success of such a response. Rather, it may indeed boost the opponents' morale and determination to use more violence. Indeed, a well-armed opponent may find it easier to quell violent uprisings than a non-violent resistance like civil disobedience or mass non-cooperation (Carter, 1990, p. 213). Reprisals against violence are more savage and easier to justify than against non-violence. Therefore, violence does not have any advantage over non-violence as far as ruthless opponents are concerned.

A problem with pacifism is that it requires near impossible levels of heroism and self-sacrifice as pacifists are not expected to use violence to defend themselves, even when this is the only viable option left to them in the face of mortal danger. This requirement appears contrary to the innate human drive for self-preservation and also contradicts the fundamental human right to life and the right to defend one's life. Hence, it is at the least difficult, if not altogether impossible, to consistently practice. In this regard, pacifists might want to appeal to Gandhi's opinion about the preservation of the purity of the human soul. He believes that the preservation of the natural and ideal state of the human soul is more important than saving biological lives. This state, described as a state of harmlessness and harmony, is believed to be perverted by acts of violence and purified through non-violence (Desai, 1960, p. 26). Hence, rather than save lives through the use of violence, it is better to lose biological lives and preserve the ideal condition of the soul through the practice of non-violence. Given the above, pacifists might argue that people generally have difficulties in carrying out non-

violent actions primarily because they do not understand that preserving the purity of souls is more important than saving biological lives. Gandhi contends that the use of violence is a bad means, which can never produce any good end. Even when violence seems to have some good results, it cannot, in Gandhi's opinion, be used to establish true peace and social well being (Bose, 1948, p. 159). While presenting a similar argument, Lackey (1989, p. 22) states that the amount of good produced by war and other acts of violence is greatly exaggerated and their evils often underplayed. In his words: "it is a tragic mistake to believe that there are great moral goods to be obtained only by war" or violence generally.

But, the Gandhian view which regards the attainment of the spiritual purity of the soul as more important than saving biological lives is problematic. It seems morally wrong to suggest that each person should concern himself with his own spiritual purity when sacrificing such could save the lives of many. Suppose there are good grounds suggesting that a well timed commando raid will prevent a nation or the entire world from experiencing a long period of war, in the course of which millions of lives would be lost and many more millions of people permanently deformed. Gandhian pacifism suggests that such a raid be avoided on the ground that the spiritual purity of a few might be polluted. But, this seems unacceptable because in the final analysis more lives would be lost and if there was really anything like the pollution of the human soul, more souls would be perverted than if the commando option were employed. Many more people would be involved in the war than in the commando raid. For example, it seems more acceptable to have assassinated Adolf Hitler before the commencement of the Second World War than to have refrained from doing so on the ground that the soul of the assassins would be perverted. Therefore, in some cases, the use of some minimal violence in order to avert greater violence may be more acceptable than the adherence to the principle of non-violence. This view was maintained by St Augustine, who argued that violence against evildoers may at times be necessary for the attainment of peace (Barash, 1971, p. 447).

Leo Tolstoy presents another argument against the use of violence and in support of non-violence. He contends that instead of making life more secure, all the centuries of efforts to make life more secure through the pagan organization of violence has brought only fresh dangers into our personal and social lives (Tolstoy, 1987, p. 1989). Tolstoy's remark appears correct because the search for peace and security through the

use of violence has led to the production of the weapons of mass destruction, which today puts the continued existence of humanity in jeopardy (Groff and Smoker, 1996a, p.16).

Hence, violence has become counter-productive. For Tolstoy (1987, p.8), it is based on an erroneous view that there is a public good to be furthered through institutionalized violence and wars. If such good exists at all, it is subordinate to the duty we have to preserve life generally and promote unity between all men. Tolstoy's argument is that while the specific positions people occupy in society may demand and justify the use of violence, the universal position of all humans as beings created by God, endowed with love and reason, and meant to achieve the greatest possible unity among all living beings, renders violence unacceptable. And since the obligations we have in our specific social positions, as judges, soldiers or policemen are subordinate to the eternal and universal duties we have as created beings, the latter should take precedence over the former. One problem with Tolstoy's argument is that it relies heavily on a religious premise that is subject to controversy. It remains open to question that humans are actually created by God, with the purpose of achieving the greatest possible unity between all living beings.

