

"Sympathetic strikes must be taboo until it is conclusively proved that the affected men have exhausted all the legitimate means at their disposal."

Harijan, 11-8-1946

This may sound strange to anybody used to Western strike strategies. However, the idea is simply that for non-violent action to work there has to be a direct link between the two parties. One may strike out of sympathy for other groups than one's own, but then the strike is in fact directed against somebody unrelated to the original conflict and this creates an artificial negative relationship.

"This messenger of peace will cultivate through personal service contacts with the people in his locality or chosen circle, so that when he appears to deal with ugly situations, he does not descend upon the members of a riotous assembly as an utter stranger liable to be looked upon as a suspect or an unwelcome visitor."

Harijan, 18-6-1938

In other words, Gandhi is not suggesting that in order to act in conflict and be a "messenger of peace" a person necessarily has to be a member of the group for which he acts. But he has to do so out of identity, through a long lasting relationship of personal service and contact with the people, and not only in his own locality but also in his "chosen circle" (a very Gandhian expression). He should never be an "utter stranger". He should also have a cause by being one of them.

"Volunteers may not take sides in any communal quarrels. Wherever there is a violent eruption, volunteers are expected to die in the attempt to quell violence.

Perfect discipline and perfect cooperation among the different units are indispensable for success."

Young India, 3-4-1930

This is the model of how the outside volunteer with strong identification acts: he takes no side, except against violence.

"Lord Hunter: Your leading lieutenant in Delhi, Swami Shraddhananda — Mr. Gandhi interrupting: I would not call him my lieutenant, but an esteemed co-worker."

Young India, 21-1-1920

Another type of identity: with one's own group in the struggle, trying to avoid hierarchies that might themselves be violent.

N₁₁₄ *Act out of identity!*

"The would-be member of a peace brigade should come into closer touch and cultivate acquaintance with the so-called *goonda* in his vicinity. He should know all and be known to all and win the hearts of all by his living and selfless service. No section should be regarded as too contemptible or mean to mix with. *Goondas* do not drop from the sky, nor do they spring from the earth like evil spirits. They are the product of social disorganization, and society is therefore responsible for their existence. In other words, they should be looked upon as a symptom of corruption in our body politic."

Harijan, 15-9-1940

A clear, structure-oriented statement. The evil-doers from below, the social bandits, the *goondas* are also seen as a product of the wrong social structure. To get the structure right, as a first step, one has to associate with them, recognizing the responsibility for their existence. With this statement Gandhi lays the basis for social work on India.

N₁₁₅ *Act out of conviction!*

"He (the *satyagrahi*) must believe in truth and non-violence as his creed and therefore have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which he expects to evoke by his truth and love expressed through his sufferings."

Harijan, 25-3-1939

A very concentrated statement indeed. There must be belief in non-violence, in the inherent goodness of human nature. Belief can be used to release goodness if it is based on truth and love, and proven by suffering. There has to be some kind of "inner calling" otherwise non-violence reduces to a technology. Further, there has to be compassion, there has to be empathy. In short: *conviction*.

"There is no road, except through living the creed in your life which must be a living sermon."

Harijan, 14-3-1936

What Gandhi is stressing here the deep inner connection between the creed inside a person and the way the person lives. If the creed is beautiful and the life is a "living sermon", then that is the road. To which goal? In a sense less important, any road travelled in this manner will lead to a worthy goal, according to Gandhi.