Another argument in support of non-violence is derived from the religious premise that God commanded that we should not kill. The Bible, for instance, in Exodus 20: 13, records God's instruction that "thou shalt not kill". This has been interpreted as meaning that no one should kill any other human being under any circumstances. Pacifists like King and Tolstoy employ this premise to reject all forms of violence that may result in death. However, this position is subject to criticisms: for instance, Lackey argued that Exodus 20: 13 was originally written in Hebrew and it reads "Lo Tirzach" which is best interpreted as "thou shalt not murder" and not "thou shalt not kill" (Lackey, 1989, p.8). This suggests that Exodus 20:13 does not forbid all forms of killing, but only those that amount to murder. At least, there are several sections in the same Bible where people are commanded to kill. For example, Exodus 22: 18 states "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" and Leviticus 24: 16 maintains that "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death". This greatly undermines the pacifist position that depends on the premise that God commands that we do not kill. In Besides, there is really no way to confirm that the commandment is actually from God and not just the opinion of Moses, the author of the book of Exodus (Ibid.). If it turns out that the commandment does not originate from God, then it lacks any binding force. Also, the fact that

such commandment may originate from God does not establish that we are all morally bound to obey it. The command may be a religious command for only the children of Israel and not for all men, or at best for only those who are interested in the salvation and other benefits which the Hebrew or Christian religion offers. As a religious law, it lacks the universality that moral laws have.

An additional problem with pacifism is that its advocates seem to reject only physical violence while psychological violence is accepted and actually employed. Pacifists subject their opponents to various forms of psychological injury and intimidation through direct actions like strikes, civil disobedience, fasts and boycotts. Although Gandhi, for example, in his writings condemned coercion and violence, he did not renounce psychological coercion or psychological violence in practice. He exerted every form of "non-violent" pressure to ensure that the British left India. His threat of "a fast unto death", for instance, brought tremendous psychological pressure on the British authorities that feared the riots that would ensue should Gandhi die.

For Gandhi and King, the way such actions as strikes and fasts may cause injury is quite different from the way a violent physical attack may cause injury. In their opinion, non-violent coercion can only cause loss of face or mental discomfiture while violent coercion, in addition to the above can cause various forms of physical harm or even death. Pacifists suppose that the loss of face or pride is more acceptable than physical injury or death (Ostergaard, 1990, p. 10).

Advocates further argue in defence of pacifism that it transforms the soul and also helps to purify it in a way that violence cannot. This is achieved by virtue of the fact that it acts upon the mind of the opponent. In this respect, Gandhi describes actions, like his terrifying fasts, as acts of education and not coercion (Lackey, 1989, p. 15). A problem with the above attempt to justify the use of psychological coercion is that it only tries to camouflage the true nature of non-violent actions. The truth about non-violent actions is that they are meant to compel actions contrary to the will of the individual or group against whom they are directed (Ostergaard, 1990, p. 9). To this extent, they are as coercive as any violent action. Also, the use of violence may be as educative as the use of non-violence. At least children are known to be taught some lessons by the rod or at least the threat of its use. The same goes for adults that are sentenced to jail terms with hard labour.

Nonetheless, pacifism has its own strong points. One is that it records a lower number of casualties than violent protests. Another is that the

non-violent approach is less destructive and more cost effective. It does not involve the deliberate destruction of social amenities, nor does it require huge investment in weapons of warfare or put humanity at the risk of annihilation the way the use of violence does. However, the greatest advantage the non-violent approach could possibly have relates to its capacity to enhance social peace better than the violent alternative. For this reason we shall proceed to carefully examine how and the extent to which pacifism can enhance social peace.

Pacifism and Social Peace

Advocates of pacifism are convinced that the practice of non-violence "by the world's different people, cultures and religions today would do much to create a more peaceful world in the 21st century" (Groff and Smoker, 1996b, p. 14). The first step towards the attainment of social peace would be to create inner peace in the practitioners of non-violence. According to Abdul Aziz Said and Nathan Funk (1996, p. 8), world political peace cannot be achieved by belligerent people. Inner peace is its basis and this is a process that occurs in steps. It is only after people have attained inner peace that they can try to change the world outside and make it more peaceful by dealing with such social problems as hunger, poverty, gender issues or conflicts. Similarly, Groff and Smoker argue that only true inner peace within the hearts of people can engender outer peace in the world. If individuals are plagued by inner conflicts, doubts, fears and insecurities, they are likely to project them outwardly unto others, blaming others for their problems without even realizing what they are doing (Groff and Smoker, 1996b, p. 16). In the opinion of Gandhi, the inner peace that would produce outer peace can only be created through a process of prayer, meditation and self-examination.

To attain inner peace, Gandhi suggests that each practitioner of non-violence should, by close and prayerful self-introspection and self-analysis, find out whether or not s/he is completely free from the taint of anger, ill-will, self-interest and such other human infirmities. S/he should ensure that s/he is not capable of those very evils against which s/he is out to lead a crusade. Also, during the process of prayerful self-introspection, pacifists are expected to overcome all propensities for anger and violence (Gandhi, 1950, p. 203). It is only after the above process, described by Gandhi as a process of self-purification, that inner peace can be achieved. This is a state devoid of fear, anger, anxiety,

doubt, feeling of insecurity and ill will. The spirit of harmlessness, non-violence, harmony with oneself and one's environment characterizes the state of inner peace.

However, the meditative and prayerful approach suggested by some pacifists does not necessarily produce inner peace. "Meditation" refers to reflection, pondering or contemplation on any issue while "prayers" is a means of approach to a deity in word or thought in order to entreat, give thanks or make supplication. "Self-examination" can be understood to mean the process of carefully looking at one's mind in order to understand one's thought and thought process. Going by the above definitions, there seems to be nothing in meditation and self-examination suggesting that they necessarily lead to inner peace. Either of these activities may bring to the fore the content of one's mind, but there is no good reason to suppose that they inevitably yield inner peace. In fact, such contemplative activities may lead to inner conflict characterized by the emotional states of anger, fear, depression, etc. Indeed, the meditative activities of some mystics have been known to lead to insanity, depression and such negative mental states (Hanegraaff, 1997, p. 62).

Also, the fact that many of the non-violent actions carried out by pacifists like Gandhi and King degenerated into violent protests suggests that, in spite of efforts to create inner peace through self-purification, this process does not guarantee the creation of inner harmony and tranquillity. In addition, the natural tendency that humans have towards anger, aggression and violence, suggests that the creation of inner peace, using the Gandhian method, may not be as easy as it is supposed (Beitz and Herman 1973, pp. 109–139). At least, some people may be unable to overcome these tendencies and develop the mental states requisite for pacifism.

Furthermore, the same method proposed by pacifists as capable of creating inner peace is also employed by martial artists to improve their art of violence. For instance, during training sessions, they are required to undergo meditative processes to develop their fighting skills (Crum, 1987). This suggests that meditation or self-introspection does not necessarily yield inner peace; rather, it could facilitate the development of the art of violence. And given the pacifist' perception of inner peace as a prerequisite for social peace, we need a more reliable means of achieving inner peace than the meditative approach suggested by some pacifists.

Even if inner peace is produced using the meditative technique, questions may still be raised about the possibility of inner peace being

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translated into outer peace. Advocates of non-violence contend that if such inner state is achieved, the propensity to employ violence will be removed or at least greatly reduced. Their assumption is that before a person can resort to violence, s/he must be sufficiently consumed by such feelings as anger, hatred or ill will (King, 1972, p.337). In the absence of such states, it becomes easier for people to co-exist peacefully in society without resort to violence of any kind. Similarly, Gandhi points out that when inner peace is achieved, people would employ more of non-violent techniques in resolving conflicts and correcting social ills like social discrimination and economic oppression (Carter, 1990, p. 210; Bondurant, 1988, p.3).

But, the problem here is that even if pacifists are able to attain the state of inner tranquillity, social peace may still remain elusive unless everyone becomes a pacifist and attains inner peace. As long as there remain people sufficiently imbued with the psychological states that engender the resort to violence in society, the attainment of inner peace and the consequent practice of non-violence by only a section of society may not significantly promote social peace. Violent aggressors may even see pacifists as easy preys to be attacked and exploited. If it is sure that pacifists would be left alone, we can meaningfully argue that peace is enhanced in society to the extent that there are fewer people willing to use violence. Unfortunately, it is quite unlikely that violent aggressors would leave pacifists alone.

Advocates of pacifism, like Deming, responds to the line of argument above by contending that a consistent practice of non-violence in the long run inhibits the ability of the antagonist to continue with the use of violence (Deming, 1990, p. 103). Similarly, Carter (1990, p. 202) argues that the non-violent approach, as prescribed by Gandhi, could sap the morale of the violent opponents and work through its persuasive power to get them to embrace the ideals of pacifism. Therefore, if practitioners of non-violence are consistent and unwavering, a point would be reached when the use of violence would begin to de-escalate until antagonists have a complete change of mind and embrace the ideals of pacifism. At this point, peace would be established in society.

The difficulty, however, is that pacifist are not always consistent and unwavering in practice. Many of the crusades and movements that started with a proclamation of the ideals of non-violence ended up adopting violent techniques. For example, the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa moved from non-violent protests to guerrilla warfare in the 1950's. Also, the U.S. civil rights activities, which began as

a pacifist movement gave way to the Black Power Movement in the latter part of the 1960's. Like the ANC, the Black Power Movement also took to guerrilla warfare (Deming, 1990, p. 214). Such transformation from non-violence to violent techniques, according to Carter, is a natural response to anger and frustration, and a way of reacting to and denying fear.

Even if pacifists could be consistent with their non-violent approach, it is doubtful that non-violent resistance would always sap the resolve to employ violence in very ruthless and inhumane opponents. It is also uncertain that it would facilitate the complete rejection of violence by such foes. For example, during the Second World War, several millions of Jews were slaughtered in spite of their non-resistance. This leaves us with the earlier stated problem that non-violence does not necessarily enhance peace unless virtually everyone becomes a pacifist. Obviously, if everyone were a pacifist, the world would be a more peaceful and much better place, perhaps a paradise. If everyone abstains from the use of all forms of violence, such social evils as wars, riots, interpersonal fighting and crimes would be non-existent. In addition, structural violence, manifested in oppressive socio-political systems, economic inequalities and social discrimination would be eradicated.

Regrettably, attractive as pacifism may be in theory, it does not, in reality, completely prevent inter-group organized violence nor guarantee social peace. Its claim that "there will be peace in society (or in the world) if all become non-violent" appears tautological and trivial. An examination of the concept of peace would show that it includes the absence of all manifestations of violence. Peace implies absence of violence. Clearly this does not provide any meaningful solution to the problem of how to promote peace.

The all important question that we need to provide a plausible answer to is: how do we get people to actually reject all forms of violence and, in practical terms, embrace the ideals of pacifism. Although, pacifists like Tolstoy, Gandhi and King offer some religious and moral reasons why men should shun violence and adopt non-violence; these reasons have been shown to be quite controversial and insufficient to motivate people to actually become pacifists.

Conclusion

At the theoretical level, pacifism seems to offer a good principle for promoting peace in the world. No one would deny the symmetry that

the world would become a paradise of peace if everyone became a pacifist. If all were imbued with the spirit of harmlessness, love and respect for all humanity and an attitude of tolerance, if no one employed violent methods, our world would become a haven of peace. But can we ever have such a world? The various problems identified with the practice of pacifism show that the principle of non-violence is extremely difficult if not altogether impossible to practice, more so at the universal level. And, as we have shown, it is important for pacifism to become universal before it can adequately enhance peace in our world.

In conclusion, the principle of non-violence, as it is, does not seem to offer an effective solution to the practical and pressing problem of how to promote social peace. It is not just enough to say as many pacifists do that for the world to become peaceful and free from violence, all we need to do is abstain from violence. It is imperative for pacifists to evolve a more plausible and practical means of encouraging people to adopt non-violence in place of the alternative of violence which is predominant in the world today. For instance, pacifists need to evolve more effective means of correcting the unjust social structures that compel people to resort to violence.

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